

D. M. Nigro Collection (SC123)

Introduction

The D. M. Nigro Collection consists of publicity materials, correspondence, ephemera, and photographs created by or relating to Dr. D. M. Nigro of Kansas City. Nigro was a medical doctor, sports enthusiast, world traveler, photographer, and an active member of the Democratic Party and the Italian-American community. The collection includes approximately 500 photographs.

Descriptive Summary

Title: D. M. Nigro Collection
Dates: 1944-1999, and n.d.
Size: 2.25 linear feet, 3 boxes
Collection Number: SC123

Donor Information

Gift, 2010, Ann O'Hare.

Citation Note

D. M. Nigro Collection (SC123), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Administrative Information

Related Collections: Additional items and information relating to D. M. Nigro may be found in Missouri Valley Special Collections local history collections. These include: Vertical File – Nigro, Dr. D. M.; *Doctor on Wings* by Paul E. Prugh; Kansas City Police Historical Society Collection (SC122); General Photograph Collection (P1); and South Central Business Association Records (P14 & SC39).

Biographical/Historical Sketch

Dr. Dominic M. Nigro was born in Cosenza, Italy in 1893. As a child, Nigro's family moved to the United States and settled in Kansas City, Missouri. He attended the University of Notre Dame, earned a medical degree at Creighton University, and went into practice as a doctor, treating Harry Truman before he was President. In the 1930s, he served as commissioner of child hygiene and communicable disease for the Kansas City Health Department, and also had ties to Thomas Pendergast's crime organization.

While at Notre Dame, Nigro became friends with future football coach Knute Rockne. After Rockne's death in a plane crash in 1931, Nigro founded the Rockne

Club of America and led efforts to place a memorial at the crash site. He also hosted annual Rockne Club awards dinners for prominent athletes and citizens. A passionate sports fan, he coached teams at Rockhurst College and De La Salle Academy, officiated football games for the Missouri Valley Conference, and traveled extensively to various domestic and international athletic events, acting as a voluntary goodwill ambassador for Kansas City.

Additionally, Nigro was an active member of the Democratic Party and UNICO National, an Italian-American service organization for which he served as president. He was also a photography enthusiast who took and collected numerous pictures of trips, events, and people he met. Dr. Nigro died on August 7, 1975 at the age of 82.

Scope and Content Note

Materials in this collection are arranged by type, subject, and chronologically by date if possible. Some documents and photographs are arranged by size for preservation reasons.

The majority of the photographs are not identified.

Series 1: Press materials, correspondence, and ephemera, 1951-1965, 1984, and n.d.

This series includes press releases and newsclippings relating to D. M. Nigro, Arthur Eilers, Volney C. Ashford, Claude W. Duke, Frank Capra, and Johnny Weissmuller. There is also correspondence between Nigro and Capra, concerning Capra's receipt of the Rockne Club Man of the Year Award. The series also contains a holiday newsletter from 1959, a Christmas card from Kansas City Athletics owner Charles Finley, patient menus from the Kansas City Medical Center, a program for a Notre Dame Glee Club concert, as well as business cards, a postcard, and telephone book pages acquired during a trip to New Orleans. Four certificates awarded to Nigro are also included in this series, but are housed at the end of the collection because of their size.

Series 2: Nigro Memorial and Family, 1995-1999

Materials in this series relate to the Nigro legacy and family. Included are official programs from the UNICO National Conventions for 1995 and 1996, both of which contain information on the D. M. Nigro Memorial Award for Amateur Athletics. Also included are brief articles regarding Katherine Clark Reilly and Dr. Dennis M. Nigro, children of Dr. E. Robert Nigro and grandchildren of D. M. Nigro.

Series 3: Dated photographs, 1951-1967

The photographs in this series date from 1951 to 1967 and contain images of social events, trips, sporting events, parties, and the 1956 Democratic National Convention.

Series 4: Athletics photographs, 1950-1958 and n.d.

