

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

Message from the City Archivist

In the space of three weeks Seattle lost two former City Council members. Richard McIver passed away on March 9 and Cheryl Chow on March 29. McIver was appointed to Council to complete a term and was subsequently elected to three full terms, sitting on Council from 1997 through 2009. Chow was elected twice, serving eight years (1990-1997) before choosing not to run for a third term.

Chow's Council records have been processed and are available for research at the Seattle Municipal Archives. McIver's records are currently being processed and that work should be completed by the end of 2013.

I once played basketball against Chow at a Legislative Department retreat. She had sharp elbows and was not above committing a hard foul to suggest her physical stature was not a detriment on the court...or in life. McIver, who had a dry, but sharp sense of humor, seemed to revel in asking pointed questions that made one uncomfortable—an annoying attribute, but one that served him well.

Chow led a life committed to the welfare of children; McIver stood for racial and economic equity.

My point here is not to write obituaries. The deaths of these two public servants recalls feelings I experienced at the passing of other City Council members who served during the 28 years I've been City Archivist and whose records we hold: George Benson, Jeanette Williams, Sam Smith, Michael Hildt, and Charlie Chong. These feelings are best summed up by a colleague, Linda Long, who wrote, following the death of a donor and friend, "The experience taught me that the archivist is the keeper of someone's life."

The records in the Seattle Municipal Archives reflect just one part of the lives of these elected officials. But the fact that all of them were committed to public service, the welfare of the City, and to the public good, suggests that we are keepers of a very important aspect of how they would define their lives.

As archivists, our commitment is to the documentation of the work and interests of these individuals, including the highs and lows; and to do it as fairly as possible. In this respect, it is a huge responsibility; when couched in Linda Long's language, it becomes a sacred or spiritual obligation.

Most of us don't readily use that sort of language in our day to day work (perhaps especially those of us in government service). These words don't need to be used in a religious sense to convey their power and their applicability in the archival setting.

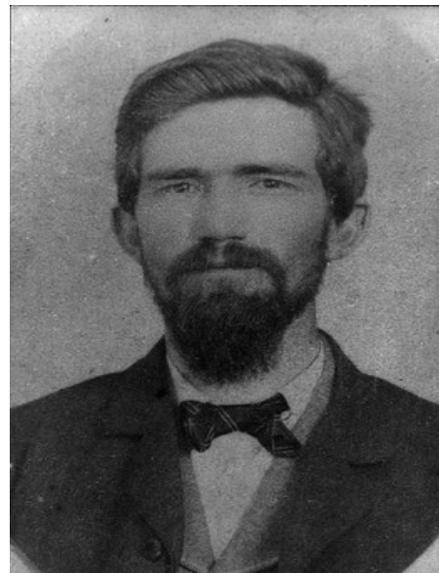
Perhaps more comfortable language is that we find ourselves in a trust relationship. For our user community, our job is to provide the public with a transparent view into the work of these political figures. We must be trustworthy in doing this. For those whose records we keep, we are entrusted with accurately (and, again, fairly) keeping alive through the record the interests and work of these public servants—and keeping it alive and accessible to current and future generations.

My guess is that Cheryl Chow and Richard McIver (and the others), who saw their work as a public trust, would agree with these sentiments. May their memories be a blessing.

--Scott Cline, City Archivist

City Officials: Law Department

The City Officials section of the SMA website now includes an enhanced Law Department page, including a detailed history of the department, photos of most past City Attorneys/Corporation Counsel, and five biographical sketches. Changes to the city charter have meant that the office has changed a great deal over the years, with varying powers, responsibilities, and challenges. Learn more on the new page at <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Facts/law.htm>. The departmental history and biographies were provided by the Law Department.



Ike M. Hall. Seattle
City Recorder, 1869.
Seattle City Attorney,
1879-1881

Item 168884, Seattle
Municipal Archives

Early City Council Minutes Available

Minutes from 1881 to 1900 for the City's Common Council and Bicameral legislative bodies are scanned and available [online](http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/minu2.htm). <http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/minu2.htm> Not yet indexed by subject, PDF scans are available of every meeting. This database provides access to scanned images of the proceedings of the Seattle Board of Aldermen, House of Delegates, and the Common Council/City Council. The scanned documents are not full-text searchable.

