

THOMAS, W. DENNIS: Files, 1983-1987 – REAGAN LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

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THOMAS, W. DENNIS: Files, 1983-1987

Office of Legislative Affairs: Deputy Assistant for Legislative Affairs, 1983-1985 (see [separate inventory](#))

Office of the Chief of Staff: Assistant to the President, 1985-1987

In July 1985 William Dennis Thomas began work as the chief assistant to Donald Regan, the White House Chief of Staff. He served as a *de facto* deputy chief of staff, though this title was never used of him. Thomas advised and assisted Regan on the full range of policy and administrative matters, with a concentration on economic policy. Thomas also oversaw White House staff involvement in President Reagan's overseas trips, and coordinated the drafting of Reagan's State of the Union messages. He attended many Administration meetings with Mr. Regan, accompanied Regan on some of President Reagan's travels, screened appointment requests and telephone calls for Regan, and occasionally substituted for Regan at meetings and events.

Dennis Thomas was born in Baltimore on August 12, 1943. He grew up in central Maryland, earning a B.S. degree from Frostburg State College in 1965, and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Maryland in 1967. After graduate school he served for about a year as Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education of Carroll County, northwest of Baltimore. From 1969 to 1976 he was Administrative Assistant for Glenn Beall Jr., a Republican Congressman and Senator from Maryland. After Beall was defeated for reelection in 1976, Thomas became Administrative Assistant to Senator William Roth (R-Delaware).

When Ronald Reagan became President in 1981, he appointed Mr. Thomas Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs in the Department of the Treasury. In this position Thomas worked with Congress, and Treasury Secretary Regan, as the Administration tried to enact its economic agenda into law. Thomas moved to the White House staff in December 1983, as the Deputy Assistant for Legislative Affairs in charge of relations with the House of Representatives. He left in April 1985 for a position with the professional service organization Touche Ross, but returned to the White House in July as Regan's assistant.

Thomas left the White House staff for the second time in May 1987, about three months after Regan's departure. He soon joined the firm International Paper, rising to the position of Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications. He has served on the Boards of Directors for various corporations. He is a member of the Council on American Politics for the George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management.

Thomas' files are arranged in six series. The files contain many handwritten draft memos, draft speeches, notes, and marginalia from Thomas, Regan, and others in the White House Office.

Copies of the same documents are often filed in more than one series.

SERIES I: CHRONOLOGICAL FILE, 1985-1987 (0.6 l.ft., Boxes 1-2)

This series contains: copies of memos and notes exchanged between Dennis Thomas, Donald Regan, and others on the White House staff; unsolicited personnel recommendations, scheduling proposals, and event invitations; published articles and reports sent to Thomas; draft and final versions of presidential speeches, Administration statements, and White House press guidance; requests for birthday and anniversary greetings; handwritten and typed thank-you notes; and notes on telephone calls made to Thomas or Regan. Topics include the proposing and scheduling of Presidential trips and events, tax and budget policy (including the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and the Gramm-Rudman Act), the federal deficit, planning and public relations work for summit meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev, the White House's public response to the Iran-Contra affair, and antidrug policy. Arranged chronologically by month.

SERIES II: GENERAL FILE, 1985-1987 (1.0 l.ft., Boxes 2-5)

This alphabetically arranged series contains material pertaining to Thomas' and Regan's correspondence with units within the White House Office, on topics such as the drafting of Presidential speeches, long-range policy planning, unsolicited personnel recommendations and requests for Presidential events, the selecting of a new Secretary of Health and Human Services, and White House staff personnel. The series also has material pertaining to White House administrative matters such as staff travel and gift handling, and correspondence with friends and acquaintances of Mr. Thomas.

SERIES III: MEETING FILE, 1985-1987 (2.1 l.ft., Boxes 5-10)

This series contains material pertaining to the planning and execution of various meetings and trips. Much of the material pertains to President Reagan's foreign trips, including the summit meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva (1985) and Reykjavik (1986), the trips to the annual G7 meetings in Tokyo (1986) and Venice (1987), and the 1987 visit to Ottawa, Canada. Records pertaining to these travels may include Advance Office site reports and trip books, draft and final schedules, draft and final versions of Presidential speeches and statements, reports and published articles on the issues and foreign leaders involved, and schedules for post-meeting public events. Other material in this series consists of agendas, notes, press guidance, and other records pertaining to meetings that included senior White House staff (particularly the Senior Staff Planning Group), members of Congress, and the public. Such meetings involved several issues of the day, including antidrug efforts, tax and budget issues, the State of the Union Address, White House public relations (including reaction to Iran-Contra), the proposed new Air Force One aircraft, and the allocation of White House office space. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES IV: ISSUES FILE, 1985-1987 (2.7 l.ft., Boxes 11-17)

This series contains folders pertaining to specific issues, including: the federal budget (including proposed budgets and spending, the national debt, and the Gramm-Rudman Act); federal antidrug policy; tax policy, including the Tax Reform Act of 1986; Central America policy; reaction to the Iran-Contra affair by the Administration, Congress, and the media; the drafting of the 1986 and 1987 State of the Union Addresses, and public reaction to the Addresses; US trade policy, including trade sanctions against South Africa; the space shuttle

Challenger explosion; the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident; and the assigning of offices within the White House. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES V: REGAN MEMORANDUM FILE, 1985-1987 (0.7 l.ft., Boxes 17-19)

This series contains memos from Donald Regan to Dennis Thomas. Many of the memos have attachments, which usually consist of memos and related documents involving other White House staff or OMB personnel. Topics include long-range scheduling and policy planning, Presidential scheduling for the Geneva and Reykjavik summits, the federal budget, the State of the Union Address, strategy for public handling of Iran-Contra, the 1986 US attack on Libya, South Africa policy, antidrug policy, relations with Congress, trade policy, and the division of responsibilities among White House staff. Arranged chronologically by month.

