



Judge Douglas Woodruff Hillman papers Collection 486

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Prepared by Jordan Cloud

Grand Rapids History Center

Grand Rapids Public Library

111 Library Street NE

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Business Number: 616-988-5497

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URL: <https://www.grpl.org/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History Center
Title:	Judge Douglas Woodruff Hillman papers
ID:	Collection 486
Date [inclusive]:	1880-2007
Physical Description:	6 Linear Feet 11 Boxes.
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Judge Douglas Woodruff Hillman papers is a collection on one of Grand Rapids' prominent citizens during the second half of the twentieth century. A Second World War veteran, lawyer, and judge, Douglas Hillman (1922-2007) was also a charting member of the Grand Rapids Human Relations Commission. With its numerous photographs and war-time correspondence, this collection is particularly useful for those wanting to learn more about Judge Hillman's military service and post-war home life.

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Biographical / Historical

Born on February 15, 1922, Douglas Hillman was an Army Air Corps pilot, lawyer, and federally appointed Federal Judge. The son of Lemuel S. Hillman & Dorothy W. Hillman, Douglas was one of four children born and raised in Grand Rapids. His father, Lemuel, worked at a number of local financial institutions and was an active member of Grand Rapids' public & civic life. At only 8 years old, Douglas lost his father in 1930 to an automobile accident when his father was struck by a car while walking with his mother.

Attending Fountain Street School and then Central High School, Douglas continued his education at the University of Michigan until his studies were interrupted by the Second World War. Serving as a Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps, Douglas was a B-24 pilot and flew numerous bombing missions over Italy and the oil fields of Ploesti. During his service, Douglas was awarded a number of service medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. While in the army, Douglas also met Sally (Sarah) Jones, whom he married in September of 1944.

After the war, Sally & Douglas returned to Michigan, where Douglas earned a Bachelor of Arts (1946) and then a Bachelor of Laws (1948) from the University of Michigan. Having graduated with a law degree, Douglas began working as a private attorney in Grand Rapids where the pair would later have a daughter, Drusilla. During his time as an attorney, Douglas also became the president of the Grand Rapids Bar Association (1965) and was a charter member, and later chairman of, Grand Rapids' Human Relations Commission.

Following the creation of two new judgeships in the Western District of Michigan, Douglas was chosen by President Carter and confirmed in 1979. In 1986 he became the district's chief judge and served in this capacity until he took senior status in 1991, followed by retirement in 2002. On February 1, 2007, Douglas died in Muskegon at the age of 84, followed by his wife Sally in 2013.

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Content Description

The Judge Douglas Woodruff Hillman papers consists of papers, photographs, scrapbooks, and memorabilia related to the Hillman family, as well as Douglas Hillman's service during World War II and legal career. Items related to Hillman's war service are primarily personal letters and photographs, but also consist of post-war newsletters, war medals, and flight logs. The strength of the collection lies in its photographs, which are numerous for both Douglas' war time experiences and the Hillman's post-war family life.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grand Rapids History Center

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donated by Ann Cooper, a friend of the family. Judge Douglas Woodruff Hillman papers, 2019.007

Newspaper plate donated by Catherine Kennedy, Douglas Hillman's daughter, 2014.041

Scrapbook belonging to Douglas' father, Lemuel Hillman, with images from the 1913 Copper Strike was donated by Barbara Robinson, 2013.036

A number of newspaper clippings and letters, though not all, were donated by Douglas' sister, Caroline Hillman-Blacklund, 2010.036

Correspondence and newspaper clippings were donated by Douglas's neice, Dorothy H. Wickenden, 2024.038.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

For additional information on the Hillman family see:

- The Lemuel S. Hillman papers, Collection 526

For further images of the Hillman family see the following collections:

- Grand Rapids Public Library photograph collection, Coll. 054

- Robinson Photographic Studio Collection, Coll. 125

For an oral history interview with Dorothy Hillman, see:

- Grand Rapids oral history collection (RHC-23), Grand Valley State University Special Collections and University Archives

For general information see the portrait & biography file

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Controlled Access Headings

- World War, 1939-1945
- United States. Army. Air Corps
- letters (correspondence)
- family papers
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Collection Inventory

Hillman Family, 1880-2007

Biographical

Title/Description

Instances

Wickenden, Dorothy. Nothing Daunted: The Unexpected Education of Two Society Girls in the West. New York: Scribner, 2011.

Box 1

Folder 1

Physical Description: 1 item

General

Has inscription in front matter.

