

## Robert F. Wagner Collection

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Wagner family was the First-Family-of-New York. Mayor Wagner's father, Robert F. Wagner, Sr., served as U.S. Senator, authoring much of President Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. Mayor Wagner's son, Robert F. Wagner, Jr., served as City Councilman at Large, Deputy Mayor and President of the city's Board of Education.



Mayor Wagner epitomized a revolution in both the style and the substance of municipal governance and politics. First elected in 1937, Wagner served two terms in the State Assembly in Albany. Returning to New York after World War II, Wagner served in a series of appointed positions in the city. In 1949, he secured the Democratic nomination for Borough President of Manhattan and went on to win the mayoralty in 1953. In 1961, Wagner turned against Tammany Hall and broke its singular power, sweeping to an unprecedented City-wide victory despite strong opposition from the Democratic Party organization.

One of only four New York mayors to serve three terms, Wagner was recognized as both a seasoned public servant and as an innovator of civic reform. From 1954 to 1965, he oversaw the construction of housing, parks, roadways, and schools. He championed the growth and empowerment of municipal labor unions, and sponsored the creation of The City University of New York. He mobilized resources for civil rights and the war against poverty. He used city government to combat housing bias and job discrimination. Upon retirement from the mayoralty, Wagner served as Ambassador to Spain and remained active in civic, public and political affairs until his death in 1991.

The Robert F. Wagner Collection spans the years 1790 to the present (bulk 1954-1965) and consists of more than 19,000 webdatabase index records across 27 document series. Document types include correspondence, meeting minutes, speeches, press releases, memoranda, reports, budgets, maps, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and other printed materials. The Archives holds content (in print or on microfilm) across 24 of these 27 document Series. Working jointly with the NYC Municipal Archives, the La Guardia and Wagner Archives has processed and microfilmed more than 10,000 folders of documents from the Wagner Mayoral Papers, which includes the following document Series: Departmental Correspondence, General Correspondence, Subject Files, as well as more than 200 volumes of Mayoral Scrapbooks. Material from these Series, representing a significant portion of the collection, is available on microfilm at the La Guardia and Wagner Archives. The original documents of this portion of the collection are housed at the NYC Municipal Archive of the Department of Records and Information Services, located at 31 Chambers Street, NY, NY. The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives holds the original documents of personal papers donated by Wagner family and staff, along with the papers of Bobby Wagner, the main series of which include Board of Education, LH Research, and Subject Files.

The bulk of the Archives papers on Senator Wagner consist of microfilm of material held at Georgetown University. The main Senator Wagner series from Georgetown are Labor

Files, Keyserling Files and General Files. There is also a significant RFW Sr. document Series consisting of Speeches, Articles and Press Releases, which originals are located at the La Guardia and Wagner Archives.

The photograph series comprises more than 7,400 photographs, official and personal, principally of Mayor Robert F. Wagner, but also his family, as well as photos donated by former officials of the Wagner Administration, including Julius C.C. Edelstein. The Archives also holds in the collection, more than 1,400 artifacts; nearly 50 videos (which include a new Video Oral History Collection); and over 550 interviews in the Wagner Oral History Project. All series and folder titles are fully searchable using the Advanced Search button on the Wagner Collection page.