

DAVID SULLIVAN COLLECTION

Papers, 1950-1970

2 linear feet

Accession Number 1542

OCLC #

DALNET #

The papers of David Sullivan were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in 1994. They were opened for research in 1996.

David Sullivan was born in Cork City, Ireland on May 7, 1904. His father was a chemist, his mother a homemaker. He attended schools in Ireland and emigrated to the U.S. in 1925. He worked as an elevator operator in New York City, and was a founding member of BSEIU Local 32B in New York City in 1934. He was a rank and file member of 32B until 1938 when he was elected Secretary-Treasurer, a post he held until 1941 when he became President of the Local. Sullivan served as President of 32B until 1960. He also was an International Vice President of BSEIU from 1941-1960. In May, 1960 he was elected President of BSEIU and served until 1971. Upon his retirement, he was named President Emeritus of the International. Sullivan was also active in a number of other labor affiliated organizations and civic groups. He died in New York City on January 23, 1976. He had married in 1930, and was the father of five children.

Historically, the Service Employees had one of the best records of minority representation of any labor union, and had been racially integrated since 1921. By establishing the Committee on Civil Rights in 1961, David Sullivan continued and expanded upon the Union's commitment to civil rights. Also in 1961, Sullivan established the Union's scholarship fund for members and their children. In 1963 the International moved its headquarters from Chicago to Washington, D.C., in part to have greater access to the political life of the nation. 1968 was the year the Union's pension plan was established, and "Building" was dropped from the Union's name, officially making it the Service Employees International Union. During his tenure as President of SEIU, David Sullivan saw a 70% membership increase in the Union. For more information on David Sullivan, please consult *A Need for Valor: The roots of the Service Employees International Union, 1902-1992* ; *Local 32B-32J: Sixty Years of Progress 1934-1994*; and "*Going Up!*" *The Story of 32B*.

The Sullivan collection contains materials from Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign in 1968, clippings from the 1950 BSEIU strike in New York City, and several honoria given to David Sullivan in the course of his Union career. There is also a scrapbook of congratulatory letters and other related materials he received upon his election as BSEIU President.

Important subjects in the collection include:

Hubert Humphrey Presidential campaign
Strikes

Important correspondents in the collection include:

George Hardy
Walter Mondale

Non-manuscript material:

Photographs from the 1968 Labor Day Mass in Washington D.C., the 1969 Association of Catholic Trade Unionists dinner, and the 1950 and 1964 General Conventions have been transferred to the Archives Audio-Visual Collection, as have some materials from the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

The following materials have been transferred to the Library section of the Archives:

Building Service Employee: Feb. 1948-Dec. 1950
Feb. 1951-Dec. 1953
Feb. 1954-Dec. 1956

Service Employee: June 1960-April 1962
Feb. 1961-Dec. 1964
Feb. 1965-Dec. 1968
Feb. 1969-Dec. 1970

Public Service News: June 1960-May 1962
Jan. 1966-Nov. 1970

Leadership News: Sept. 1961-Aug. 1962

Dollars and Sense: April 1964-Dec. 1970

The President's Commission on Income Maintenance Programs: Background Papers, 1970.

Box 1

1. Association of Catholic Trade Unionists; Social Action Award, 1969-1970
2. Clippings; civil defense, 1950-1951
3. Clippings; Civil Rights, 1952
4. Clippings; elevators / elevator operators, 1952
5. Clippings; William L. McFeteridge, 1951-1952
6. Clippings; membership, 1951-1952
7. Clippings; David Richey obituaries, 1954
8. Clippings; scholarships, 1950-1952
- 9 thru 11. Clippings; strike, New York, 1950
12. Clippings; Strike, New York, 1951
13. Clippings; David Sullivan, 1950, 1955
14. Clippings; tax protests, New York, 1952
15. Clippings; Union issues, 1950-1952, 1959
16. Clippings; wages, 1951-1952
17. Humphrey campaign; AFL-CIO platform proposals, 1968
18. Humphrey campaign; clippings, 1968
19. Humphrey campaign; convention materials, 1968

Box 1 continued

20. Humphrey campaign; materials, 1968
21. Humphrey campaign; SEIU materials, 1968
22. Humphrey campaign; SEIU / Sullivan materials, 1968
23. Humphrey, Muriel; press kit, 1968
24. Labor Day Mass; Washington, D.C., 1968
25. "Page One" Yearbook of the Newspaper Guild, New York, 1959

Box 2

David Sullivan's scrapbook from the Twelfth Annual BSEIU Convention,
May, 1960