

DEAVER, MICHAEL, 1980-1985 – REAGAN LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

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DEAVER, MICHAEL K.: Files, 1980-1985

Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff: Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant to the President, 1981-1985

Biography

Michael Deaver's White House title nominally ranked him under James Baker, the Chief of Staff. In actuality, Deaver had his own leadership role in the Reagan White House, one based on his long personal association with Ronald and Nancy Reagan.

Deaver was born in Bakersfield, California on April 11, 1938. He grew up largely in California's Central Valley and the nearby desert town of Mojave. In 1960, he graduated from San Jose State College with a B.A. degree in Public Administration. After spending time in travel and various temporary jobs, he took a position with the Santa Clara County Republican Party organization in 1963. Two years later, he transferred to the regional Republican organization in Santa Barbara.

In November 1966 Deaver was hired as the chief assistant to William Clark, the head of Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial transition staff. Deaver went on to serve as Reagan's Director of Administration for all eight years of the Reagan governorship. When Clark became Reagan's Chief of Staff in August 1967, he put Deaver in charge of the Governor's schedule, political liaison, and issues of concern to Nancy Reagan. Through these responsibilities, Deaver became part of the Reagans' inner circle.

After Reagan left the governorship, Deaver co-founded Deaver & Hannaford, a public relations firm based in Los Angeles. The firm booked Reagan's speeches, marketed Reagan's radio commentaries and syndicated column, and served as the site for his work office. Deaver was the campaign committee Chief of Staff for Reagan's unsuccessful run for the 1976 Republican presidential nomination. He was a senior advisor at the launching of Reagan's 1980 presidential bid, until conflicts with campaign manager John Sears led to his departure in November 1979. Deaver rejoined the campaign after Sears left in February 1980. As Reagan campaigned around the country, Deaver traveled with him as his closest aide. After the election, Deaver served as a senior advisor on the 1980-1981 transition team.

In the Reagan White House, Deaver, James Baker, and Edwin Meese shared the leadership of the White House staff, in a senior staff triumvirate nicknamed the "Troika." Deaver's role included oversight of matters that pertained to President and Mrs. Reagan's public image or personal lives. He supervised the President's travel and events, working to ensure that Reagan was presented to the media and the public in the best manner possible. He served as a liaison between Nancy Reagan and the White House staff, and dealt with her travel and events as well. He often

accompanied President and Mrs. Reagan on their trips, or personally performed advance site visits – especially for overseas trips. He was a personal intermediary for the Reagans, taking messages directly to and from them. He dealt with issues involving Presidential security or the White House complex. Deaver had oversight of the Office of Appointments and Scheduling, Office of Presidential Advance, Office of the First Lady (including Social Affairs), White House Military Office, and President Reagan's immediate office (*e.g.*, his personal secretary). He was also heavily involved with the Office of Communications. In early 1984 the Deputy Chief of Staff office took over most aspects of communications, as part of a staff reorganization done for the 1984 campaign season.

Deaver and the Deputy Chief of Staff office also dealt with various “special projects” and *ad hoc* matters on behalf of the White House. For instance, Deaver oversaw the Administration's private sector initiatives efforts, was presidential liaison to the 1984 Summer Olympic Games, served as Chairman of the Outreach Working Group on Women, and was named General Chairman of the 1985 Inaugural Committee. Although domestic and foreign policy issues were not his primary focus, his concern for the President's interests sometimes led him to serve as a politically moderate mediator within the White House staff.

After President Reagan was re-elected, Deaver submitted his resignation, with spring 1985 as a tentative departure time. He remained on the White House staff until May 10, long enough to assist with Reagan's trip to Europe that month. The trip included a controversial Presidential visit to the military cemetery at Bitburg, West Germany, where some Nazi SS soldiers were buried.

Deaver founded a lobbying firm, Michael K. Deaver and Associates, after he left the White House. In December 1985, the General Accounting Office began investigating allegations that he had violated Government ethics laws by lobbying former Administration colleagues before legally allowed. Deaver cooperated with an Independent Counsel investigation, and voluntarily testified before a grand jury and a Congressional subcommittee. This strategy backfired when discrepancies in his testimony led to his being indicted on perjury charges. As part of his defense, Deaver publicly admitted that he had developed a drinking problem, and become dependent on Valium, while serving on the White House staff. However, the trial judge disallowed this substance abuse as a factor in the jury's deliberations, and Deaver was convicted in 1987. He was placed on three years' probation, fined \$100,000, ordered to perform compulsory community service, and temporarily barred from lobbying. In 1992, Deaver took a position with the Washington-based consulting firm Edelman. He played a central role in planning Ronald Reagan's funeral ceremonies in 2004.

