Missouri State Archives
Finding Aid RG 4.41

Office of Lieutenant Governor

Kenneth Joel Rothman, 1981-1985

Abstract: Records of Kenneth J. Rothman's lieutenant governorship, include subject files and commutations, extraditions, and pardons, 1981-1985 (bulk dates, 1983-1984).

Extent: .2 cubic ft. (.5 Hollinger box)

Record Description: Paper.

Alternative Formats: None.

Location: Missouri State Archives.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions: No special restrictions.

Publication Restrictions: Copyright is in the public domain. Items reproduced for online or physical publication should carry the credit line: Courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.

Preferred Citation: [Item description], [Date]; [Box and Folder]; [Series]; Kenneth J. Rothman, Record Group 4; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

Acquisition Information: Agency transfer. Accession Number 89-012.

Processing Information: Processing completed by Amy C. Nickless on 12/6/23.

Historical and Biographical Notes

Kenneth Joel Rothman was born in St. Louis on October 11, 1935 to Herman Rothman and Anna Ollanick. After graduating from Soldan High School, he earned both his bachelor of arts in history and political science and law degree at Washington University. Rothman also served in the Missouri Air National Guard from 1953-1962, including serving on active duty in Europe during the Berlin Crisis of 1961. From 1959-1961, Rothman served as the prosecuting attorney for St. Louis County. He was elected to the

Missouri House of Representatives in 1962 at the age of 26, making him one of the youngest elected to the Missouri General Assembly. He represented the St. Louis suburb of Clayton (District 8 from 1963-1967, District 36 from 1967-1973, and District 77 from 1973-1981).

During his eighteen years in the Missouri House, Rothman became the first Jewish person to become House Majority Leader (1973-1976) and Speaker of the House (1976-1980). He also served as chair of the House Judiciary Committee for six years. According to the *St. Louis Jewish Light*, Rothman led "the legislative process and influenc[ed] passage of bills on such issues as the statewide criminal code law, revision of the state drug code, prevention of child abuse, strong licensing standards for nursing homes and a major reorganization of the state's highway and transportation system and structure." Concurrent to his time in the General Assembly, Rothman worked for a private law practice.

Rothman served as Lieutenant Governor of Missouri from 1981-1984. He was also the first Jewish person to serve in a statewide office. Rothman ran as the Democratic nominee against Republican John Ashcroft for Governor in 1984, but lost the race. After this, Rothman returned to private practice.

Rothman married his first wife Geraldine "Geri" Jaffe on April 10, 1965. They had four children, David, Sarah, Rachel, and Daniel. Geri Rothman-Serot also had political aspirations and ran against Kit Bond for the United States Senate seat in 1992. They later divorced and Rothman married Judith Kriegshauser. Rothman passed on April 26, 2019.

Timeline

Year	Event
1935	Rothman was born on October 11.
1953-1962	Rothman served in the Missouri Air National Guard.
1959-1961	Rothman served as St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney.
1961	Rothman served overseas during the Berlin Crisis of 1961.
1962	Rothman was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives for the first time.
1965	Rothman married Geraldine Jaffee on April 10.
1973-1976	Rothman served as House Majority Leader.
1976-1980	Rothman served as Speaker of the House.
1980	Rothman was elected Lieutenant Governor of Missouri.
1984	Rothman lost the Missouri governor's race to John Ashcroft.
2019	Rothman passed away on April 26.

Additional Descriptive Information

Bibliography

"First-Jew Elected Lt. Gov. of Mo., November 26, 1980." Jewish Telegraphic Agency Archive. Accessed December 6, 2023. https://www.jta.org/archive/first-jew-elected-lt-gov-of-mo.

"Kenneth J. Rothman Obituary." *Dignity Memorial*. Accessed December 6, 2023. https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/st-louis-mo/kenneth-rothman-8265718.

"Kenneth Rothman and Harriett Woods: only Missouri Jews to serve as Lt. Governor." *St. Louis Jewish Light*. Accessed December 6, 2023. https://stljewishlight.org/opinion/kenneth-rothman-and-harriett-woods-only-missouri-jews-to-serve-as-lt-governor/.

Official Manual of the State of Missouri. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Secretary of State. Volumes 1909-1910 through 1999-2000. https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/bluebook/search.

Related Material

Oral History Collection (S0829). *The State Historical Society of Missouri*. Accessed December 6, 2023. https://collections.shsmo.org/manuscripts/saint-louis/s0829.
- Includes multiple interviews with Rothman.

RG 003.49 Christopher "Kit" Samuel Bond, 1981-1985.

RG 322.01 Board of Public Buildings.
- The Lieutenant Governor serves as secretary of the board.

Series

The records are organized into the following series:

Commutations, Extraditions, and Pardons, 1981-1984
Subject Files, 1983-1984

Commutations and Extraditions, 1981-1984

Extent: 4 folders

Arrangement: Chronological

Scope and Content

Series contains Commutations and Extraditions issued or delivered by Rothman when Governor Christopher "Kit" Bond was out of state. Copies of pardons with some related correspondence and news clippings are included in the files.

Container List

Box	Folder	Date
1	1	1981
1	2	1982
1	3	1983
1	4	1984

Subject Files, 1983-1984

Extent: 4 folders

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Scope and Content

The Subject Files series includes files related to construction and dedication of buildings and a short history of the Lieutenant Governor's office.

Container List

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
1	5	Memorandums Regarding Dedications Ceremonies for Harry S. Truman State office Building	1984
1	6-7	Minority Contractors	1983-1984
1	8	Office of Lieutenant Governor History and Organization	1983