Family History & Genealogy

Box 1

Folder 2

Physical Description: 20 items

Biographical Materials: Lemuel & Dorothy Hillman. Includes memos & letters from Samuel Ranck following Lemuel's death, (1927-1930)

Box 1

Folder 3

Physical Description: 11 items

Biographical Materials: Lemuel & Dorothy Hillman

Box 1

Folder 19

Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2022.013

Lemuel Hillman. University Club of Grand Rapids. Roster and Memorial., 1929, 1930

Box 1

Folder 4

Physical Description: 2 items

General

University Club memorial written by Samuel Ranck,
friend of Lemuel and first librarian of the Grand
Rapids Public Library

Memorial items for Douglas kept by his sister Caroline, 2007	Box 1	Folder 18
<u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u> Immediate Source of Acquisition 2010.036		
Central High School, "Hilltoppers," reunion materials, 1998-1999	Box 1	Folder 8
<u>Physical Description:</u> 21 items		
Central High School 60th Reunion	Box 1	Folder 9
<u>Physical Description:</u> 10 items		
General Accompanying Items		
1 1902 article from the Daily Eagle entitled "Some Pioneer Recollections" by Mrs. Louis Mosier, along with a letter written by granddaughter Alice Mosier from Nov. 16, 1949		
2 2 newspaper clippings on the marriage of Sally Jones and Douglas Hillman		
Marriage Certificates for Douglas Hillman & Sarah Jones, 1944-09-14	Box 1	Folder 10
<u>Physical Description:</u> 7 items		
Hillman Family, Newspaper Clippings	Box 1	Folder 11
<u>Physical Description:</u> 15 items		
Hillman Family, Newspaper Clippings [Photocopies]	Box 1	Folder 12
<u>Physical Description:</u> 15 items		
University of Michigan items from L.S. Hillman wallet	Box 1	Folder 13
<u>Physical Description:</u> 9 items		
Douglas ephemera, mostly from Ann Arbor	Box 1	Folder 14
<u>Physical Description:</u> 13 items		
Newspaper clippings and biographical materials for Lemuel Hillman	Box 1	Folder 17
<u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u>		

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2010.036

Processing Information:**Processing Information**

Some of these items are duplicated in box 1, folder 3, but these were kept by Caroline rather than Douglas. Includes dates and information not found in the afore mentioned folder.

Obituary for Douglas and Memorials, 2007 <u>Physical Description:</u> 5 items	Box 4	Folder 1
Funeral service guest album, 2007-02-12 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 4	Folder 2
Memorial albums, circa 2007 <u>Physical Description:</u> 2 items	Box 4	Folder 3
Funeral service programs at Fountain Street Church, 2007-02-12 <u>Physical Description:</u> 2 items	Box 4	Folder 4
Funeral service audio, 2007-02-12 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 4	Folder 5
Passport for Douglas <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 4	Folder 7
Gordon Scott Cup Award <u>Processing Information:</u> Processing Information Poor condition, in two pieces.	Box 9	
Hamilton, Claude T. "Western Michigan History: Colonial Period." Published in Des Moines, Iowa, n.d. 23 pages.	Box 9	
Annotated copy of Michigan Tradesman, no. 2227, 1926-05-26	Box 9	
Autographed photograph of Blair Moody addressed to Mrs. Douglas Hillman, n.d.	Box 2	Folder 15

Correspondence

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence: FDR to L.S. <u>Physical Description:</u> 2 items	Box 1	Folder 5
Correspondence: To and from Lemeul Hillman, 1926-1927	Box 1	Folder 16

Correspondence: To Douglas from Lemuel (2) & To Mother from Douglas (1) <u>Physical Description</u> : 3 items	Box 1	Folder 6
Correspondence concerning pre-war education & transcript for Douglas <u>Physical Description</u> : 5 items	Box 1	Folder 7
Correspondence, from Douglas to Fred Riley, regarding visit to Italy, 1994-10-31 General Includes identifications of the Italian men & women in the photographs, envelope, & letter	Box 2	Folder 6
Correspondence: To Douglas - Christmas Card & Letter <u>Immediate Source of Acquisition</u> : Immediate Source of Acquisition 2022.013	Box 1	Folder 20

Photographs & Negatives

Title/Description	Instances	
Douglas, University of Michigan Fraternity Portraits, 1940-1942 <u>Physical Description</u> : 3 items	Box 1	Folder 15
Family photos: 35mm Color Negatives, sets 1 & 2, n.d.	Box 2	Folder 1
Family photos: 35mm Color Negatives, set 3, n.d.	Box 2	Folder 2
Family photos: 35mm Color Negatives, sets 4 & 5, n.d., 1977-09 <u>Processing Information</u> : Processing Information Date comes from discarded negative envelope	Box 2	Folder 3
Photographs. Stornara, Italy. Return trip for Douglas later in life, circa 1994	Box 2	Folder 4
35mm Color Negatives. Stornara, Italy, circa 1994	Box 2	Folder 5
Photographs, Lemuel & unidentified, n.d.	Box 2	Folder 7
Photographs, color. Mostly Dorothy Hillman, circa 1960s-1970s	Box 2	Folder 8
Photographs, mixed set	Box 2	Folder 9
Photographs of Douglas as a child	Box 2	Folder 10
Photographs of Douglas as a young adult		

	Box 2	Folder 11
Photographs of Douglas & Sarah	Box 2	Folder 12
Photographs, loose from album. Mostly Douglas & Sarah	Box 2	Folder 13
Photographs from unknown album, circa 1980s-2000s	Box 2	Folder 14
Family Photo Album, 'The Hillmans.' Mostly World War II & Early Post-War era family photos., 1946-1959	Box 5	

General

Images include views of Ann Arbor and family and friends on vacation.

