

John P. Rousakis papers

Descriptive Summary

Repository:	Georgia Historical Society
Creator:	Rousakis, John P., 1929-2000.
Title:	John P. Rousakis papers
Dates:	1962-2001
Extent:	7.1 cubic feet (14 boxes, 1 oversize box, 1 oversize folder)
Identification:	MS 1678

Biographical/Historical Note

John Paul Rousakis (1929-2000), the son of Greek immigrants Paul and Antigone Alexopolos Rousakis, was born in Savannah on January 14, 1929. After graduating from Savannah High School in 1947, John Rousakis attended the University of Kentucky on a basketball scholarship. When an ankle injury ended his basketball career, Rousakis transferred to the University of Georgia. He graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in 1952. Rousakis served in the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps during the Korean War.

In 1953, Rousakis married Irene Fotopoukus. The couple had three daughters and one son. Returning to Savannah in 1956, Rousakis opened an insurance agency, Rousakis Insurance, and became active in local civic and political organizations. After serving on the Chatham County Commission from 1965-1970, he was elected to his first term as Savannah mayor in 1970. His ticket included Bowles Ford, the first African American elected in Savannah since reconstruction. Rousakis went on to serve an unprecedented five terms as mayor from 1970 to 1991. In two elections he ran unopposed.

Some of his administration's accomplishments included: building Savannah's tourist industry, expanding Savannah's historic area and landmark preservation program, revival and development of the River Street and City Market areas, rehabilitation of slum housing and revitalization of lower income neighborhoods, annexation of the Southside, developing youth education and employment programs, and bringing the 1996 Olympics to Georgia.

Rousakis was very active in local and national organizations. He was a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. He was a past president of the National League of Cities, Georgia Municipal Association, and St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church (Savannah), where he was a lifelong member. He was also active with the Jaycees, Union Mission and American Cancer Society.

Following the death of his wife in 1985, Rousakis married Elizabeth Lattimore Sparks in 1987. John Rousakis died in Savannah on December 11, 2000.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of the papers of John P. Rousakis, arranged into four series: mayoral; personal; newspaper clippings; and photographs. The mayoral series is further arranged into the following three subseries: correspondence; subject files; speeches; and campaigns. A proper name index follows the photograph inventory; it lists people who are identified in the photographs, and therefore is not a complete listing of every person found in the collection.

The boxes containing photographs are noted as "VM" (visual materials) in the collection inventory.

Index Terms

Administrative records.
Carter, Jimmy, 1924-

Clippings (information artifacts)
Democratic Party (U.S.)
Georgia Municipal Association.
Georgia--Politics and government--1951-
Greek Americans--Georgia--Savannah.
Letters (correspondence)
National League of Cities.
Olympic Games (26th : 1996 : Atlanta, Ga.)
Photographs.
Politicians--Georgia--Chatham County.
Public relations and politics.
Rousakis, Elizabeth Lattimore Sparks.
Rousakis, John P., 1929-2000.
Saint Patrick's Day--Georgia--Savannah.
Savannah (Ga.). City Council.
Savannah (Ga.). Mayor.
Speeches (documents)
Urban renewal--Georgia--Savannah.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Material was acquired from wife of creator.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], John P. Rousakis papers, MS 1678, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Elizabeth Rousakis, 2001.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Separated Material

Artifacts were separated and cataloged with the Georgia Historical Society Artifacts Collection. View digital images of artifacts at the end of this collection inventory or search the Digital Image Catalog for further information.

Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Container List

SERIES 1:: Mayoral papers, 1970-1996

This series consists of four subseries: 1.1, correspondence; 1.2, subject files; 1.3, speeches; and 1.4, campaigns.

SUBSERIES 1.1:: Correspondence, 1970-1991

This subseries contains incoming and carbon copies of outgoing letters to and from Rousakis. Topics include the disposition of Hunter Air Base property, property taxes, housing rehabilitation programs, the Riverfront development, annexation of unincorporated areas, and other topics related to the city and Rousakis' personal and political interest. The subseries is arranged chronologically.

Box	Fldr	
1	1-10	1970-1980

Box	Fldr	
2	11-15	1981-1985
	16-18	1986-1988

Box	Fldr	
3	19-21	1989-1991

SUBSERIES 1.2:: Subject files, 1972-1990

This subseries contains Rousakis' reference files on topics ranging from state and national democratic political issues and candidates, including Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale, to Greek festivals and two tours of Greece, 1985 and 1988 to 1989. Also included are files regarding the Rousakis' trip to Japan to learn about that country's hosting of the Olympics in preparation for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. This subseries is arranged chronologically.

