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North Carolina Collection

Sylvia Kerckhoff Papers

Title:	Sylvia Kerckhoff Papers
Inclusive Dates:	1962-2010
Extent of Materials:	1 Box
Location:	NC 2nd floor storage, Shelf 52
Date of Accession:	September 8, 2011
Donor:	Sylvia Kerckhoff
Relationship of donor or materials to the DCL/NCR	
Processor:	Lori Neumeier
Subject Headings:	Local government — North Carolina — Durham.
	Durham (N.C.) — Politics and government.
Scope and Content:	Materials within the Sylvia Kerckhoff papers include correspondence, résumés, contracts, certificates, proclamations, reports, newspaper clippings, and photographs. Materials relate to her time as mayor and document her activity with the North Carolina League of Women Voters and with the Cooperative School for Pregnant Girls. Material extends into Kerckhoff's retirement after the end of her second term as mayor.
Related Materials:	
Restrictions:	
Biographical/Historical Note:	<p>Sylvia Kerckhoff was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1928. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin in 1950 with a degree in psychology, she pursued master's degrees in history and education from Duke University, from which she graduated in 1960. Kerckhoff advocated for education and women's rights, issues she supported as an active member of the North Carolina League of Women Voters and as a teacher at the Cooperative School for Pregnant Girls, a school established to provide academic, emotional, and medical support to a demographic susceptible to abandoning their education. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, Kerckhoff served on a number of boards and committees and co-founded the Durham Urban Trails and Greenways project. She was elected to six, two-year terms on the Durham City Council, including four years as mayor pro-tem, before being elected Durham's first female mayor in 1993, defeating incumbent Mayor Harry Rodenhizer. She was reelected to a second two-year term in 1995. Key issues during her time in office included economic development, crime prevention, and affordable housing. Two acts during her tenure as mayor made her especially proud. The first of these was the creation of Downtown Durham Inc. in 1993. The nonprofit was organized to "promote and facilitate development and revitalization of the city center," and slowly but surely the city center began to show the results of the organization's efforts. The other was the city council's acceptance of a "living wage" law that raised the minimum wage of workers on city contracts and payrolls to \$7.55 an hour, much more than the federal minimum wage of \$4.75 in effect in 1966. The ordinance passed in January 1998. She was succeeded by Nick Tennyson, who received her endorsement. After her time as mayor, she continued to be active in the community, serving on the North Carolina Transit 2001 Commission (2001), Durham's Cultural Master Plan Advisory Board (ca. 2005-2007), and A Taste for Durham's Future Committee (ca. 2008-2009).</p>

Organization of Collection:		
Container List:	Box 1	
	Correspondence: Official	1964-2005, undated
	Includes correspondence with Michael Dukakis	
	Correspondence: Personal	undated
	Includes correspondence with Michael Dukakis	
	Résumés	undated
	Contracts, certificates, proclamations	
	Includes certificates of election for city council and mayor	
	NC League of Women Voters	1965-1968
	Reports: Teenage Pregnancy	1979, undated
	Newspaper clippings: NC League of Women Voters	1962-1973, undated
	Newspaper clippings: Cooperative School for Pregnant Girls	1969, undated
	Newspaper clippings: Miscellaneous	1928-2010, undated
	"Memories" of City Hall binder	undated
	Includes political cartoons compiled throughout Kerckhoff's time as mayor	
	Miscellaneous material	1979, undated

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