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Reginald C. Harmon
Collection, 1909-1993

Collection 199

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Cassandra Parsons, July 2025

Creator/Corporate Name: Reginald C. Harmon

Inclusive Dates: 1909-1993

Physical Description: 6 boxes, (6.8 linear ft.)

Language: English

Provenance:

The Reginald C. Harmon collection was donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives. A separate donation from the Harmon Family was received in November 2024 and March 2025.

Access:

These records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Harmful Language in Archives:

The Champaign County Historical Archives at The Urbana Free Library is committed to developing inclusive collections that capture the diverse history of our communities. However, some language used in our collections and collection descriptions may be outdated or harmful. Please refer to our statement on [Harmful Language in Archives](#) to learn how we are addressing language concerns in our collections.

Biographical Note:

Reginald Carl Harmon (February 5, 1900-October 19, 1992) was born on a farm in Olney, IL. After high school, Harmon taught in a one-room schoolhouse for two years and saved money for college. In 1927, Harmon graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Law and as second lieutenant in the R.O.T.C. Harmon practiced law as an attorney in Urbana at Busch and Harrington Law Offices.

In 1929, at age 28, Harmon was elected mayor of Urbana and served two two-year terms (1929-1933). In 1930, Harmon received national attention after he announced a “banking moratorium” and closed the local Urbana banks to allow the banks to reorganize their assets and avoid financial failure. This practice was adopted by many other mayors and President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a national practice.

In 1937, Harmon married Doris Vance in Urbana. The couple had one daughter named Susan. In 1940, Harmon was called for active service during WWII to serve at the Wright Field military base in Dayton, Ohio. His work there concerned checking contracts for purchase of airplanes and other equipment for the air corps. Between 1945 and 1948, Harmon headed the Air Material Command legal department at Wright Field. Later, Harmon and his family moved to Washington, D.C., for Harmon to continue his military career.

In 1948, Harmon was named by President Truman as the first Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Forces with the rank of Major General. Harmon received the Legion of Merit in 1951 and the



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Distinguished Service Medal in December 1956. Harmon served as the United States Security Corp President from 1960-1965 and executive director of the Air Force Aid Society from 1966-1978. Harmon spent his remaining years in Washington, D.C., until his death in October 1992. Harmon is buried in Arlington Cemetery in Virginia.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection includes materials and documents from three main areas: Reginald C. Harmon's career as a lawyer, mayor, and military officer, the Harmon family, and local Urbana and Champaign ephemera. The Harmon family materials include written correspondence, genealogy records and family research, collected poetry and creative writing, and financial documents. Reginald C. Harmon's career materials include campaign documents and materials sent to Harmon in 1940 when he was called for active military service during WWII. Additionally, there are attorney-client documents for Gale K. Blakeslee, Louise Hart, Earl Ebert, and others housed in Series 1, Folder 2 Champaign County Court, 1927-1940. The local ephemera includes pamphlets and published material from local businesses and clubs in the Champaign-Urbana area.

The Harmon Family Accrual focuses on material related to Reginald C. Harmon's career, including awards, biographical sketches, newspaper clippings, and photographs. Also present is ephemera, including his Air Force Dress Hat and the flag submitted to the family upon his burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

Arrangement:

These materials are arranged in two series: the Harmon Collection and the Harmon Family Accrual. The Harmon Collection is the legacy collection of material donated to the Archives. The first series is arranged into three subseries: the Harmon Family, Reginald Harmon's Career, and Local Ephemera. The Harmon Family Accrual consists of materials donated in 2024 and 2025 by Susan Harmon and Dan Harmon.

Related Material:

Oral History: My years as mayor of Urbana [sound recording] / Reginald C. Harmon. [Digitized](#)
Call number: A Cassette ILLINOIS (Champ) URB

Subject Terms:

Mayors--Illinois--Urbana
Politicians--Illinois--Urbana
World War, 1939-1945

Name Terms:

Aufdemkampe, Elsie
Blakeslee, Gale Kenith
Ebert, Earl
Grimes, A.W.



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Hall, J.T.
Harmon, Reginald Carl, 1900-1992
Harmon, Harley H.
Harmon, Frank
Hart, Louise A.
Jacobs, Frank J.
Klemick, Fred
Stipes, Delia T.
Stipes, Royal A.
Vance, Doris Evangeline

Container List

Box 1

Series 1: Harmon Collection

Sub-series 1: Harmon Family

Folder 1: Correspondence, 1931-1938
Folder 2: Genealogy and Family Records, 1909-1957
Folder 3: Harmon Family Insurance and Financial Records, 1933-1993
Folder 4: Local Bills and Receipts, 1931-1940
Folder 5: Poetry and Creative Writing, 1909

Series 1: Harmon Collection

Sub-series 2: Reginald Harmon Career

Folder 1: Campaign Documents, 1929-1936
Folder 2: Champaign County Court, 1927-1940
Folder 3: Mayor Speech Notes, 1929-1933
Folder 4: Personal Notes, 1932-1940
Folder 5: WWII Military Course Materials, 1932-1940
Folder 6: WWII National Defense Week, 1940

Box 2

Series 1: Harmon Collection

Sub-series 3: Local ephemera

Folder 1: Local Business Ephemera, 1924-1939
Folder 2: Local Clubs, 1933-1937
Folder 3: Published Material, 1927-1936

Series 2: Harmon Family Accrual

Folder 1: Awards, 1951-1991
Folder 2: Bank Moratorium "Thank You" notes, 1931-1932
Folder 3: Diploma (updated), 1968



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Folder 4: Judge Advocate Materials, 1956-1972
Folder 5: Newspapers, 1930-1990
Folder 6: Newspapers, 1948-2001
Folder 7: Photographs, 1959
Folder 8: R.C. Harmon biography and speeches, 1943-1992
Folder 9: R.C. Harmon News Release Copies and Correspondence, 1957-1960
Folder 10: R.C. Harmon U.S. Air Force Interview, 1987

Box 3

Series 1: Harmon Collection

Subseries 2: Reginald Harmon Career

Folder 1: Airplane photographs (Harmon was responsible for their contracts)

Series 2: Harmon Family Accrual

Folder 1: Air Force Award, 1949
Folder 2: Bank Moratorium Proclamation, 1932
Folder 3: Judge Advocate Association Award, 1960

Box 4

Series 2: Harmon Family Accrual

Reginald C. Harmon's Military Medals

Box 5

Series 2: Harmon Family Accrual

United States flag presented to Harmon family upon Reginald C. Harmon's burial at Arlington National Cemetery

Box 6

Series 2: Harmon Family Accrual

Reginald C. Harmon's Air Force Dress Hat