



Buchanan, Patrick J.: Files, 1985-1987

Finding Aid Type

White House Staff and Office File Collections

Subtitle/Office

Assistant to the President for Communications, Director - Office of Communications

Disclaimer

This collection is available in whole for research use. Some folders may still have withdrawn material due to Freedom of Information Act restrictions. Most frequently withdrawn material is national security classified material, personal privacy, protection of the President, etc.

Copyright

Documents in this collection were prepared by federal employees and appointees of the United States government as part of their official duties. This material is in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult United States copyright laws (Title 17, USC) governing reproductions of copyrighted material.

Record Type

Textual

Biography

Biography

Patrick Buchanan was born on November 2, 1938 in Washington, DC. He was born into a large Catholic family including six brothers and two sisters. His sister, Angela Marie (nicknamed Bay) served as US Treasurer under Reagan and had been treasurer of Reagan's 1980 and 1984 campaigns. She is seen frequently on television as a commentator.

Buchanan attended Catholic schools including Jesuit-run Gonzaga College High School. He then went on to Georgetown University. After graduating cum laude in 1961 he attended Columbia University and received a Master's degree in Journalism in 1962.

From 1962-1966, Buchanan worked as a reporter, editorial writer and assistant editor for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. In 1964 he supported Barry Goldwater for president, but the Globe-Democrat did not endorse Mr. Goldwater.

After leaving the paper, Buchanan spent a brief time as an executive assistant in the Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander, and Mitchell law offices in New York City. He was the first advisor hired by Nixon's presidential campaign where he worked as speech writer and research director, press assistant, political aide, and executive assistant to Richard Nixon. He is known for his opposition research during this campaign.

With the election of President Nixon, Buchanan joined the White House immediately as a Special Assistant to the President for Media Analysis and Speech Writing and was later promoted to Special Consultant to the President. During this time, he met and married Miss Shelly A. Scarney, a White House receptionist. For further information about this time period, please see the [Buchanan](#) collection at the Nixon Library.

Buchanan stayed with the Nixon administration up to the resignation of Nixon in August 1974. For a brief time he worked as a Special Consultant for President Gerald Ford. He left the White House in November 1974.

Buchanan began a long career as a news commentator, syndicated columnist and radio personality that continues to this day. He co-hosted a daily radio show with liberal columnist Tom Braden called *The Buchanan-Braden Program*. He delivered daily commentaries on NBC Radio from 1978-1984. Buchanan started his television career as a regular on *The McLaughlin Group*, CNN's *Crossfire*, and *The Capital Gang*

giving him a national following.

In 1985, Buchanan returned to the White House as Assistant to the President for Communication. As Reagan White House Communications Director he had supervisory responsibility for all outside communication from the White House including speechwriting, public affairs publications, media relations with non-Washington press/media and overall communications strategy. While at the White House, Buchanan was very involved in trying to hold off sanctions against South Africa, and promoting support for the Nicaraguan “Freedom Fighters” or Contras. Buchanan resigned from the White House on March 1, 1987. This was part of the resignations of the White House staff associated with ousted Chief of Staff Don Regan.

While working for Reagan, his sister, Bay Buchanan, started a campaign to draft her brother for a presidential run in 1988. Buchanan announced in early 1987 he would not seek the nomination in deference to his choice, Jack Kemp.

Buchanan returned to his column and *Crossfire*.

Starting in 1990, Buchanan began to challenge the incumbent President George H.W. Bush. He ran on a platform of immigration reduction, social conservatism, isolationist foreign policies and trade protections. He did not continue in his challenge past the early primaries and eventually supported Bush. He delivered the keynote address at the 1992 Republican National Convention. This became known as the “culture war” speech. Buchanan spoke in the speech of “a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America.”

Again, Buchanan returned to his column and *Crossfire*. To promote the principles of federalism, traditional values, and anti-intervention, he founded The American Cause, a conservative education foundation in 1993. Bay Buchanan serves as the foundation’s president and Pat as its chairman. He also returned to radio as host of *Buchanan and Company* for Mutual Broadcasting. He left in March 1995 to launch his 1996 try for the presidency.