The best way to locate specific meetings is with the assistance of the legislative databases. Legislation referenced in the proceedings can be found in the [Council Bills and Ordinances Index](#) and in the [Resolutions Index](#). The Archives hopes to add subject indexing within the next year. An example of an entry in the minutes from 125 years ago, with a transcript following, is below:

From City Attorney and Judiciary Committee: On the matter of the application of Julia A. Fenton for damages, ^{to injuries} sustained by alleged defective sidewalk as follows: We have carefully examined the matter and find that the City was guilty of no negligence in the matter, and that there is no legal liability on its part to make compensation. The petitioner claims to be a poor woman and to have suffered injury by which she was deprived of her means of support for some time, and for this reason and for the purpose of avoiding the expense and trouble of litigation, we would recommend that she be allowed the sum of \$250. which would pay for her loss of time and expense of medical attendance. Report adopted and approved.

Excerpt from a Meeting of the Common Council, April 20, 1888:

From City Attorney and Judiciary Committee: In the matter of the application of Julia A Fenton for damages sustained for injuries by alleged defective sidewalk as follows: "We have carefully examined the matter and find that the City was guilty of no negligence in the matter and that there is no legal liability on its part to make compensation. The petitioner claims to be a poor woman and to have suffered injury by which she was deprived of her means of support for some time, and for this reason and for the purpose of avoiding the expense and trouble of litigation, we would recommend that she be allowed the sum of \$250, which would pay for the loss of time and expense of medical attendance." Report adopted and approved.

The majority of minutes are hand-written, although a few are typed. The Archives is grateful for the support of Carol Shenk in the Clerk's Office on this project. This is an exciting new resource for researchers.

Photos

New in the photograph database are 123 images of Discovery Park. The photographs capture the park's environment as a natural habitat for birds, reptiles, insects, marine life, and plants and trees. Also captured are park events and staff, park grounds, beach ecology and many other subjects. Many more scanned slides will be added to this online collection this year. View bald eagles in Discovery Park in the [Photograph Index](#).



Bald eagles in nest, Discovery Park, March 1, 1995
Item 169012, Seattle Municipal Archives

Photographs accompanying [Clerk/Comptroller Files](#) have also been added to the database. These photos often accompany reports or petitions coming from City departments, citizens or consultants.



Auto dealership along Roosevelt. This photograph accompanies a petition of University District Community Council for rezoning portions of Brooklyn Addition, et al. CF 280586, Dec. 16, 1974
Item 168881, Seattle Municipal Archives

Over 100 new images from Seattle City Light negatives were also added. Included are shots of employees, employee events, substations, businesses and a flood along the Duwamish.

(Photos cont.)



Dick's Drive In on Broadway, January 20, 1955
Item No: 168533, Seattle Municipal Archives

New Seattle Voices Audio Exhibit: Crimes Against Women

On March 11, 1975, the Human Resources and Judiciary Committee, chaired by Councilmember Jeanette Williams, and the Public Safety and Health Committee jointly held a public hearing to discuss a proposed ordinance by the Feminist Coordinating Council to establish authority independent of the police department to deal with rape and domestic violence.

Read the transcript and listen to all or part of the hearing: <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Exhibits/voices/crimeswomen.htm>

In the Vault

Reporting directly to Mayor Braman, the Waterfront Advisory Committee was established in 1969 to assist a consultant hired to develop a "people-oriented" urban design plan for the central waterfront. Work of the Committee is reflected in minutes (Record Series 9591-01) and Mayor's records (Record Series 5210-01).

At the January 16, 1969 meeting, a member of the Committee, Ivar Haglund, expressed a desire to maintain a part of the waterfront area as a reminder of the early days of Seattle, stating that he planned to form a corporation to be known as "Gold Rush Docks Ltd." He thought it would provide a good contrast to the proposed World Trade Center development..

Chairman James A. Todd noted on January 22, 1969, that the biggest unsolved problem from earlier plans is "a solution for the traffic problem on the waterfront."

Hunter Simpson, representing the Save Our Ships organization, made a plea for the historic ship, the Wawona, to be part of the waterfront environment as a display in the summer, moving to what is now Gas Works Park in the winter.

(Waterfront Committee cont.)

Railroad traffic was cited as a major obstacle at the beginning of the Committee's meetings. In a June 1969 meeting, James Mason of the City Planning Department reported that the City could not change track locations along the waterfront as the franchise was granted in perpetuity. He suggested the problem be approached "on a cooperative basis with the railroads rather than by unilateral City action."