This series consists of photographs relating to sports and athletics. One folder contains images of the 1857 Holiday Bowl, featuring the Kansas State Teachers College (now known as Pittsburg State University) football team of Pittsburg, Kansas. Included are photographs of award ceremonies for high school, college, and professional athletes and coaches, including baseball player John Antonelli. Many of these awards were presented by the Rockne Club of America. The series also contains photographs of multiple athletic events, as well as professional portraits and print blocks of coaches, athletes, and supporters that were intended for publishing.

Series 5: UNICO, military, and religious photographs, 1950 and n.d.

This series contains photographs of UNICO National events and meetings, including a convention banquet held at the Muehlebach Hotel in 1950. The series also contains photographs of military service men and religious figures at unidentified ceremonies and events.

Series 6: Miscellaneous photographs, 1944-1957 and n.d.

Photographs in this series depict unidentified awards, dinners, speeches, trips, and miscellaneous events. Included is a souvenir photograph from the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, as well as nine signed photographs to Dr. Nigro from friends, acquaintances, and celebrities. Some of the signed photographs are paired with brief notes.

Series 7: Negatives, n.d.

This series contains a glass plate negative of a portrait of A. J. Stephens, and a photographic negative of a headshot for Ann Leonardo. Also included are four photographic negatives of unidentified events.

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Press materials, correspondence, and ephemera, 1951-1965, 1984, and n.d.

- f. 1 Athletics press releases, 1951 and 1958
- f. 2 Certificates, 1955-1965 and n.d. (see oversize materials)
- f. 3 New Orleans ephemera, 1957
- f. 4 Correspondence, 1959-1960 and n.d.
- f. 5 News clippings, 1984 and n.d.
- f. 6 Miscellaneous materials, n.d.

Series 2: Nigro Memorial and Family, 1995-1999

- f. 7 UNICO convention program, 1995
- f. 8 UNICO convention program, 1996
- f. 9 News clippings, 1999

Series 3: Dated photographs, 1951-1967

- f. 10 Photographs, 1951-1954
- f. 11 Photographs, 1956
- f. 12 Photographs, 1957-1967

Series 4: Athletics photographs, 1950-1958 and n.d.

- f. 13 Kansas State Teachers College Holiday Bowl, 1957
- f. 14 Athletics awards and events, 1950 and n.d.
- f. 15 Athletics awards and events, n.d.
- f. 16 Award for John Antonelli, n.d.
- f. 17 Portraits of coaches and athletes, 1954-1955 and n.d.
- f. 18 Portraits of coaches and athletes, n.d.
- f. 19 Photographs of coaches, athletes, and supporters, 1957-1958 and n.d.
- f. 20 Athletes and sporting events, n.d.

Series 5: UNICO, military, and religious photographs, 1950 and n.d.

- f. 21 UNICO photographs, 1950 and n.d.
- f. 22 Military awards, n.d.
- f. 23 Photographs of military members and events, n.d.
- f. 24 Photographs of military members and events, n.d.
- f. 25 Photographs of religious figures and events, n.d.
- f. 26 St. Louis University Pius XII Memorial Library, n.d.

Series 6: Miscellaneous photographs, 1944-1957 and n.d.

- f. 27 Photocopies of award photographs, n.d.
- f. 28 Miscellaneous awards and events, n.d.
- f. 29 Miscellaneous dinners and events, n.d.
- f. 30 Miscellaneous dinners and events, n.d.
- f. 31 Miscellaneous dinners and events, n.d.
- f. 32 Miscellaneous dinners and events, n.d.
- f. 33 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 34 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 35 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 36 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 37 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 38 Miscellaneous travels and events, n.d.
- f. 39 Signed photographs, 1944-1957 and n.d.

Series 7: Negatives, n.d.

- f. 40 A. J. Stephens negative, n.d.
- f. 41 Negatives, n.d.
- f. 42 Press release and holiday newsletter, 1951 and 1959
- f. 43 Certificates, 1955-1965 and n.d.
- f. 44 Photographs of coaches, athletes, and events, 1958 and n.d.

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