The papers of George Clifton Edwards, Jr. were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in 1962, 1968, and 1973 by Judge Edwards and opened for research in May of 1992.

George Clifton Edwards, Jr. was born in Dallas, Texas in 1914 to George Clifton Edwards, a Dallas attorney and socialist, and Octavia Nichols Edwards, an educator.

He received his B.A. from Southern Methodist University in 1933 and then attended Harvard, where he received his master's degree the following year. During his time at Harvard, Edwards became involved with the Student League for Industrial Democracy headed by Norman Thomas, and worked for the organization for two years.

In 1936 Edwards came to Detroit, where he went to work in production at Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company. It was there that he became involved with union organizing, participating in the strike at Kelsey-Hayes that year. In 1937 he became a UAW-CIO representative and directed their WPA-Welfare Department for the next two years.

In April of 1939 Edwards married Margaret McConnell. Their first son, George Clifton Edwards III, was born in 1940.

Appointed director of the Detroit Housing Commission by Mayor Edward Jeffries that same year, Edwards played a large role in the construction of the Herman Gardens Housing Project. In 1941 he ran successfully for a seat on the Detroit Common Council. He served four terms on the Council, two as its president. Part of that time was served in absentia, as Edwards enlisted in the United States Army in 1943 and served until 1946. In 1944, while still in the military service, Edwards received his law degree from the Detroit College of Law and celebrated the birth of his son James.

Upon his discharge from the army, Edwards went into private practice in Detroit with attorney Theodore Bohn. Bohn played a major role in Edwards' unsuccessful 1949 mayoral campaign. In 1950 the firm became Rothe, Marston, Edwards, and Bohn, but Edwards left it in 1951 when he became probate judge in Wayne County Juvenile Court. In 1954 he became a judge in Wayne County Circuit Court, and from 1956 to 1962 served as a justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. In 1962 he returned to Detroit to serve as police commissioner and a year later was appointed to the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals from which he retired as an active judge.

Judge Edwards co-authored *The Law of Criminal Correction* with Sol Rubin, Henry Weihofin and Simon Rosenzweig. He also wrote a biography of his father, *Pioneer at Law*. 
Important subjects covered in the collection are:

- American Judiciary
- Child Welfare League of America
- Criminal Justice System
- Detroit and Michigan Politics
- Detroit Common Council
- Detroit Mayoral Campaign, 1949
- Detroit Police Department
- Housing
- Juvenile Delinquency
- League for Industrial Democracy
- Race Relations in Detroit
- Social Welfare Programs
- United Auto Workers
- Yale and Towne Strike, 1937
- Youth Organizations

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- George Addes
- Justice Eugene Black
- Justice Leland Carr
- Jerome Cavanagh
- Justice John Dethmers
- John Dingell
- Felix Frankfurter
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- Edward Jeffries
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George C. Edwards, Jr. Papers, Part IV
9 Linear Feet, 5 Oversize/Flat Boxes
1939-2001 (bulk 1960-1996)

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
Finding aid written by Anne Johns on April 8, 2010.

Accession Number: 10

Creator: George C. Edwards, Jr.

Acquisition: Part IV, George C. Edwards, Jr., was first deposited in 1991, with a subsequent deposit in 1998.

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Papers are open for research.

Use: Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library Rules for Use of Archival Materials.

Notes: Citation style: “George C. Edwards, Jr. Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University”

Other Access Aids: A listing of speeches in Part IV, by decade and title, is included at the end.

Related Material: Reuther Library Collections: UAW President’s Office: Walter P. Reuther Records; George C. Edwards, Sr. Papers; Stanley J. Winkelman Papers; IWW Records; Jerome Cavanaugh Papers; George Crockett Papers; John Herling Papers; Claude Williams Papers; NAACP Detroit Branch Records; American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan/Metropolitan Detroit Branch Collection; UAW Research Department Records; Harold Norris Papers; Mel Ravitz Papers; Damon J. Keith Papers; Mary Fox Herling Papers.

Library of Congress Collections: Nomination of George Clifton Edwards, Jr. Hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-eighth Congress, first session, on nomination of George Clifton Edwards, Jr., of Michigan, to be United States circuit judge, sixth circuit.

Photographs were transferred to the Reuther’s AudioVisual Department.
History
See Parts 1-3.

Scope and Content:
Material in part IV covers a wide range of years, from George Edwards, Jr.’s service in the military in the mid 1940’s until his death, in 1995, with some post 1995 items. Included are manuscript material and reviews of Pioneer at law, written by Edwards and published in 1974, and documents and correspondence relating to publications about him after his death. Correspondence ranges from early personal letters, from his time in the military, with friends, service personnel, his wife, and family members to correspondence throughout his career, especially pertaining to his service as Police Commissioner of Detroit, 1962 to 1963, and his nomination to the Sixth Judicial Circuit of the United States in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy. Edwards’ papers also contain correspondence and writings, speeches, and presentations before professional organizations, particularly the Anglo-American Justice Team, the National News Council, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and the South African Project. Issues of special interest to him included organized crime, free press and free trial, and in particular, the trial of Sam Sheppard. When Edwards died from complications of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease at the age of 80, his family received many letters of condolence and memorial tributes from friends and prominent political figures from all over the country. These comprise the post 1995 material. Oversize materials include sketches, scrapbooks, certificates, a map, and military apparel.