By March 1970, the Committee provided recommendations for the waterfront which included: "...an activity center, not a pastoral resting place;" a people-oriented waterfront park; continuation of appropriate commercial activity; relocation of the railroad tracks; a mini-bus for waterfront transportation, acquisition of Piers 57 and 58; and no permanent marina.

Recently Cited

Images from Seattle Municipal Archives were used and cited recently in:

- [WallofRetro](http://wallofretro.wordpress.com/2013/02/21/seattle-parks-video-parks-pleasant-occasions-and-happiness-1977/) blog featured the 1977 film "Parks, Pleasant Occasions, and Happiness"
<http://wallofretro.wordpress.com/2013/02/21/seattle-parks-video-parks-pleasant-occasions-and-happiness-1977/>
- Random House is using a photograph of Second Avenue from Yesler looking north from the Department of Streets and Sewers negatives on the cover of a book entitled *Songs of Willow Frost*.

45 Years Ago: Seattle Passes First Open Housing Legislation

The City of Seattle passed its first Fair Housing ordinance in April 1968 after a ten-year battle. The hard fought struggle is told in an online exhibit on the Seattle Municipal Archives [website](#).

In 1975, the legislation was broadened to include additional categories of discrimination including sex, marital status, sexual orientation and political ideology. The Seattle Women's Commission introduced proposed amendments in 1973 but it took almost two years before the amendments passed. The Seattle Human Rights Commission, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Seattle Atlantic Street Center were among the groups that supported adding the additional categories, while apartment owners and real estate agents were among those who opposed the amendment. Jeanette Williams, as chair of the Human Resources and Judiciary Committee, shepherded the legislation through. The Mayor signed it in August, after it passed narrowly in City Council by a 5-4 vote.

The Open Housing ordinance was amended again in 1979 to prohibit discrimination based on age and parental status. After the amendment was introduced by the Housing and Urban Development Committee, President of the Apartment Operators Association, Inc., Donald Haas, sent a letter to members of City Council stating his opposition. On May 2, 1979, he wrote, "Many owners are telling me that they will withdraw their vacancies from the open rental market before letting them be wrecked by irresponsible teenagers and undisciplined children."

Open Housing (cont.)

Seattle's Department of Human Resources pointed out to Councilmember Michael Hildt, Chair of the Committee, on April 4, 1979, "The proposed amendment to the Fair Housing Ordinance will not change the housing shortage in Seattle....but letting the elderly compete on an equal basis with others for housing they can afford will be of the utmost significance in allowing them to function independently as long as possible."

In 1985, Jeanette Williams, then chair of the City Operations Committee, introduced proposed amendments to the fair housing ordinance that would include creed and disability. Representatives of the Rental Housing Operators (RHO) of Seattle wrote to express their disapproval. "The requirement of remodeling existing housing so that a handicapped person may live anywhere is an unreasonable burden placed on private landowners," wrote R. Drake Bozath and John Misner, representing RHO.

The amendment passed in 1986. Open housing legislation was broadened to include gender identity in 1999.

Flickr News

At SMA, we have a great number of photos depicting fire hydrants and street construction, but our image collection has a human side too. Check out our Portraits set on Flickr to see some of the faces of our city, including city employees, famous visitors to Seattle, children participating in city events, elected officials, Aqua Theatre actors, new immigrants, and citizens in their neighborhoods. The set gives a glimpse of the city's inhabitants over the past 100 years.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/sets/72157612315019769/>

The most popular Flickr image for June-September is this one of First and Union in 1972.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/seattlemunicipalarchives/8370027177/in/photostream>



Volunteers and Interns

Lydia Vernon left SMA to return to the other side of the United States (Maryland). She will finish up her degree there while she searches for a job. SMA especially appreciated her work with audio projects.

John Ned, long-time work study student from Seattle University, is graduating and moving on to his passion in the world of film making.

Volunteer Carolyn Downs accepted a position with Snohomish County.

Recent Acquisitions

In addition to Councilmember records, recent acquisitions include records from the Department of Transportation, Ethics and Elections, and the Fremont Neighborhood Service Center.



Seattle Waterfront with Navy Pier, grain terminal, and Smith Cove, 1969.
Item 63987, Seattle Municipal Archives

Upcoming Events

- April 23, AKCHO Annual Awards and Meeting, Museum of History and Industry
- May 3-5 Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting Vancouver, B.C.

Seattle Municipal Archives

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