Deaver wrote three books about his life and his career: *Behind the Scenes* (1988; co-written with Mickey Herskowitz); *A Different Drummer: My Thirty Years with Ronald Reagan* (2001); and *Nancy: A Portrait of My Years with Nancy Reagan* (2004). In 2005, he edited and published a collection of essays titled *Why I Am a Reagan Conservative*. Deaver died of pancreatic cancer on August 18, 2007.

Collection Description

This collection covers the full range of Mr. Deaver's activities during his time as a White House advisor. It contains correspondence and memos with White House staff members that he oversaw or worked with, as well and correspondence with the general public. It reflects his close

relationship with President and Mrs. Reagan, and some of the tasks that he undertook on their behalf.

The collection contains some materials of a purely personal or political nature, or regarding the Presidential Inaugurals. These materials are not Presidential records, and have been designated as personal papers of Ronald Reagan. In the interest of context and ease of use, we have retained these materials within the Deaver collection, reviewing them under the Deed of Gift for the papers of Ronald Reagan.

This collection does not contain material on Mr. Deaver's career prior to Ronald Reagan's Presidency, or the later investigation of Deaver. However, other Reagan Library collections do have material pertaining to these periods of Deaver's life.

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE, (1980-) 1981-1985. (12.7 l.ft., Boxes 1-32)

This series contains material relating to Mr. Deaver's work and life during his time on the White House staff. Correspondents include the general public, friends and acquaintances of Deaver or President Reagan, Republican Party officials, members of Congress, representatives of foreign governments, and Reagan Administration staff. The material covers speaking and event proposals, requests to meet or interview the President, requests for photos and autographs, recommendations for Presidential phone calls, thank-you notes for assisting with trips and events, reactions to Presidential trips and events, unsolicited resumes and personnel recommendations, and holiday greetings. Topics include the 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan, gifts sent to Deaver, private sector initiatives, tax and budget policy, oil and gas lottery fees, the Middle East, the environment, the Legal Services Corporation, US-Soviet relations, the G7 economic summits, trade policy, the 1984 Summer Olympics, women's rights and the "gender gap," controversies surrounding Secretary of the Interior Watt and OMB Director Stockman, the future Reagan Presidential Library, the 1985 Bitburg visit, wineries and wine, Deaver's hospitalization in January 1985, and his departure from the White House staff.

Many documents from late 1983 through 1984 pertain to the 1984 elections. This material includes unsolicited political advice, requests to help with the Reagan-Bush campaign, suggestions and feedback for Reagan's debates with Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale, and post-election reaction.

There are "Outgoing" and "Incoming" files beginning with July 1983. The "Outgoing" files consist mostly of incoming mail, and copies of response letters. The "Incoming" files contain relatively more White House memos, but have only a few Deaver responses.

SERIES II: SENIOR STAFF MEETINGS, 1981-1984. (0.3 l.ft., Boxes 32-33)

This series contains material relating to "Senior Staff Action Items" lists. These lists are also in many other Reagan Library collections. They record items that the White House Senior Staff discussed at its meetings, such as domestic and foreign policy issues, scheduled Presidential and Administration events, high-level personnel matters, and updates on other staff meetings. The

Action Items lists also name the White House staff people who were assigned to follow up on particular action items.

SERIES III: SCHEDULING, 1981-1985. (0.8 l.ft., Boxes 33-35)

This series contains material relating to proposals for Presidential events and travel, agendas for long-range Presidential scheduling meetings, and guidelines for political versus official travel. It is arranged by month. The series also contains analyses of White House staff input at long-range scheduling meetings, copies of President Reagan's monthly block schedules through April 1983, statistical information on the President's trips, and guidelines regarding Reagan family travels.

SERIES IV: SUBJECT FILE, 1981-1985. (11.4 l.ft., Boxes 35-65)

This series contains material relating to matters Mr. Deaver and his White House staff dealt with, including planning for events involving President and Mrs. Reagan; event invitations and schedule proposals; compilations of information on events; trip advance material, particularly for foreign trips; material pertaining to the design and decorating of the White House complex, and the wine and food served at White House functions; memos and letters on policy issues and other topics, exchanged with White House and Executive Branch units; gift reports, travel forms, and other administrative material pertaining to Deaver and the staff that he oversaw; and daily phone and correspondence logs maintained by Deaver's secretary. Some material was created by, or originally addressed to, the people who served under Deaver in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff.

**SERIES V: 1983 ECONOMIC SUMMIT – WILLIAMSBURG, VA, 1983.
(0.6 l.ft., Boxes 65-66)**

This series contains material relating to the 1983, Summit of Industrialized Nations (aka the Williamsburg Summit or 1983 G-7 Summit). The United States hosted this event in 1983 in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Deputy Chief of Staff office, with Deaver's assistant Michael McManus serving as one of two Administrators of the Summit, took ultimate responsibilities for the planning and coordination of this event. Material within this series covers the work of the Economic Summit Task Force, schedules of Summit events, papers and talking points for use during the Summit, and Deaver's copy of the Economic Summit briefing book.

