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Bridges, Richard Wilson, 1943-2015 (MSS 646)

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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 646 BRIDGES, Richard Wilson, 1943-2015

2 boxes. 17 folders. 659 items. 1956-1990. Originals and photocopies.

SC2016.99.266

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Richard Wilson “Dick” Bridges was born on 15 June 1943, the son of Robert Alton Bridges and Rob Shelton Bridges. They lived in Gracey, Christian County, Kentucky. Bridges majored in History, Religion and English at Baylor University in Waco, Texas and graduated in 1965. He also received a Masters of Divinity degree from South Baptist Theological Seminary. He married Sandra Hill and had two children, Robert Alton Bridges, II and Jewell Wilson Bridges. Bridges served as a pastor for three years prior to coming to Bowling Green’s First Baptist Church as Minister of Education in 1970. He served in that role, until he became Associate Pastor in 1978. He remained in that role until 1981, when he became interim pastor and finally senior pastor in 1982; he remained in that position until 1996. He was pastor when a 14 October 1991 fire destroyed the church’s 1913 sanctuary. Bridges helped oversee the building of a new sanctuary on the same site. He later served as pastor of the Franklin Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Kentucky and retired from the ministry on 31 July 2007. Bridges passed away in Bowling Green on 5 August 2015 at the age of 72.

COLLECTION

All of the material in this collection, except for the last folder (Box 2, Folder 7), relates to Richard W. Bridges’ service as the Chairman of the *Western Recorder* Board of Directors. The *Western Recorder* (WR) is the weekly newspaper for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and during this period had a circulation of around 45,000. During Bridges’ tenure as Chairman, The WR’s editor Jack Sanford (editor from 1985 to 1989) died from a heart attack on 24 May 1989. The Board of Directors voted to empower the Administrative Committee to serve as the publication’s management and editorial supervisors until a new editor was hired. The new editor assumed duties at the WR in 1990.

Box 1, Folder 2 contains several short histories of the *Western Recorder* as well as lists of previous editors, employees, and circulation information. Folder 3 contains an incomplete compilation of WR Board of Directors’ meeting minutes from 1983 to 1990. Folder 4 contains incomplete financial records from roughly the same period. Box 1, Folder 5 through Box 2, Folder 4 contains Bridges’ correspondence related to his tenure as Chairman and subsequently

his editorial responsibilities from 1989 to 1990. The correspondence includes both internal and external correspondents. It is particularly rich in material related to social and moral issues of the era: abortion, gun control, child care, and evolution and more specifically address the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention by a conservative faction in the 1980s. Folders 5 and 6 contain information related to the search process for a new WR editor that started in July 1989 and ended in May 1990 with the naming of E. Marvin Knox, Jr. as the new editor. Box 2, Folder 7 includes information about a controversial letter sent from Aurora, Colorado pastor Jerry A. Johnson to Dr. Roy L. Honeycutt, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, regarding faculty member Paul Simmons. A copy of the letter and Honeycutt's reply are included.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1		1956-1990	319 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Historical information	1956-1989	18 items
Folder 3	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Minutes of Board of Directors' meetings	1983-1990	18 items
Folder 4	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Financial information	1982-1990	28 items
Folder 5	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	1982-1988	18 items
Folder 6	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	January 1989- May 1989	28 items
Folder 7	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	June 1989	53 items
Folder 8	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	July 1989- August 1989	72 items
Folder 9	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	September 1989- October 1989	83 items
BOX 2		1988-1995; n.d.	340 items
Folder 1	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	November 1989- December 1989	58 items
Folder 2	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	January 1990- February 1990	71 items

Folder 3	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	March 1990	56 items
Folder 4	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Correspondence	April 1990-1995; n.d.	49 items
Folder 5	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Editor search committee	June 1989-May 1990	66 items
Folder 6	<i>Western Recorder</i> – Editor search candidate resumés	January 1990	32 items
Folder 7	Southern Baptist Seminary – Louisville	1990	3 items
Folder 8	Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs	December 1988; February 1990; n.d.	5 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS BRIDGES, Richard Wilson, 1943-2015 1956-1995
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Material, chiefly correspondence, of Bowling Green, Kentucky pastor Richard W. Bridges, who served as Board of Directors' Chairman for the *Western Recorder*, the statewide newspaper of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. During Bridges' Chairmanship, the editor, Jack Sanford, died. Bridges and the Board's executive committee assumed the paper's management and editorial responsibilities. This collection provides insights into the conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s.

2 boxes. 17 folders. 659 items. Originals, photo, and photocopies.

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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Abortion – Comments about, 1989 B1,F7-9; B2,F1,3
Allen, Jimmy Raymond, b. 1927 B1,F7
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs – Comments about B2,F2-4,8
Brymer, Jack E., Sr. B2,F2,5
Child care – Comments about B1,F9
Christian Life Commission – Southern Baptist Convention B1,F6,9; B2,F3
Church controversies – Southern Baptist Convention – 20th century
Cox, James H., Jr., b. 1939 B1,F7-9; B2,F1-5

Dunn, James M. B2,F2-3,5
 Evolution – Comments about, 1989 B1,F7
 Falwell, Jerry Larmon, Sr., 1933-2007 B1,F8
 Fundamentalism – United States – 20th century
 Gun control – Comments about, 1989 B1,F9
 Honeycutt, Roy Lee, Jr., 1926-2004 B2,F7
 Johnson, Jerry A. B2,F7
 Journalism
 Journalists
 Knox, E. Marvin, Jr., b. 1956 B2,F5
 Land, Richard D. B1,F6,9; B2,F2
 Marshall, William B1,F5-7; B2,F1-2,4,
 Martin, Jerry Wayne, b. 1935 B1,F8
 Newspapers
 Parks, R. Keith B1,F6
 Religion – Related to
 Sanford, Jack D., 1925-1989 B1,F5-6
 Sanford, Jack D., 1925-1989 – Death of, 1989 B1,F6
 Sanford, Jack D., 1925-1989 – Relating to B1,F8-9; B2,F5
 Simmons, Paul – Comments about B2,F2-3,7
 Southern Baptist Convention – Conservative takeover – Comments about
 Southern Baptist Seminary – Louisville – Relating to B2,2-3,7
 Warder, William, 1786-1836 – Relating to B1,F8
Western Recorder – Louisville – Relating to
 Wood, James P. B1,F6
 Young, J. Terry B2,F1

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