SERIES VI: DISKETTE FILE, 1985-1987 (0.2 l.ft., Box 19)

This series contains material printed from 8-inch IBM Displaywriter diskettes, the word processing system used widely by the Reagan White House. The material includes meeting agendas, responses to unsolicited personnel recommendations, general planning material for the 1986 Reykjavik summit, working papers and talking points regarding Iran-Contra, address and telephone lists, and documents apparently created by Thomas' secretary for use in her course work. The series also includes lists of document file names, instructions for printing the diskettes, and general formats for schedules and other documents. Arranged alphabetically, mostly by diskette name.

At this time, the Reagan Library staff has been able to print out only some of the material from the diskettes. The staff has transferred the diskettes to preservation storage.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I: CHRONOLOGICAL FILE, 1985-1987

Box 1

Chron October [July] 1985 – May 1986 (1)-(7)

Chron June 1986 – July 1986 (1)(2)

Chron August 1986 (1)-(4)

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Chron October 1986 (1)-(3)

Box 2

Chron October 1986 (4)

Chron November 1986 – December 1986 (1)-(3)

Chron January 1987 (1)-(5)

Chron February 1987 (1)-(3)

SERIES II: GENERAL FILE, 1985-1987

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Administration (1)-(3)

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[Administrative:] Gifts (1)-(4)

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[Administrative:] Scheduling (1)-(3)
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[Administrative:] Travel (1)-(6)
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Cabinet Affairs (1)(2)
Communications (Buchanan) (1)-(3)

Box 4

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[Correspondence, General D]
[Correspondence, General E-F] (1)(2)
[Correspondence, General G-H]
[Correspondence, General I-K]
[Correspondence, General L-M]
[Correspondence, General N-R]
[Correspondence, General S-V]
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First Lady
Legislative Affairs
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Personnel – HHS Secretary (1)(2)

Box 5

Personnel – HHS Secretary (3)
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Political Affairs (1)-(4)
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SERIES III: MEETING FILE, 1985-1987

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Canada [President's Trip 04/05/1987-04/06/1987]
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DTR Planning Group Meetings (1)-(3)

Box 6

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[\[Geneva\] Dennis Thomas – Geneva Trip \(1\)](#)
[\[Geneva\] Dennis Thomas – Geneva Trip \(2\)](#)
[\[Geneva Events – Participants\]](#)
[\[Geneva\] Hold for Summit Meeting \(1\)](#)
[\[Geneva\] Hold for Summit Meeting \(2\)](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group – Dennis Thomas \(1\)](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group – Dennis Thomas \(2\)](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group – Dennis Thomas \(3\)](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group – Dennis Thomas \(4\)](#)
[Geneva Oversight Group – Dennis Thomas \(5\)](#)

Box 7

[\[Geneva Planning\]](#)
[Geneva Planning Meeting Agenda](#)
[\[Geneva\] President Reagan's Trip to Geneva, November 16-21, 1985 – Background Book
\[Dennis Thomas Copy\]](#)
[Geneva – Safe \(1\)](#)
[Geneva – Safe \(2\)](#)
[Geneva – Safe \(3\)](#)
[Gorbachev Visit \[US-USSR Summit Planning, 1986\]](#)
[Iceland \[Pre-Reykjavik Planning Meeting 10/03/1986\]](#)
Jordan Arms
[South Korea: Dinner with Ambassador Kim 03/15/1986]
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Morning & Evening Agenda Items (2)
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[Planning] Air Force One (Meetings) (5)-(9)
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[\[Reykjavik\] Background Book – President's Trip to Iceland \(1\)](#)
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[\[Reykjavik\] Iceland \(1\)](#)

[\[Reykjavik\] Iceland \(2\)](#)

[\[Reykjavik\] Iceland \(3\)](#)

[\[Reykjavik\] Iceland \(4\)](#)

[\[Reykjavik\] Iceland \(5\)](#)

[Summer Summit \[Second US-USSR Summit\] \(1\)](#)

[Summer Summit \[Second US-USSR Summit\] \(2\)](#)

Tokyo Economic Summit: NSC Briefing Book (binder) (1)(2)

Tokyo Economic Summit: Packet I

Tokyo Economic Summit: Packet II

Tokyo Economic Summit: Preparations (1)(2)

Tokyo Economic Summit: Trip Scheduling (1)(2)

Tokyo Summit Meeting Planning Meetings

SERIES IV: ISSUES FILE, 1985-1987

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[Budget] (1)-(11)

Budget Meetings 1986

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Box 12

Drug Initiative I (1)-(7)

Drug Initiative II (1)-(4)

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Gramm-Rudman #1 July 1985 – August 1985 (1)-(3)

Gramm-Rudman #2 September 1985 (1)(2)

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Gramm-Rudman #2 September 1985 (3)

Gramm-Rudman #3 October 1985 – November 1985 (1)-(8)

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Gramm-Rudman January 1986

Gramm-Rudman February 1986 (1)-(3)

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Iran [Iran-Contra] (4)-(8)

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Miscellaneous Issues [Sequoia (Presidential Yacht)]

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SERIES VI: DISKETTE FILE

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