SERIES VI: POLITICAL MATERIAL, 1980-1984. (1.8 l.ft., Boxes 67-71)

This series contains material relating to the 1984 Reagan re-election campaign, the 1982 mid-term elections, and other matters of a political nature. A large portion consists of public opinion polls and poll analyses, most of which are from Decision Making Information, the organization headed by longtime Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin. There are also materials pertaining to Reagan re-election campaign strategy and the selection of a campaign advertising agency, Reagan campaign surrogate speakers and budget figures, draft scripts for radio and television ads, draft fundraising material and campaign literature, and state-level political analyses.

SERIES VII: INAUGURAL MATERIAL, 1980-1981, 1984-1985. (0.7 l.ft., Boxes 71-73)

This series contains material relating to the 1985 Inaugural Committee and Inauguration ceremonies, including the launching and organization of the Committee, Committee budget figures and press releases, Committee staffing, draft and final event schedules, information on potential entertainers and food, draft seating charts and lists of invitees, lists of thank-you notes and congratulatory letters, and form letters from the Committee. There are also some materials pertaining to the 1981 Inauguration, such as copies of invitee lists.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1981-1985.

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[Correspondence – February 1981 \(3\)](#)
[Correspondence – February 1981 \(4\)](#)
[Correspondence – February 1981 \(5\)](#)
[Correspondence – February 1981 \(6\)](#)
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[Correspondence – March 1981 \(2\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(3\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(4\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(5\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(6\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(7\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(8\)](#)
[Correspondence – March 1981 \(9\)](#)
[Correspondence – April 1981 \(1\)](#)
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[Correspondence – April 1981 \(3\)](#)

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[Correspondence – April 1981 \(5\)](#)
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[Correspondence – May 1981 \(2\)](#)
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[Correspondence – May 1981 \(4\)](#)
[Correspondence – May 1981 \(5\)](#)

[Correspondence – May 1981 \(6\)](#)
[Correspondence – May 1981 \(7\)](#)
[Correspondence – May 1981 \(8\)](#)
[Correspondence – May 1981 \(9\)](#)
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[Correspondence – June 1981 \(2\)](#)
[Correspondence – June 1981 \(3\)](#)
[Correspondence – June 1981 \(4\)](#)
[Correspondence – June 1981 \(5\)](#)
[Correspondence – June 1981 \(6\)](#)
[Correspondence – July 1981 \(1\)](#)
[Correspondence – July 1981 \(2\)](#)
[Correspondence – July 1981 \(3\)](#)

Box 3

Correspondence – July 1981 (4)-(9)
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Box 5

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Senior Staff Meetings–1982 (July 1982)
Senior Staff Meetings–1982 (August 1982)
Senior Staff Meetings–1982 (September 1982)
Senior Staff Meetings–1982 (October 1982)
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Scheduling [Memos Dated] May 1982

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Scheduling [Memos Dated] August 1982
Scheduling [Memos Dated] September 1982
Scheduling [Memos Dated] October 1982
Scheduling [Memos Dated] November 1982
Scheduling [Memos Dated] December 1982
Scheduling [Memos Dated] January 1983
Scheduling [Memos Dated] February 1983 I
Scheduling [Memos Dated] February 1983 II
Scheduling [Memos Dated] March 1983
Scheduling [Memos Dated] April 1983
Scheduling [Memos Dated] May 1983
Schedule [Memos Dated] June 1983
Schedule [Memos Dated] August 1983
Schedule [Memos Dated] September 1983
Schedule [Memos Dated] October 1983
Schedule [Memos Dated] November 1983
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Schedule [Memos Dated] January 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] February 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] March 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] April 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] May 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] June 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] July 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] August 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] September 1984
Schedule [Memos Dated] October 1984
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Child Support Law – Margaret Heckler – HHS – PSA Spot (Audio Cassette – Stored in Audiovisual for preservation)

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50 States Project

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“American Women – Three Decades of Change” [U.S. Census Bureau]
“A Woman’s Influence” – *Woman’s Day* Survey (Binder)
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SERIES VI: POLITICAL MATERIAL, 1980-1984.

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Decision Making Information: Voter Attitude toward Vice Presidential Attributes
and Some of the Political Nominees – For the Reagan for President
Committee June 1980 699-16-07 #7381
Decision Making Information: Eagle Track IV – 11/19/1981 Flash Report

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Decision Making Information: A Study of National Attitudes, 04/07/1983-04/10/1983
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Decision Making Information: Public Attitudes and Candidate Statements on
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Decision Making Information: Flash Results, 06/02/1984-06/05/1984 RNC 84-6
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[Reagan-Bush 1984] Attitudes on Immigration – Prepared by Reagan-Bush 1984
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