Douglas A. Fraser Papers
5 linear feet

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Accession Number: 2062

Creator: Douglas A. Fraser


Language: Material entirely in English.

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Related Material: College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs Records
Douglas A. Fraser Center for Workplace Issues Records
Irving Bluestone: UAW New Directions Movement Records
UAW International Executive Oral Histories
UAW Office of the President: Douglas Fraser Records
UAW Office of the President: Owen Bieber Records
UAW Region 1 Records
UAW Local 277 Records
History

Douglas A. Fraser is best known for his presidency of the United Auto Workers and his work on the Chrysler Board of Directors. Early in his life, Doug developed a commitment to public service which was fostered by his work with the UAW and continued into his retirement. Upon his retirement in 1983 from the UAW Doug Fraser continued his life of public service in the role of Professor of Labor Studies at Wayne State University.

Doug Fraser was born December 18, 1916, in Glasgow, Scotland. The Fraser family traveled to America and settled in Detroit in 1922, when Doug was 6 years old. At age 18, Doug graduated from Chadsey High School and began his career with the Chrysler Corporation. Working at the Chrysler DeSoto Plant Doug became a member of UAW Local 277. Through hard work and dedication Doug was elected president of Local 277 in 1943 at the age of 27. In 1947 Doug joined the UAW staff working with the Chrysler Department. Doug’s intelligence and talent were quickly identified by Walter Reuther, and in 1951 he became Reuther’s Administrative Assistant to the President. In 1970 Doug was elected to the position of International Vice President of the UAW. Following the retirement of Leonard Woodcock in May of 1977 Doug was elected President of the United Autoworkers, a position he held until his retirement in 1983.

In recognition of Doug’s extensive career and public service, Wayne State University conferred upon him the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters on May 31, 1978.

During his presidency Doug was instrumental in working with Chrysler to obtain a federal loan to save the company from bankruptcy. In 1981 Doug reunited the UAW with the AFL-CIO after a 13 year absence. Representing the union through negotiations Doug secured the “30 and out” retirement agreement, substantial gains in healthcare, safety programs, and incremental pension increases for current and future retirees. In 1980 Doug was elected the first union member of the Chrysler Board of Directors, a position he held until 1984 when he was succeeded by UAW President Owen Bieber.

Following his retirement from the UAW in 1983, Doug Fraser began his academic career as visiting professor and labor scholar. Accepting a position as Professor of Labor Studies at Wayne State University Doug engaged workers, students, corporate professionals, and educators in a forum of exploration surrounding labor and urban issues.

Extending his influence beyond Detroit, Doug received the Jerry Wurf Fellowship at the John F. Kennedy School in 1983. Through this fellowship Doug contributed his experience and intellect in the form of lectures and workshops to the students and faculty of Harvard University. He also brought his experience to New York, serving as Labor Leader in residence at Columbia University for three years. In April of 1992, Doug became the 11th occupant of the Wayne Morse Chair of Law & Politics at the University of Oregon. Within Michigan he also maintained a visiting professor relationship with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

In recognition of Doug’s accomplishments Wayne State University opened the Douglas A. Fraser Center for Workplace Issues, known as the Fraser Center, in 1997. The Fraser Center was
developed to create a forum of workers, students, and corporate professionals to discuss relevant issues within the workplace.

During his career in academia Doug continued his commitment to public service holding multiple appointments on committees and councils. Locally Doug served on the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, the Economic Club of Detroit, New Detroit, and the United Foundation of Detroit. Doug co-chaired with Lee Iacocca the Michigan Governor’s Commission on Jobs & Economic Development. Doug also worked to establish the Business Enterprise Trust with the University of Michigan Business School and the Kellogg School at Northwestern. Although the trust never achieved the desired potential, thirty awards over six years were conferred for education in business.

Nationally, Doug was a lifetime member of the NAACP, a member of the board of trustees for the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, and served on the executive committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. He also held three Presidential appointments on the Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, the President’s Advisory Committee to Japan, and the National Commission on Public Service. Doug also chaired the Health Security Action Council with Peter Pestillo of Ford Motor Company.

In tandem with his professorial duties and committee work Doug maintained a close relationship with members of the UAW. He presented at conferences and workshops, attended retirement dinners, and local union meetings. Doug also developed an extensive resume of public appearances and publications. He addressed Senate and House Committees concerned with healthcare, labor law, and human rights. Doug’s writings and interviews appeared in both scholarly and popular media publications with topics ranging from union issues to national concerns.

Scope and Content:
This collection was created by Doug Fraser during his tenure as Professor of Labor Studies at Wayne State University. The collection includes some material collected during Fraser’s presidency of the UAW. The majority of the collection is material collected during Fraser’s tenure at WSU ending in his death in 2008. The collection demonstrates the personal relationships Doug maintained and developed in his role as a university professor. The collection includes interviews, speeches, presentations, and publications Doug engaged in during his time at WSU. The collection also demonstrates the multiple roles Doug held on national and local councils and committees.

