

JACKSON “JACK” WILLIAMS TARVER COLLECTION, 1962-2000
PP0182

Descriptive Summary

Creator Tarver, Jackson Williams, 1917-1999

Title Jackson “Jack” Williams Tarver Collection, 1962-2000

Accession Number PP0182

Physical Description 0.834 Linear Feet. 1 archival box of papers and photographs, 1 archival box containing two framed photographs.

Inclusive Dates 1962-2000 (Bulk 2000)

Language Note English.

Administrative Information

Repository

Mercer University Library
Archives and Digital Initiatives
1501 Mercer University Dr.
Macon, Georgia 31207
478-301-2968
archives@mercer.edu

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Jackson “Jack” Williams Tarver Collection, 1962-2000.
Archives and Digital Initiatives, Mercer University Library, Macon, GA.

Acquisition

Gift of the Tarver family (2000).

Processing note

Inventory prepared by Gabrielle Hale (2021).

Restrictions on access

Unrestricted access. All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Restrictions on use

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Collection Description

Biographical Note

Jackson “Jack” Williams Tarver was born March 2, 1917, in Savannah, Georgia, the only son of banker and hotelier Otis M. Tarver and deLuth Williams Tarver. In 1938, he graduated from Mercer University in Macon with a degree in journalism and began his professional career at *The Vidalia Advance*. He started *The Toombs County Democrat* in Lyons in 1939.

One of Tarver’s columns on the film *Gone With the Wind*, in which he described Rhett Butler as a cross between Jesse James and Little Boy Blue and Scarlett O’Hara as “changeable as a baby’s underwear” earned him national recognition. The column was widely reprinted in papers across the state and led to a job at *The Macon News*. His humor columns attracted the attention of Ralph McGill, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, who persuaded Tarver to leave his job as editor of *The Macon News* and join the Atlanta paper in 1943. In his first column, he wrote these words: “I am, by way of background, a Georgian by birth, a Methodist by sprinkling, and a Roosevelt man out of obstinacy.”

Tarver was named assistant to the president of Atlanta Newspapers, Inc., in 1950 when the Journal and Constitution came under the same ownership. He was made the general manager of the corporation in 1952. During his tenure with Atlanta Newspapers, he held a variety of leadership positions, including vice president from 1956-57, president from 1957-58 and publisher from 1958 to 1976. He served as vice-chairman of Atlanta Newspapers’ parent company, Cox Enterprises, Inc., from 1976 to 1983. He also served as chairman of the Associated Press from 1977 to 1983.

In addition to his humor columns, Tarver was most known in journalism circles for standing between McGill and hateful opponents of McGill’s controversial front-page columns calling for racial moderation. Tarver has been credited with putting the Atlanta Newspapers in the financial position to be able to withstand the firestorm surrounding McGill’s columns, which won a Pulitzer Prize.

Tarver was a member of the American Society of Newspaper Publishers, serving as chairman of the Bureau of Advertising from 1962-64 and president of the society from 1976-77. He was also a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists. Outside of journalism, Tarver served as chairman and director of Theaters Service Company and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He was also a director of Southern Bell, American Motors, and Maccabees Mutual Insurance Co. He was a member of the state Board of Education from 1942-43 and served as a Trustee of Mercer University. In 1979, he was awarded the humanitarian of the year award by the Institute for Human Relations.

Jack Tarver died at his home in Buckhead on March 22, 1999.

(2019). *About Jack Tarver*. Mercer University Libraries. <https://libraries.mercer.edu/about-us/about-tarver/about-jack-tarver>

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains materials related to the dedication of the Jack Tarver Library on Mercer University's Macon campus, newspaper clippings either about or by Jack Tarver, photographs, a brief biography of Jack Tarver, and a small amount of correspondence sent to or by the Tarver family. The collection is located in compact shelving on 06/C/06.

Subjects

Journalism – Georgia

Mercer University

Mercer University – Alumni and alumnae – Biography

Mercer University – History

Related Material

There are additional materials about the Tarver family in the Jack Tarver Room in Mercer University's Tarver Library. These items include scrapbooks of family, news clippings, and correspondence. Georgia State University in Atlanta also holds the Jack Tarver Research Collection, which includes items related to Tarver's journalism career.

Series Description

Series 1: Papers

Series 2: Framed Photographs

Container List

SERIES 1: PAPERS

Folder 1/1: "Charter and By-Laws of the Associated Press" (1976)

Folder 1/2: Jack Tarver – Biography

Folder 1/3: Jack Tarver – Correspondence, 1962-1994

Folder 1/4: "Luncheon Honoring Jack Tarver" Program (1977)

Folder 1/5: Materials Found in the Tarver Books

Folder 1/6: Newspaper Clippings about and by Jack Tarver

Folder 1/7: Photographs

Folder 1/8: "Puppies Grow Up to be Dogs" Handbook (1970)

Folder 1/9: Tarver Library – Dedication Ceremony (2000)

Folder 1/10: Tarver Library – General Information

Folder 1/11: Tarver Room (Tarver Library) – Construction Notes (2000)

Folder 1/12: Tarver Room (Tarver Library) – Inventory of Items (Circa 2000)

SERIES 2: FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS

Box 2: Photograph of Jack Tarver and Three Men (Undated); Portraits of Jack Tarver and Margaret Tarver (Undated)