Individuals pictured

- 1 Bill Seidman
- 2 Sally Seidman
- 3 Bob Shaw
- 4 Allan Knapp
- 5 Hazel Amberg
- 6 Julius Amberg
- 7 David Amberg
- 8 Jinx Johnson
- 9 Emily Johnson
- 10 Jack Uhl
- 11 Roberta Merrick
- 12 Mike Keeler
- 13 Mary Anne Keeler
- 14 Barb Wilcox
- 15 Nancy Mueller
- 16 Lou Evans
- 17 Walt Freihofer
- 18 Sybil Freihofer
- 19 John Getz
- 20 Douglas Hillman
- 21 Sarah "Sally" Hillman
- 22 Dorothy Hillman "Mother H"

Family Videos. DVD	Box 4	Folder 6
<u>Physical Description:</u> 1 DVD containing transfers from VHS & 8mm		

Family Videos. 8mm & VHS Cassette	Box 11	
<u>Processing Information:</u>		
Processing Information		

All materials contained on these originals have been transferred to DVD for patron access.

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

Preservation copies not for public use.

Family Videos. Master & Transfer DVDs	Box 11
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Conditions Governing Use:

Conditions Governing Use

Not for public use. Usage copy available in Box 4.

Photo album belonging to Lemuel Hillman that includes images from the 1913 Copper Strike , 1913	Box 12
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Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2013.036

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Military Service, (1942-1945), 1942-2007

Scope and Contents

Includes items related to Douglas' service in the Army Air Corps, as well as his sister Caroline's service during World War II. Correspondence is primarily between Douglas and Sarah Jones.

Army-issued Documents & Items, 1942-1945

Title/Description	Instances	
Army Flying Record. Hillman, Douglas W. 2nd Lt., 1942-1945 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 3	Folder 1
Military Estate Chart, Private 201 File, 1942-1945	Box 3	Folder 2
Crosswind: Class of 43-E 7th A.A.F.F.T.D. Oxnard, California. Flight School Yearbook., 1943 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 3	Folder 3
General		
Douglas Hillman pictured under "F" Flight"		
Unit Citation & Service Medal Documents, 1944-1945 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 item	Box 7	Folder 8
Flight training log & ephemera <u>Physical Description:</u> 6 items	Box 7	Folder 10
Flight Training Diploma	Box 9	

Physical Description: 1 item

Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, & other Realia

Box 10

Conditions Governing Access:

Conditions Governing Access

These materials are requestable by patrons, but must be viewed at the desk in the precense of a staff member

War-time correspondence, 1942-1945

Title/Description	Instances
War-time correspondence. 3-ring binder, 1944 <u>Physical Description:</u> Housed in non-archival sheets used by document creator. Original order has been maintained. Letters have original date it was written and a second date, likely signifying when it was received. 1 bright green binder	Box 6
General Several letters have sticky notes placed on them, presumably by Douglas Hillman.	
Sticky Notes 1 1944-04-16. "Fatigue" 2 1944-04-20. "Sick to death of this war!" 3 1944-05-25. "5/25/44 34 Missions" 4 1944-05-29. "Reveille @2am. Up to fly-" 5 1944-05-06. "Our last fateful combat flight..." 6 1944-05-31. "05/21/44. Plane shot up - all bailed out -" 7 1944-05-31. "05/31/44. Bailout"	
War-time correspondence. 3-ring binder, 1943-1944 <u>Physical Description:</u> Housed in non-archival sheets used by document creator. Original order has been maintained. Letters have original date it was written and a second date, likely signifying when it was received. 1 Dark Green Binder	Box 6
War-time correspondence. V-Mail, 1944 <u>Physical Description:</u> 1 black & white laminated booklet	Box 6

World War II Photos, circa 1940s

Title/Description	Instances
Black Scrapbook - Loose Images, 4x5 or smaller, circa 1940s <u>Physical Description:</u> 23 Items	Box 3 Folder 4

Processing Information:

Processing Information

These images are all believed to come from the black scrapbook due to their military service-focused content and similar type of print as those contained in the black scrapbook. Images have been sorted by relative size due to volume.

