

# Judge Elmo M. Hargrave Photograph Collection

The Judge Elmo M. Hargrave Photograph Collection is a group of images taken circa 1920s-1940s that were used to document accident sites in the city.

## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Unknown

**Title:** Judge Elmo M. Hargrave photograph collection (Title of collection denotes preserver's name)

**Dates:** 1920s-1940s, bulk 1920s

**Size:** 1 box, 18 folders, 175 photographs

**Location:** P28

## Administrative Information

**Restrictions on access:** Unrestricted access.

**Additional physical form available:** The photographs have been digitized.

**Publication note:** Article about the collection and some photographs published in: "On the Streets Where We Lived", *The Kansas City Star Magazine*, by Tim Engle, June 28, 1998, p.10-18.

**Acquisition information:** Gift, 1998, Joe Zenitsky, Accession#1998-26.

**Citation note:** Judge Elmo M. Hargrave photograph collection (P28), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

## Collection Description

### **Biographical/Historical note**

The late Elmo Hargrave, for many years a Municipal Judge for Kansas City, recognized the intrinsic historical value of the images in this collection and received permission to save them from destruction. He held on to them for a number of years, and after his death his close friend, Joe Zenitsky, contacted the Kansas City Public Library to make arrangements for providing these photos to its customers and to have available in digitized form.

Elmo M. Hargrave was born in Kansas City in 1918. At the age of 12 he began work at a meat market on east 12th Street, delivering meats to restaurants in his coaster wagon. After attending Manual High School, he enlisted in the Army. It was here that he suffered severe injuries when an exploding mortar shell sent metal shards through his throat and chest. He spent many months in hospitals, experienced more than 20 surgeries, and eventually taught himself to speak again.

Mr. Hargrave returned a war hero with numerous decorations, but was now unable to pursue his career as an Army officer (he had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel). He chose to study the field of law, as it would provide him the opportunity to hone his speaking skills. He enrolled in the law program at the University of Kansas City (now University of Missouri-Kansas City), and a quote from him that appeared in a Kansas City Star article from February 23, 1983, noted that "I really developed my voice by going to law school and reciting every day."

He had a long public career, serving variously as an assistant city attorney, Police Department attorney, acting liquor control director, and, beginning in 1968, as municipal judge, including two terms as presiding judge. The same Star article includes Judge Hargrave's colleagues' descriptions of him as "one of the most conscientious judges on the bench..." and "comes across as being real tough, but he's got humanity."

He retired in 1983 at the age of 65, noting that decades of early rising "did as much as anything to influence my decision." Judge Hargrave died in 1997 at the age of 79.

### **Scope and content note**

The Judge Elmo Hargrave Photograph Collection is a set of 175 black and white photographs and measuring primarily 8 x 10 inches with two duplicate images. They depict scenes mostly in and around downtown Kansas City, Missouri. They were originally created to document accident sites for later use as evidence in lawsuits people had filed against the city. All the photographs have 4 x 5 inch negatives. The photographers were primarily Anderson Photo Company, Norris B. Cresswell, and Photographic and View Company.

The photographs date from the 1920s-1940s, with the bulk from the 1920s. Because of their original intent, they provide a unique perspective on the traditional views of streetscapes, businesses, residences, parks and other locales. Streets and avenues include: 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 23rd Street Viaduct, 63rd, 69th, Armour, Broadway, Forest, Gillham Road, Grand, Locust, Main, McGee and McGee Street Trafficway, Monroe, Oak, Troost and Walnut.

**Processed by** Special Collections Librarian Stuart Hinds, February, 1998.