

James B. Morrissey Collection

Papers, 1969-1986

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James B. Morrissey joined the National Maritime Union (NMU) in 1941 at age 24. He was a keen observer and outspoken critic of working conditions and union activities. Crews frequently chose him as a union delegate and he was soon elected patrolman, an administrator who enforced labor contracts and handled grievances.

Repeatedly frustrated by what he perceived as an unresponsive and unfair leadership, Morrissey challenged Joseph Wall for NMU Secretary-Treasurer in 1966, but lost in what the U. S. Labor Department later determined to be an undemocratic election. He ran and lost again in 1969.

Shortly after, with the help of sympathetic union staffers, he initiated a series of lawsuits on behalf of the rank and file, charging the administration with misappropriation of union funds and violation of free speech. The most important of these cases, one that began in 1973, charged NMU president Joseph Curran and six other union leaders with misappropriation of funds. In a precedent-setting ruling recognizing the complaints of union members against officers' abusive financial practices, the U. S. Court of Appeals ultimately decided most charges in favor of the plaintiffs.

The papers of James B. Morrissey contain briefs, exhibits, legal documents, correspondence and news clippings related to a number of lawsuits brought by Mr. Morrissey against the National Maritime Union from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Important subjects in the collection:

Joseph Curran
Labor Unions — Corruption
National Maritime Union

Non-Manuscript Material:

A few photographs have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual Collection.

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Morrissey et al v. Curran et al, argued in U.S. District Court, Southern District of N.Y.
and U.S. Court of Appeals--# **69 Civil 442**, 1969-80

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- 1-2 Briefs and affidavits
- 1-3 Corr., 1972-77
- 1-4 Transcript, Jun 28, 1974
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- 1-10 Corr., 1970-71
- 1-11 Curran and Wall brief
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- 1-13 Olick affidavit
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The appeal: docket # **80-7062**:

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11-18	Morrissey appendix
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11-24	Wall brief
11-25	Plaintiffs' reply to Wall, et al
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1-48 thru 51	Plaintiffs' exhibits re: Curran
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2-19	Discovery of documents
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2-21	National Maritime Union notices to members
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Other cases:

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12-8	<u>Morrissey v. Schultz</u> ; legal papers
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12-10	<u>People of the State of New York v. Morrissey</u> ; legal papers, corr., 1971-74
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12-17	<u>People v. Morrissey</u> ; (U.S. Supreme Court) Morrissey brief in opposition to Perry petition, 1973
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12-19 thru 20	<u>Morrissey v. Wall et al (78-7206)</u> ; legal papers and corr., 1978-79
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Subject files:

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13-2	National Maritime Union; mtg. mins., 1974-79
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13-4	AFL-CIO Maritime Comm.; corr. with Curran, 1971
13-5	National Maritime Union conv.; president's report, 1969
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13-7	National Maritime Union; election, 1973
13-8	Committee for National Maritime Union Democracy, 1973
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13-13	National Maritime Union conv.; procs., 1972
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13-15	Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, 1959-71
13-16	National Maritime Union conv., 1976
13-17	National Maritime Union officers pension plan, 1972-75
13-18	Labor Organization annual reports; NMU and AFL-CIO Maritime Trades, 1972-77