Important Subjects:
- Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies
- Business Enterprise Trust
- College of Urban, Labor, and Metropolitan Affairs
- Council for National Health Issues
- Detroit Economic Club
- Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
- Edward L. Cushman Endowment Fund
- Governor’s Committee for the 21st Century
Important Names:

David Adamany
Owen Bieber
Irving Bluestone
Sam Fishman
Sheldon Friedman
Ronald Gettelfinger
Melvin Glasser
Rev. Msgr. George G. Higgins
Lee Iacocca
Mildred Jeffery
Lane Kirkland
Ernie Lofton
Philip Mason
Peter Pestillo
Victor Reuther
Jacob Sheinkman
Sue Mary Smock
Don Stillman
Stephen Yokich
Leonard Woodcock
Series I: Correspondence, 1983-2006 (bulk, 1983-1996)
Series I consists of personal and professional correspondence collected by Doug Fraser during his tenure as Professor of Labor Studies at Wayne State University. The personal correspondence illuminates the relationships Doug developed and maintained during his presidency at the UAW and his tenure at WSU. The professional correspondence demonstrates Doug’s role as Professor of Labor Studies, as well as, the various committees and councils Doug served on outside of the university. Subjects covered in the correspondence include: presentations, degrees/awards, scholarship funds, politics, and the economy in Michigan. The correspondence includes: memos, letters, cards, news clippings, and publications.

Subseries A: General Correspondence
Subseries A consist of general correspondence written to Doug Fraser from various individuals within his professional life. The correspondence demonstrates Doug’s continued involvement with the UAW, with both the leadership of the union and on the local level. The correspondence also demonstrates Doug’s continued role in the labor movement overall, corresponding with the individuals in the AFL-CIO and other labor leaders. The correspondence also reflects professional relationships Doug developed within the Wayne State University community, reflecting Doug’s emerging career in academia as a visiting professor and scholar. Index to Subseries A follows container listing.

Subseries B: Personal Correspondence
Subseries B contain the personal correspondence between Doug Fraser and his close friends and relatives. This group of correspondence was organized in a binder in alphabetical order by Doug Fraser’s administrative assistant (original order was maintained). This correspondence reflects Doug’s personality and commitment to his friends and family. The majority of correspondence consists of handwritten notes, often addressing individuals by their first name or by a nickname, demonstrating the level of intimacy Doug held with these correspondents.

Series II consists of subject files created and maintained by Doug Fraser during his tenure at Wayne State. The coursework portion of the series reflects Doug’s role as educator in University community. The coursework includes course descriptions, publications for the course packs, and handwritten notes for lectures. This series also demonstrates Doug’s continued public service commitment, showing his engagement with various committees and councils. This series demonstrates his work on the Business Enterprise Trust Committee, the Committee for National Health Insurance, and the Race-Relations Council of Metropolitan Detroit. This series also demonstrates Doug’s continued personal exploration in the field of economics, politics, and international affairs. The documents in this series include: handwritten notes, memos, correspondence, publications, and draft reports.
Series III consists of presentations and publications collected by Doug Fraser during his tenure at WSU. This series includes interviews with or publications about Doug Fraser, as well as, presentations and publications authored by Doug Fraser. Following his retirement from the UAW Doug Fraser was periodically interviewed by various individuals, from graduate students to professional talk show hosts. These interviews resulted in publications appearing in both scholarly and popular media venues. The presentations and publications authored by Doug Fraser include published and unpublished writings, statements to the US House and Senate, and presentations at UAW conferences. The published writings of Doug Fraser range from local news articles to scholarly journal articles and book chapters. The documents in this series include: drafts, published works, speech notes, and formal resolutions.

Subseries A consists of interviews and publications about Doug Fraser that appear in various publications such as the Christian Science Monitor and the Automotive Intelligence Report. The subjects covered in the interviews are current politics, the auto industry, and Doug’s public service endeavors. Student essays and thesis written about Doug Fraser are also contained within this series.

Subseries B: Doug Fraser Public Speeches and Publications, 1976-1994
Subseries B consists of public speeches and publications created and maintained by Doug Fraser during his tenure at WSU. The presentations in this subseries include: statements and remarks to Senate and House committees, speeches to UAW conferences and local unions, as well as, statements to various local and national organizations. The publications within this series consist of articles and book chapters authored by Doug Fraser. The subjects contained in these presentations and publications include Healthcare, Labor Relations, Employment and Job Security.