Buchanan mounted his strongest challenge for the Presidential nomination in the 1996 campaign. The campaign started as a wide field including the eventual nominee Senate Majority leader Bob Dole, Sen. Phil Gramm, Governor Lamar Alexander and publisher Steve Forbes. Buchanan started on a very positive note

winning New Hampshire, Alaska, Missouri and Louisiana. He was a close second to Dole in Iowa. However, in the Super Tuesday primaries, Dole defeated Buchanan by large margins and Buchanan again suspended his campaign in March 1996.

Buchanan returned to his column, *Crossfire*, and began a series of books, beginning with *The Great Betrayal* published in 1998. In 1999 he announced he was leaving the Republican Party. He became the presidential candidate of the Reform Party in the 2000 and his place on the ballot is believed to have been part of the confusion in Palm Beach County, Florida and the “butterfly ballots.” He announced in 2004 that he was again a Republican and he would no longer seek the presidency.

CNN decided not to take him back after being the Reform candidate, but his column resumed. In 2002 he joined MSNBC in a longer variation of the *Crossfire* format in a new show entitled *Buchanan and Press*. This show was cancelled in 2003, but he remained with MSNBC as a commentator and frequently filled in on other MSNBC programs. Increasing controversies over Buchanan’s continued comments about racial minorities and Jews led the network to permanently part ways with Buchanan on February 16, 2012.

Buchanan began a new magazine featuring paleoconservative viewpoints entitled *The American Conservative*. Buchanan severed ties with the magazine in 2007, although they continued to print his opinion pieces. The magazine ceased print publication in late 2010, but has a website continuing to publish. He continues as a member of the panel for *The McLaughlin Group*

Scope and Content Note

PLEASE NOTE -This collection may have material added to it at some point in the future. The Library staff continues to find material created by or for Mr. Buchanan in other collections or areas of the Library.

The materials of Patrick J. Buchanan cover the period from February 6, 1985 to just shortly past his leaving the White House on March 1, 1987.

Buchanan joined the White House staff as an Assistant to the President for Communications. He revised and revitalized the Office of Communications and the

power of the Director of Communications. The Office of Communications functions and power had been largely overtaken by Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver and his assistant Michael McManus after the first Director of Communications, David Gergen left the White House in late 1983. The office had been converted to the Office of Communications and Planning under Pam Bailey (reporting to McManus).

The Office of Communications was actually very small and included just the Director and several assistants. Buchanan supervised the speechwriters, the public affairs staff, media-broadcast relations staff, and the public liaison functions. He had considerable control over “the message.” He also had control over the personnel in these offices and hired people of his own choosing including Frank Gregorsky and Mona Charen in the Office of Public Affairs, and Linda Chavez as the head of the Office of Public Liaison.

Buchanan has a surprisingly small collection, particularly when compared to his first administration counterpart, David Gergen. The material focuses on specific projects – the effort to head off sanctions against South Africa’s apartheid policy, aid to the Nicaraguan “Contras” and the passage of the President’s tax reform program, personnel issues and personal correspondence from his many followers.

Buchanan had experience with the Central filing system at the White House from his previous service in the Nixon administration. The Library staff finds most former Nixon and Ford staff members use the White House central filing system much more heavily than new Reagan Administration White House staff members. A much larger volume of Buchanan material can be found in the White House Office of Records Management Subject File case files than is currently in his staff collection. Consulting this material gives researchers a much fuller idea of Buchanan’s duties and interests while in the Reagan White House. In addition, Office of Communications administrative material for most of the second administration can be found within the Mari Maseng Office of Communications collection and includes Buchanan material. Check with your archivist to consult the subject file case files and/or the [Maseng](#) collection.

The Patrick J. Buchanan collection consists of three series: SERIES I: Subject File; SERIES II: Personnel; and SERIES III: Correspondence.

