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Donor: Benjamin Franklin Hilbun, Jr., Starkville, Mississippi, 1967.

Scope and Contents

Papers of Benjamin Franklin Hilbun, Jr., lawyer and state legislator, of Mississippi. Includes correspondence, legislative material, clippings, and other papers, from Hilbun's legislative career.

Series 1 contains Mr. Hilbun's correspondence and legislative material through the years 1962-1968. Series 2 contains 1966 correspondence, 1966 and undated legislative material, and miscellaneous items. Series 3 is made up of published material such as clippings, brochures, magazines, and booklets.

Biographical Information

Ben F. Hilbun, Jr. was born August 20, 1934, in Starkville. He attended the public schools of Starkville and graduated from Starkville High School in 1952. In 1955 he graduated with honors from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Affairs and a Master of Science Degree in Government. He was also cited as a distinguished military graduate at MSU. In 1960 he received his law degree from Ole Miss.

Ben's father was Dr. Ben F. Hilbun, who was President of Mississippi State from 1953 to 1960. Dr. Hilbun served on the faculty at MSU from 1925 till his retirement as President in 1960.

After graduating from State, but before entering Ole Miss Law School, Ben served 2 1/2 years in the United States Air Force. His service began in July, 1955, and ended honorably in November, 1957.

In 1959, while still a student in law school at Ole Miss, Hilbun was elected to his first term in the Mississippi State Senate for the 35th district (Noxubee-Oktibbeha Counties). He began service in January of 1960 as the youngest State Senator in Mississippi history. State law requires that a State Senator be at least 25 years of age before his election; Ben was 25 years and two months when he was elected in November, 1959. In 1963 Hilbun was elected to another four year term. He declined to run for another term in 1967.

In addition to being the youngest State Senator in history, Ben also was the youngest member ever of the State Building Commission. Additionally, he served as Chairman of the Senate Universities and Colleges Committee and Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Hilbun has been actively engaged in the practice of law in Starkville since 1960. He is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association and is past President of the Oktibbeha County Bar Association. Additionally, he has the honor of being one of only eight Mississippians who are Sustaining Members of the Association of Trial Lawyers in America. Sustaining Membership is by invitation only.

In addition to his law practice, he also maintains cattle and tree farm operations in Oktibbeha County.

Hilbun is married to the former Rosanne Burleson of Fulton. Rosanne, a graduate of Mississippi State, served Mississippi as Miss Hospitality in 1964. They have one son, Benjamin, III.

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