

**Inventory to the  
James Lenox Sullivan Papers, 1976-1977**

**AR. 586**



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives  
Nashville, Tennessee

INVENTORY TO THE  
JAMES LENOX SULLIVAN PAPERS  
AR. 586

**Summary**

Main Entry: James Lenox Sullivan Papers.

Date span: 1976-1977

Abstract: Collection of correspondence and subject files of James L. Sullivan related to his service as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from June 1976 to June 1977. Served as President of the Sunday School Board from 1953 to his retirement in 1975.

Size: 2.5 linear ft.

Collection #: AR 586

**Biographical Note**

James Sullivan was born on March 12, 1910 in Silver Creeks, Mississippi to James Washington and Mary Ellen Sullivan. Most of his early years were spent in Mississippi and Tennessee where his father served as a Southern Baptist pastor. He attended high school in Tylertown, Mississippi, graduating in 1928. He received his B.A. degree from Mississippi College in 1932. Sullivan graduated from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1935 with a Th.M degree. Mississippi College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1948.

He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1930. He served as pastor to several churches; Boston, Kentucky, 1932-33; Beaver Dam, Kentucky, 1933-38; Ripley, Tennessee, 1938-1940; Clinton, Mississippi, 1940-42; Brookhaven, Mississippi, 1942-46; Belmont Heights Church, Nashville, Tennessee, 1946-50; First Baptist Abilene, Texas, 1950-53. In 1953, Sullivan was selected as president of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He retired in 1975. He died in Nashville on December 27, 2004.

Sullivan was active in denominational activities, serving as a trustee and committee member for several Baptist institutions. In 1976 he was elected over five

other nominees to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. He declined to be considered for the customary second term for personal and health reasons.

During his tenure as president of the Convention, he became the spokesman for Southern Baptists. The presidential campaign of Jimmy Carter (a Southern Baptist) attracted a great deal of media attention on Baptist beliefs and the denomination. Sullivan conducted numerous interviews with the press during his year as president.

Sullivan authored numerous articles and several books. The books written by Sullivan included: Your Life and Your Church; John's Witness to Jesus; Memos for Christian Living; Reach Out; Baptist Polity; Baptist Polity as I see it; and God is my Record.

#### **Scope and Content Note**

The collection includes 2.5 linear ft. of material and consists correspondence and subject files relating to Sullivan's tenure as Southern Baptist Convention president, 1976-77. Much of the correspondence relates to the activities of the Executive Committee and the planning for the 1977 Southern Baptist convention. The added significance to the Sullivan Papers involves the media attention focused on Baptists because of the nomination and election of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter as president the United States. Sullivan, in many ways, served as spokesman for the denomination during that year. The papers cover the time from July, 1976 to July, 1977. There is one folder of 1944 letters and cards when Sullivan served as pastor of the Brookhaven Baptist Church.

Significant subjects covered in the papers include: Jimmy Carter, Andrew Young speaking at 1977 Convention, and Canadian Baptists and Abortion. Included in the subject files are reports, programs, clippings, speeches, correspondence, minutes, committee material and informational files.

#### **Arrangement**

The collection is divided into two series. A. Correspondence and B. Subject Files. Both series are arranged alphabetically.

**Provenance:**

Donated by James L. Sullivan, 1997

**Preferred citation:**

James Lenox Sullivan Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

**Access restriction:**

None

**Subject Terms:**

Sullivan, James Lenox, 1910-2005  
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-  
Young, Andrew, 1932-  
Southern Baptist Convention - Presidents  
Southern Baptist Convention  
Baptists -United States  
Baptists - Tennessee  
Baptists - Canada  
Baptists - Clergy  
Church and state - Baptists  
Church and state - United States  
Elections - United States  
Abortion - Religious aspects - Baptists  
Presidents - Election - United States - 1976  
Presidential candidates - United States  
Politicians - United States  
United States - Politics and government - 1974-1977

**Related material:**

Southern Baptist Convention. Sunday School Board. Executive Office. James L. Sullivan Papers. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

**Container List**

- A. Correspondence
1. Correspondence - A
  2. Correspondence - Ba
  3. Correspondence - Be-Bl
  4. Correspondence - Bo
  5. Correspondence - Br
  6. Correspondence - Bu-By
  7. Correspondence - Brookhaven, 1944
  8. Correspondence - Ca
  9. Correspondence - Ch-Co
  10. Correspondence - Cr-Cu
  11. Correspondence - Congratulatory letters

12. Correspondence - Congratulatory letters - Sullivan  
Papers
13. Correspondence - Da-Di
14. Correspondence - Do-Du
15. Correspondence - E
16. Correspondence - Fa-Fi
17. Correspondence - Fl-Fz
18. Correspondence - Ga- Ga
19. Correspondence - Gr-Gu
20. Correspondence - Ja
21. Correspondence - He-Hi
22. Correspondence - Ho
23. Correspondence - Hu
24. Correspondence - I
25. Correspondence - J
26. Correspondence - K
27. Correspondence - L
28. Correspondence - Mac
29. Correspondence - Ma-Mi
30. Correspondence - Mo-Mu
31. Correspondence - N
32. Correspondence - O
33. Correspondence - Pa-Pe
34. Correspondence - Pi-Pu
35. Correspondence - Q-R
36. Correspondence - Sa-Sm
37. Correspondence - So-Sz
38. Correspondence - T
39. Correspondence - U
40. Correspondence - V
41. Correspondence - Wa-We
42. Correspondence - Wh-Wz
- 43a. Correspondence- X,Y,Z
- 43b. Correspondence - Unidentified

Box 2

- B. Subject Files
44. Abortion
45. Addresses and Speeches
46. Administrative Committee
47. Agendas
48. Agenda- SBC, 1977
49. Alabama Baptist
50. American Bible society
51. Baptist Hospital Inc. - Minutes and Reports
52. Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
53. Baptist Press

54. Biographical Information- Sullivan
55. Canadian Baptists
56. Clippings and Articles on Sullivan
57. Clippings and Articles on Sullivan
58. Clippings - Jimmy Carter
59. Clippings - Misc
60. Committees - Correspondence and material
61. Committee of Sixteen
62. Committee on Committees
63. Committee Suggestions
64. Convention Bulletin
65. Cooperation Program - Financial Reports
66. Credentials Committee
67. Executive Committee
68. Foreign Mission Board Reports
69. God and Country Award - Correspondence
70. Mississippi College - Report
71. National Baptist Convention - Programs
72. North Central Mission Thrust
73. Photograph - Leavell/Sullivan
74. Program, SBC - 1977
75. Programs, misc
76. Reports, misc
77. Resolutions Committee
78. Resolutions
79. Self, William L. - Convention sermon
80. Sermon - Sullivan, SBC 1977, "Let the Church Reach Out."
81. Speeches/Addresses (others)
82. Southern Baptist Convention, 1977 - clippings
83. Southern Baptist Foundation
84. Suggestions
85. Travel Schedule
86. Young, Andrew - correspondence on speaking at 1977 SBC
87. Tellers, SBC, 1977
88. United Tennessee League
89. Washburn, A.V.- Article