Black Scrapbook - Loose Images, 5x7 or larger, circa 1940s

Box 3

Folder 5

Physical Description: 7 Items

Processing Information:

Processing Information

These images are all believed to come from the black scrapbook due to their military service-focused content and similar type of print as those contained in the black scrapbook. Images have been sorted by relative size due to volume.

Black Scrapbook - Loose Images, 4x5, 5x7, 8x10

Box 3

Folder 6

Physical Description: 13 items

General

Contains duplicates, likely images kept by friends, family, or photocopied later by Douglas.

Black Scrapbook & War-Time Photo Album

Box 8

Processing Information:

Processing Information

Where possible, this album has been kept intact. Due to its poor physical condition, images are missing from its pages. Images known to have come from the album have been noted in the finding aid and are housed separately in another box.

Black Scrapbook - Full Pages

Box 8

General

Includes images, as well as newspaper clippings from Douglas' military service

Newspaper Clippings & Ephemera

Title/Description

Instances

Postcards. Rome, Italy, After 1944-06-04

Box 3

Folder 7

Physical Description: 17 items

Caroline Hillman - Photocopied photographs, clippings, and photographs <u>Physical Description:</u> 5 items	Box 3	Folder 8
Newspaper Clippings. War time & post-war, 1940s; 1990s-2000s <u>Physical Description:</u> 9 items	Box 3	Folder 9
Newspaper Clippings. War time & post war [photocopies] <u>Physical Description:</u> 6 items	Box 3	Folder 10
Military discharge papers & certificate <u>Physical Description:</u> 6 items	Box 3	Folder 11
Allied Military currency & army related ephemera, 1943-1945 <u>Physical Description:</u> 10 items	Box 3	Folder 13

Newsletters, post-war correspondence, & reminiscence, 1980s-2007

Title/Description	Instances	
Post-war application for reserve & accompanying correspondence, including letter from Gerald Ford <u>Physical Description:</u> 54 items	Box 3	Folder 12
"The Flying Colt," 456th Bomb Group Assoc. Newsletters <u>Physical Description:</u> 3 items	Box 3	Folder 14
"Col. Steeds Flying Colts," 456th Newsletter & Correspondence <u>Physical Description:</u> 15 items	Box 3	Folder 15
Correspondence concerning WWII & 456th ephemera <u>Physical Description:</u> 29 items	Box 3	Folder 16
Correspondence & accompanying images <u>Physical Description:</u> 7 items	Box 3	Folder 17
Correspondence from Douglas to Caroline <u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u> Immediate Source of Acquisition 2010.036	Box 3	Folder 18

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Legal Career & Public Life, 1945-2007

Title/Description	Instances	
Newspaper Clippings, 1953; 1965 <u>Physical Description:</u> 6 items	Box 7	Folder 1
Newspaper Clippings [Photocopies], 1953; 1965 <u>Physical Description:</u> 5 items	Box 7	Folder 2
Ephemera: Traffic Commission, Notary Public, Delegate to County Convention , 1952; 1963 <u>Physical Description:</u> 3 items	Box 7	Folder 3
Photographs, mounted 5x7s depicting Douglas as a Judge <u>Physical Description:</u> 3 items	Box 7	Folder 4
Photographs of Douglas as a Judge <u>Physical Description:</u> 7 items	Box 7	Folder 5
General Includes Robinson photo and one image of Douglas & Sarah		
Bar Association, 1948-12-18 <u>Physical Description:</u> 4 items	Box 7	Folder 6
University of Michigan Diploma & Education items <u>Physical Description:</u> 7 items	Box 7	Folder 7
Correspondence, 1952 <u>Physical Description:</u> 9 items	Box 7	Folder 9
Correspondence and items related to Judge Douglas assuming senior status, May 14, 1990 <u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u> Immediate Source of Acquisition 2010.036	Box 7	Folder 10
Newspaper Clippings, related to citizenship, desegregation, and the Human Relations Commission, 1967-1996 <u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u> Immediate Source of Acquisition 2010.036	Box 7	Folder 11
Newspaper Clippings & articles - Legal Philosophy & Hillman Advocacy Program, 1988-2001 <u>Immediate Source of Acquisition:</u>	Box 7	Folder 12

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2010.036 & 2022.013

General

Includes a bibliography of Douglas' writings

Newspaper Clippings, articles, and correspondence - career and retirement, 1984-2002	Box 7	Folder 13
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Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2010.036

Newspaper articles and correspondence related to appointment to U.S. District Court Judge, April 1979-September 12, 1979	Box 7	Folder 14
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Newspaper Clippings - Various Topics	Box 7	Folder 15
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Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2022.013

Newspaper Clippings - Various Topics [Photocopies]	Box 7	Folder 16
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Newspaper plate - Douglas Hillman, n.d.	Box 10
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Physical Description: 1 item

Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2014.041

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