Series List

SERIES I: SUBJECT FILE

This series consists of material relating to a request from the Heritage Foundation for a book “blurb” from Buchanan on their publication *The Third Generation*; communication strategies to assist passage of the Reagan administration proposed budget for fiscal years 1986 and 1987; a wide ranging set of notes, memos and fact sheets on the effort to pass the President’s tax reform program; draft speeches for the President’s Tax Reform address in May 1985, a fact sheet on the tax reform proposal and a lengthy “summary” of the tax reform proposals; creating briefings and talking points for meetings with private supporters or influential public advocacy groups on supporting aid to the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters (the Contras); several copies of the President’s Weekly Update for late 1986-early 1987 with some notations; notes, memos, speech drafts, lists of vote counts, and background information on the writing of the President’s speech on sanctions against South Africa’s apartheid policy; and status reports on deportation / prosecution of suspected Nazi war criminals, John Demjanjuk, Tscherim Soobzokov and A. Rudolph. It is arranged alphabetically.

SERIES II: ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIAL

This series consists of material related to the structure and staffing of the Office of Communications and all suboffices: Speechwriting & Speech Research Offices, Office of Media Liaison, Office of Public Affairs, Office of Public Liaison, Office of Planning and Evaluation and the Press Office. It includes suggestions for reorganization of these offices for the second administration, requests for increased personnel, complaints about particular situations in offices; suggestions for improving communications strategies and functions, and routine administrative requests for offices.

This material arrived at the Reagan Library just after the accessioning of all material transferred from the White House and the National Archives in 1989. It was assigned case file numbers and put in the White House Office of Records Management Subject File category FG006-01. Upon a re-review of this category, we have transferred all of this material to the Buchanan collection and created this series.

SERIES III: PERSONNEL

This series consists of material relating to the hiring of new employees in various offices under Buchanan's control; routine forms regarding salaries and promotions and some memos from Buchanan reviewing staffing situations for the Office of Communications. This material is loosely arranged chronologically.

An additional amount of Buchanan personnel material can be found within the [Mari Maseng Office of Communications](#) collection.

SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE

This series consists of material relating to the resignation of Patrick Buchanan and reaction to Buchanan's decision not to run for President in 1988. A small but significant amount of the correspondence is not about Buchanan's resignation but is commentary on the Iran-Contra situation; Central American policy; South Africa; executive powers; abortion and other issues from the general public. It all arrived in his office after Buchanan left the White House. Two folders consist of petitions from Chicago requesting Buchanan's assistance in stopping the Department of Justice immigration case against Martin Bartesch of Chicago. Bartesch was accused of illegal entry into the United States and was being investigated for possible war crimes as a member of the Waffen-SS. This material is arranged chronologically.

Last Modified Date

2024-02-26

SERIES I: SUBJECT FILE

This series consists of material relating to a request from the Heritage Foundation for a book "blurb" from Buchanan on their publication *The Third Generation*; communication strategies to assist passage of the Reagan administration proposed budget for fiscal years 1986 and 1987; a wide ranging set of notes, memos and fact sheets on the effort to pass the President's tax reform program; draft speeches for the President's Tax Reform address in May 1985, a fact sheet on the tax reform proposal and a lengthy "summary" of the tax reform proposals; creating briefings and talking points for meetings with private supporters or influential public advocacy groups on supporting aid to the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters (the Contras); several copies of the President's Weekly Update for late 1986-early 1987 with some notations; notes, memos, speech drafts, lists of vote counts, and background information on the writing of the President's speech on sanctions against South

Africa's apartheid policy; and status reports on deportation / prosecution of suspected Nazi war criminals, John Demjanjuk, Tscherim Soobzokov and A. Rudolph. It is arranged alphabetically.