Subseries C: Patrick J. Wright Interviews, 1981-1983
Subseries C is composed of personal interviews with Douglas Fraser conducted by Patrick J. Wright. Wright is the author of On a Clear Day You Can See General Motors, an expose on mismanagement in the auto industry. Wright, a journalist for Business Week Magazine, covered the auto industry for over 13 years. Wright also published for Atlantic Monthly, The Los Angeles Times, and the Washington Post. During the time period of the interviews Doug was engaged in the Chrysler federal loan, serving on the Chrysler Board of Directors, and working to ensure a smooth transition for the leadership of the UAW. These interviews provide insight into the topics above, as well as, Doug’s early life, his experiences with Walter Reuther, and his experience with the AFL-CIO and the Teamsters. Throughout the interviews Doug and Pat discuss the “proposal” alluding to a possible book to be published from the interviews. The book proposal Doug and Pat discussed has not result in a publication.
Series IV: Audio Visual Materials
Series IV contains audio visual materials collected by Doug Fraser during his tenure at Wayne State University. Items within this series consist of 3 Dimensional awards, audio tapes, video tapes, and broadcast quality video recordings.
Arrangement
This collection is arranged into three series- Series I (Box 1-2), Series II (Box 2), Series III (Box 3-4), and Series IV (Box 5).

Series I is further divided into two Subseries- Subseries A (Box 1) and Subseries B (Box 1).

Series III is further divided into three Subseries- Subseries A (Box 3), Subseries B (Box 3), and Subseries C (Box 3 & 4).

The chronological arrangement for Series I was maintained and folder titles determined by month. Index for Series I Subseries A follows box listing. Series II is arranged in alphabetical order by original folder title. Series III is arranged in alphabetical order by title of presentation. Index for Series III Subseries C follows box listing.

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3. October- December 1985
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5. March 1986
6. April 1986
7. May 1986
8. June 1986
10. August 1986
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12. October 1986
13. November 1986
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15. January 1987
16. February 1987
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20. June 1987
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47. September 1989
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49. November 1989
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56. June 1990
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63. January 1991
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65. March- April 1991
66. May- June 1991
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71. January- February 1992
72. March- May 1992
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74. September- December 1992
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May- December 1993

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5. January- May 1996
10. January- December 1999
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20. Personal Correspondence D-G, n/d
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22. Personal Correspondence M- R, n/d
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33. Coursework: LBS 470 Fall 1994
34. Coursework: LBS 470 Fall 1995
41. Governor’s Commission on Jobs & Economic Development, 1983
42. Harvard: Dively Award, 1985
44. Healthcare: Health Security Partnership Draft Bill, 1993
47. Hyatt- Clark, 1983-1985
49. Josephson Center for the Advancement of Professional Ethics, n/d
50. Labor@Wayne, n/d
51. Maintaining Non-Union Status, 1994-1997
52. Mayor’s Committee for the 21st Century, 1991-1993
53. Metropolitan Transit Development Committee, 11-1988

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7. Russia-Poland visit, 1991
11. UAW Region I: UAW Member response to Stephen Yockich, 1998
12. University of Michigan: DeRoy Honors Professor, 2000

Series III
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18. Automotive Intelligence Report: Focus: UAW’s Doug Fraser, 10-1994
20. Detroit College of Law Honorary Degree, 1996
22. Interview: Straight Talk with a Union Leader, n/d
24. Master’s Essay: Racial Divisions within the Labor Movement and the Progressive Alliance, 5-12-1998
25. Meet the Press: Guest Douglas A. Fraser, 1-10-1978
28. Pollock, Andy: How Doug Fraser sold out the Autoworkers, n/d
29. Reader’s Digest: The Labor Leader Everyone Respects, 6-1980
30. Reuther Library: Fraser Center for Workplace Issues, 1997
31. Saturday Review: Douglas Fraser: Labor’s Courtly Rebel, 14-4-1979

Subseries B
34. A Labor Director Looks at the Board: Teamwork chp 5, n/d
35. American Public Health Association: Opening Address, 29-9-1986
36. Article on Trade, 11-5-1985
37. Conference Panel Transcript, n/d
38. Conference Presentation: Autoworkers in a world of Overcapacity, 14-5-1987
39. Conference Presentation: Doug Fraser and Brother Gardner, n/d
40. Cornell University: Remarks to NY State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Sp. 1987
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55. Restructuring the Workplace: A Union Perspective, n/d
56. Senate Committee on Human Relations: Labor Law Reform, n/d
57. Speech notes: Enforce the National Labor Relations Act, 1981
58. The Challenge of Competitiveness: A Labor View, n/d
60. UAW CAP Conference: Keynote Address, 13-1-1980
61. UAW Skilled Trades Conference: Keynote Address on New Technology, 13-12-1977
62. UAW Skilled Trades Conference: Remarks, 17-2-1976
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<td>15-10-1981</td>
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<td>Public Image of UAW</td>
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<td>20</td>
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