

Abraham D. Beame Collection

Abraham D. Beame enjoyed a long and distinguished career in public service. Rising through the ranks in the City Hall Budget Office under Mayors O'Dwyer and Impellitteri, Beame served two terms as comptroller and one term as mayor (1974-77). During Beame's mayoralty the fiscal crisis forced the city to the edge of bankruptcy as banks lost confidence in the city's ability to repay the massive debts it had accumulated since the early 1960s. Even as he sought emergency funding from the state and federal governments, Beame was forced to make drastic cuts in the city workforce, freeze wages, increase the transit fare and eliminate free tuition at the City University of New York. Beame also presided over the city's Bicentennial celebrations, helped bring the 1976 Democratic National Convention to New York, and secured a new home for the U.S. Open Tennis Championship at Flushing Meadows park. Beame's political career came to an end in 1977 when he lost the Democratic mayoral primary, finishing third behind Mario Cuomo and Edward Koch.



The Beame Collection spans the years 1938-2001 and consists of 3,417 folders across twenty seven document series, over 1,200 photographs, more than 400 artifacts, 6 videos, and the Beame Oral History Project. All series and folder titles are fully searchable using the Advanced Search button on the [Beame Collection page](#). The original documents are housed at the Municipal Archives of the New York City Department of Records and Information Services, located at 31 Chambers St., New York, NY.

The archives holds the full content of the following 5 document series, representing about 25% of the collection, on microfilm: Departmental Correspondence; Federal, State and Local; Elected Officials' Correspondence, Executive Secretary (Sally Leonard) Subject Files; First Deputy Mayor (James Cavanaugh) Subject Files; and First Deputy Mayor (James Cavanaugh) Correspondence. The remaining record document series were not microfilmed. Please contact the NYC Municipal Archives for information on viewing these series.

The archives also holds the photograph series, artifact series and the Beame Oral History Project. The photograph series includes photos from Beame's childhood through his 94th birthday celebration. The artifacts cover mostly his term as mayor. The Oral History Project has gathered unique recollections of more than 40 associates and contemporaries of the mayor.