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Sanders, William Willard "Whitey," 1930-2021 (MSS 722)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 722 SANDERS, William Willard “Whitey,” 1930-2021

13 boxes. 50 folders. 6,306 items. 1959-2017. Photocopies.

2011.211.220

Related collections: [MSS 659](#), [MSS 723](#)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Willard Sanders (known as “Bill” or “Whitey”), the son of Romie Covington Sanders and Katherine (Tomerlin) Sanders, was born in Springfield, Tennessee on 14 October 1930. He graduated from Pompano Beach High School in Florida, then attended the University of Miami before accepting a football scholarship at Western Kentucky State College (now WKU). During 1953, Sanders set an NCAA record for completing 66 of his 98 passes as quarterback.

An English major at WKU, Sanders enrolled in a freshman art class with professor Ivan Wilson, who he credited with putting him on his future career path; while still a student, Sanders contributed cartoons to WKU’s student newspaper, *The College Heights Herald*. Another influence was Gene Graham, a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorialist and cartoonist for the *Nashville Tennessean*. On 12 February 1955, Sanders married Gene Graham’s niece Joyce Wallace, also a WKU student.

After graduating from WKU in 1955, Sanders was drafted to play professional football, but military service sent him to Korea with the U.S. Army. Put in command of a unit of the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, he contributed cartoons while overseeing printing and distribution. While in Korea, his reading of *Herblock’s Here and Now* by the legendary cartoonist Herbert Block sparked Sanders’ interest in political cartooning.

After his Army service, Sanders became a reporter with the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* in Tokyo, then worked as a freelance cartoonist with the *Japan Times*. In 1959, he accepted a position as cartoonist for the *Greensboro Daily News* in Greensboro, North Carolina. In June 1963 he became editorial cartoonist for *The Kansas City Star*, and in September 1967 moved to *The Milwaukee Journal*. Sanders’ cartoons reflected *Journal* editorial policy until 1987; thereafter, his work represented his own views rather than the paper’s.

Given considerable freedom to express his strong liberal opinions, Sanders frequently drew ire from newspaper readers, local officials and conservative groups. A proponent of civil rights, civil liberties, gun control, women’s rights, contraception and sex education, he was a harsh critic of the Vietnam War and the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. His treatment of local issues such as public accommodation laws and police misconduct also created conflict with politicians, judges and the public. In February 1970,

Sanders received a month-long suspension from *The Milwaukee Journal* for “moonlighting” when some of his cartoons appeared in a local underground newspaper, a penalty that sparked debate about political pressure on the *Journal*. However, Sanders was also known for his independence; his views on free speech, for example, led him to criticize 1960s student activists who objected to giving their opponents a forum on university campuses.

Over his career, Sanders’ cartoons were syndicated nationally to more than 100 newspapers, and his work appeared in other nationally known publications such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *The New York Times*; a 1962 cartoon about civil rights was reprinted in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*. A jazz musician, popular speaker, and participant in professional organizations, Sanders served as president of the American Association of Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC) and received numerous awards and honors including the Kansas City Civil Liberties Achievement Award (1963) and the Wisconsin Civil Liberties Award (1979). He was inducted into the Wisconsin Media Hall of Fame, the Milwaukee Press Club Hall of Fame, and the WKU Hall of Distinguished Alumni. Collections of his work can be found in *Run for the Oval Room: They Can’t Corner Us There* (Alpha Press, 1974); *The Sanders Book: Selected Political Cartoons by Sanders* (Milwaukee Journal, 1978); and *Adventures in Whopperland: a collection of political cartoons, written opinions and essays* (Lulu, 2006).

Sanders retired from *The Milwaukee Journal* in 1991. He and his wife Joyce, the parents of four daughters, moved to Fort Myers, Florida, where Sanders continued to draw cartoons for his blog, *Sanders Cartoon-Commentary*. In 2018, he published a memoir, *Against the Grain: Bombthrowing in the Fine American Tradition of Political Cartooning* (NewSouth Books). Sanders died on 27 February 2021.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of photocopies of political cartoons drawn by Bill “Whitey” Sanders. Most of the cartoons dating from 1959-1991 were clipped from newspapers by Sanders, and thereafter the cartoons have been photocopied from originals. The publication date often appears on the clipping, but some dates have been inscribed by hand; undated cartoons are at the back of each folder. The number of cartoons clipped for a particular year varies, and accordingly this collection should not be considered a comprehensive record of all Sanders cartoons. Some cartoons that appeared in other publications or formats, and miscellaneous unpublished cartoons and drawings, including those made after Sanders’ retirement in 1991, are also included.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1959-1960	536 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Greensboro Daily News</i>	1959	250 items

Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Greensboro Daily News</i>	1960	285 items
BOX 2	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1961-1962	582 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Greensboro Daily News</i>	1961	300 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Greensboro Daily News</i>	1962	282 items
BOX 3	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1963-1964	547 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Greensboro Daily News, Kansas City Star</i>	1963	273 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Kansas City Star</i>	1964	274 items
BOX 4	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1965-1966	555 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Kansas City Star</i>	1965	281 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Kansas City Star</i>	1966	274 items
BOX 5	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1967-1968	516 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Kansas City Star, Milwaukee Journal</i>	1967	206 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1968	310 items
BOX 6	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1969-1970	511 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1969	284 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1970	227 items
BOX 7	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1971-1973	583 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1971	109 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1972	242 items

Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1973	232 items
BOX 8	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1974-1976	515 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1974	237 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1975	171 items
Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1976	107 items
BOX 9	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1977-1980	565 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1977	199 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1978	68 items
Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1979	131 items
Folder 4	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1980	167 items
BOX 10	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1981-1983	477 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1981	157 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1982	136 items
Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1983	184 items
BOX 11	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1984-1989	493 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1984	120 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1985	53 items
Folder 3	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1986	75 items
Folder 4	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1987	147 items
Folder 5	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1988	40 items
Folder 6	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1989	58 items

BOX 12	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	1990-2017	281 items
Folder 1	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1990	110 items
Folder 2	Cartoons – <i>Milwaukee Journal</i>	1991	110 items
Folder 3	Cartoons	2003	3 items
Folder 4	Cartoons	2004	10 items
Folder 5	Cartoons	2005	7 items
Folder 6	Cartoons	2006	11 items
Folder 7	Cartoons	2007	6 items
Folder 8	Cartoons	2008	6 items
Folder 9	Cartoons	2009	3 items
Folder 10	Cartoons	2010	2 items
Folder 11	Cartoons	2011	1 item
Folder 12	Cartoons	2012	2 items
Folder 13	Cartoons	2015	1 item
Folder 14	Cartoons	2016	6 items
Folder 15	Cartoons	2017	3 items
BOX 13	Bill “Whitey” Sanders	various, n.d.	145 items
Folder 1	Cartoons	various & no dates	59 items
Folder 2	Cartoons	various & no dates	50 items
Folder 3	Cartoons	various & no dates	36 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS SANDERS, William Willard "Whitey," 1959-2017
722 1930-2021

Photocopies of cartoons drawn by Bill "Whitey" Sanders during his career and after retirement as an editorial cartoonist with the *Greensboro Daily News*, *Kansas City Star*, and *Milwaukee Journal*.
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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Cartoons and cartoonists
Political cartoons – United States

SEE or SEE ALSO

Sanders, Bill, 1930-2021
See:
Sanders, William Willard

Sanders, "Whitey," 1930-2021
See:
Sanders, William Willard

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