Box 1

Status	Title
OPEN	Buchanan Statement on <i>The Third Generation</i> (1)-(7)
OPEN	Budget Activity, 1985-1986 (1)-(10)
OPEN	Geneva Summit (1)-(3)

Box 2

Status	Title
OPEN	Geneva Summit (4)-(6)
OPEN	Media and Broadcast Relations (1)(2)
OPEN	Nicaragua (02/27/1985-04/14/1985)
OPEN	Nicaragua (04/15/1985-05/07/1985)
OPEN	Nicaragua (05/08/1985-05/31/1985)
OPEN	Nicaragua (1986) (1)(2)
OPEN	President's Weekly Update, 11/21/1986
OPEN	President's Weekly Update, 12/19/1986
OPEN	President's Weekly Update, 01/09/1987
OPEN	President's Weekly Update, 02/13/1987
OPEN	President's Weekly Update, 02/20/1987
OPEN	[Research Request: Negative Statements on Reagan] (1)(2)
OPEN	[Social Security Issues and James Roosevelt]
OPEN	[SDI Public Affairs Program]
OPEN	[South Africa Background Information re: Sanctions, South Africa Speech, 1986] (1)(2)

Box 3

Status	Title
OPEN	[South Africa Background Information re: Sanctions, South Africa Speech, 1986] (3)-(12)
OPEN	Tax Reform Address (1)-(4)
OPEN	Taxes (1)-(3)

Box 4

Status	Title
OPEN	Taxes (4)(5)
OPEN	[U.S. Dependence on South Africa Minerals]
OPEN	[War Crimes – Office of Special Investigations] (1)(2)

SERIES II: ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIAL

This series consists of material related to the structure and staffing of the Office of Communications and all suboffices: Speechwriting & Speech Research Offices, Office of Media Liaison, Office of Public Affairs, Office of Public Liaison, Office of Planning and Evaluation and the Press Office. It includes suggestions for reorganization of these offices for the second administration, requests for increased personnel, complaints about particular situations in offices; suggestions for improving communications strategies and functions, and routine administrative requests for offices.

This material arrived at the Reagan Library just after the accessioning of all material transferred from the White House and the National Archives in 1989. It was assigned case file numbers and put in the White House Office of Records Management Subject File category FG006-01. Upon a re-review of this category, we have transferred all of this material to the Buchanan collection and created this series.

Box 4, cont.

Status	Title
OPEN	[Communications, Office of]
OPEN	[Media Relations, Office of]
OPEN	[Planning & Evaluation, Office of]
OPEN	[Public Liaison, Office of] (1)-(3)
OPEN	[Speechwriting, Office of] (1)(2)

SERIES III: PERSONNEL

This series consists of material relating to the hiring of new employees in various offices under Buchanan's control; routine forms regarding salaries and promotions and some memos from Buchanan reviewing staffing situations for the Office of Communications. This material is loosely arranged chronologically.

An additional amount of Buchanan personnel material can be found within the [Mari Maseng Office of Communications](#) collection.

Box 4, cont.

Status	Title
OPEN	Buchanan Files - Personnel (1)-(10)

Box 5

Status	Title
OPEN	Buchanan Files – Personnel [Mari Maseng]

SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE

This series consists of material relating to the resignation of Patrick Buchanan and reaction to Buchanan’s decision not to run for President in 1988. A small but significant amount of the correspondence is not about Buchanan’s resignation but is commentary on the Iran-Contra situation; Central American policy; South Africa; executive powers; abortion and other issues from the general public. It all arrived in his office after Buchanan left the White House. Two folders consist of petitions from Chicago requesting Buchanan’s assistance in stopping the Department of Justice immigration case against Martin Bartesch of Chicago. Bartesch was accused of illegal entry into the United States and was being investigated for possible war crimes as a member of the Waffen-SS. This material is arranged chronologically.

Box 5, cont.,

Status	Title
OPEN	Correspondence Addressed to Patrick Buchanan Following his Resignation (1)-(16)

Box 6

Status	Title
OPEN	Correspondence Addressed to Patrick Buchanan Following his Resignation (17)-(20)