Important Subjects:
Capital Punishment
Community Relations and Police
Crime
Fair Trial, Free Press
Juvenile Delinquency
Law Enforcement
Malpractice
Organized Crime
Pre-Arraignment Procedure
Pre-sentencing
Probation
Race Relations
Sheppard, Sam

Important Names:
Brennan, Justice William J.
Cavanaugh, Mayor Jerome
Dingell, John D.
Edwards, George Clifton
Jeffrey, Mildred
Johnson, President Lyndon B.
King, Martin Luther (photocopy)
Kennedy, Robert F.
Murrah, Alfred P.
Reuther, Victor G.
Reuther, Walter
Romney, Governor George

Series XII:   Personal, 1930s-2001
Correspondence: to and from his wife, Peg, beginning during his military service and throughout
the rest of his life; to military personnel and business associates regarding his ideas for an
improved infantry tank; with his father, George Clifton Edwards; and with and about his
children. Military and educational records, letters of condolence upon his death in 1995, various
obituaries and ensuing memorials. His sketches of proposed infantry tank designs that he sent to
Walter Reuther and military personnel, and various military apparel and artifacts, are included in
Series XVII.

Series XIII:   Career, 1940s-1990s
General business correspondence that follows his career chronologically, documentation of his
election to and service on the Detroit Common Council, and official ceremonies as Judge of the
Michigan Supreme Court. Many notes and statements, particularly related to organized crime,
records of incidents, and questionnaires surveying public opinion of the Detroit Police
Department. Includes correspondence with Robert F. Kennedy in regard to his nomination to the
Sixth Judicial Circuit and also in regard to his fear of demise by organized crime figures. Many
letters of congratulation and thank you’s regarding nomination to the Sixth Judicial Circuit of the
United States and subsequent Senate hearings, his Ten Year celebration, trip to the Philippines in
1968, and retirement. Scrapbooks of clippings documenting his service as Detroit Police
Commissioner are included in Series XVII.

Series XIV:   Professional Activities, 1962-1985
Correspondence, writings, position statements, memorandums, and agendas of meetings or
conferences in regard to professional organizations. These organizations include Anglo-
American Justice Team, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and the Southern Africa
Project. Speeches and presentations given by George Edwards, Jr. specific to these organizations
are included.

Series XV:   Writings, 1950s-2000
Articles, eulogies, commencement speeches, a photocopy of the manuscript for Pioneer at law,
and many other speeches and presentations written by George Edwards, Jr. and given before a
variety of organizations other than those in Series XIV. Many titles are included in the Index of
Speeches. Correspondence and notes related to these speeches and presentations are included.
Only annotated reference materials have been kept with the speeches and presentations. Notes,
favorite quotes, and jokes are also included.

Series XVI:   Clippings, 1930s-2001
Clippings about George Edwards, Jr. Photocopies of some photographs.
Series XVII: Oversize, 1940s-1990
A variety of materials and formats such as scrapbooks filled with clippings from Edwards’ service as Detroit Police Commissioner, military attire, date books, children’s notes to Peg, wartime sketches by Edwards of his proposed infantry tank designs, certificates of honor, and campaign materials.

Series XVIII: Publications, 1950s-1990s
Pamphlets, articles, reports, newsletters, commentaries, small government and professional publications, and reviews either about George Edwards, Jr. or by him. Histories of Hickman County, Tennessee.
Arrangement:
Arranged in seven series, beginning where Part III left off: Series XII (Box 107), Series XIII (Box 107-108), Series XIV (Box 109-111), Series XV (Box 111-114), Series XVI (Box 114), Series XVII (Oversize Boxes 115-119), and Series XVIII (Box 120). Folders are arranged alphabetically by subject, and then chronologically, unless otherwise noted.

Series XV is further divided by subject if the folder contains all of one subject.
Series XVI and Series XVIII are arranged by decade.
Series XVII is itemized.

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Lessons from a Summer of Protest
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Police and the Community: A Judicial View
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What are the Major Problems of Law Enforcement in Detroit?
Why Go to College?

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American Issues Forum
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Balance Sheet of American Society
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No Man is Born a Criminal
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That Clumsy Word “Nonobviousness”
The Story of the Bill of Rights
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Justice William O. Douglas – Pioneer in Life and Law
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The President, the Media, and the First Amendment
The Pursuit of Happiness
The Role of the Federal Courts in Labor Relations
Should We Amend the Constitution of the United States?
Should We Scrap the Constitution?

Undated:
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Citizens of Tomorrow
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Free Press and fair Trial
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