Box	Fldr	
3	22	Greece and Papandreou, 1972-1973

- 23 Savannah Symphony fund raisers, 1975-1991
- 24 "El Paso Savannah" Tanker christening, 1978
- 25 Federal grant funds to cities, 1979
- 26 Savannahian of the Year Award, 1979
- 27 Greek controversy and Democrats for Nixon, 1979-1991
- 28 Jimmy Carter/Walter Mondale Steering Committee, 1980
- 29 Order of Alpha, Sons of Pericles reception, 1982
- 30 Savannah High School 35th year reunion, 1982
- 31 Endorsement of Walter Mitchell, Jr. as Sheriff of Chatham County, 1984
- 32 *Georgia Gazette*, "Making of the Mayor" series, 1984-1985

Box**Fldr**

- 4 33 Cancer Patients Employment Rights Act (HR 1294), 1985
- 34 Greek Festival meeting, 1985
- 35 Inside Savannah column, 1985
- 36 Theodore Saloutas memorial Fund, 1985
- 37 Tour of Greece, 1985
- 38 AXIOS "Man of the Year," co-chairman, 1987-1990
- 39 Housing Rehabilitation (HUD/city no interest loans), 1988
- 40 Tour of Greece, 1988-1989
- Olympics, Japan trip
 - Shimizu, 1990
 - Tokyo, 1990

SUBSERIES 1.3:: Speeches, 1977-1993

This subseries contains speeches arranged chronologically and topically. The topical speech files include addresses before the Bethesda Home for Boys, Savannah Jaycees, and at various graduations. All speech files contain typed speeches, drafts of speeches, notes for speeches, and reference material for speeches, including speeches given by mayors of other cities.

Box

4 General

1973, 1977-1979

Box Fldr5 47- 1980-1985
5253- 1986-1990
57**Box Fldr**6 58- 1991, undated
59

60 Appreciation Dinner, 1993

61 Bethesda Home for Boys, 1993

62 Graduation speeches, 1980-1990

63 Jokes, undated

64 Leo Center speech honoring Rousakis, 1997

65 Prayers, undated

66 Roasts, 1977-1992

67 Savannah Jaycees, 1992-1993

68- State of the City, 1973-1991
69

not including 1972, 1974-1975, 1978

SUBSERIES 1.4:: Campaigns, 1991-1996

This subseries contains donor lists, financial records, publicity, media files, opponents' literature, and speeches. The files are arranged chronologically by campaign and alphabetically by topic.

Only the campaigns of 1991, 1993, and 1995 are documented in this collection.

1991

Box Fldr

7 70 General

71	Administrative expenses
72	City reference material
73	Congratulatory messages
74	Crime
75	Debates
76	Finance
77	Lists of names
78	Opponents
79	Official proceedings of City Council, background
80	Publicity

Oversize_box

1	Scrapbook
81	Speeches
	1993

Box	Fldr	
8	82-83	Appreciation Fund, finances, lists
		1995
		Correspondence
		Crime
		Finance
		Issue research
		Mailing lists
		Marketing
		Media
		Opponents' publicity
		Publicity

Box	Fldr
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9	96	Speeches
	97	Supports
	98	Susan Weiner
	99	Volunteers
	100- 101	finance, 1996,

SERIES 2:: Personal papers, 1980-2000

This series contains information regarding Mayor Rousakis' personal life and that of his family, notably the death of his first wife, Irene, his engagement and marriage to Elizabeth Lattimore Sparks, the marriage of his daughter, Thea, his involvement in civic and religious activities, and biographical information about him. This series is arranged chronologically.

Box Fldr

- 10 102 Driving under the influence charge, February 1980
 - Correspondence
 - 1980-1987, 1993, undated
 - Death of Irene Rousakis, November, 1985
- 105 New Years party, 1986
- 106 Rousakis genealogy, 1986
- 107 Thea Rousakis Blanton wedding, February 2, 1987
- 108- Engagement to Elizabeth Lattimore Sparks, June 1987
9
- 110 Hesse Elementary School cards, 1987
- 111 Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, 1988
- 112 Olympics, 1996
- 113 Civic leadership in Savannah, interview, 1998
- 114 Ellis Island Medal of Honor, 2000
- 115- Biographical directories' information, undated
116

SERIES 3:: Newspaper clippings, 1962-2001

This series contains clippings regarding Rousakis' mayoral and personal activities. Of particular note is a folder of clippings from the *Georgia Gazette*, "The making of the Mayor," series which ran from November 1984 to January 1985. This series is arranged chronologically.

Box Fldr

11 117- 1962, 1973-1984
118

119 *Georgia Gazette*, "The Making of the Mayor", November 1984-January 1985

120- 1985-2001, undated
127

SERIES 4:: Photographs, 1968-1996

This series contains photographs documenting Rousakis' time as Mayor of the City of Savannah. The collection includes images of city celebrations and parades, groundbreaking, awarding keys to the city, receptions, and conferences. Very few photographs in this collection are of a personal nature. This collection is arranged chronologically with undated material placed at the end. Each folder is also arranged chronologically with undated material last. There is one oversized photograph.

Online Inventory Contains Digitized Items

vm_box Fldr

1 1 1968, 1970, 8 items **View online.**
Includes swearing in as mayor.

vm_box Fldr

1 2-3 1971, 28 items **View online.**
Includes Georgia Day activities and a reception for General Eugene M. Lynch.

vm_box Fldr

1 4 1972, 17 items

vm_box Fldr

1 5 1973, 34 items
Includes St. Patrick's Day parade and Bishop's ordination.

vm_box Fldr

1 6-7 1974 February-September, undated, 44 items **View online.**
includes Georgia Day activities and Georgia Municipal Association luncheon, Jerry Lewis Telethon, and City Council inauguration.

vm_box

1 1975

1975, 25 items. **View online.**

Includes March of Dimes Telerama, White House ceremonies commemorating Savannah as 500 th Sister City, opening night at Grayson Stadium, ribbon-cutting at Largo Shopping Plaza, groundbreaking for Westside Health Facility.

Photo of White House ceremony

vm_box Fldr

1 9 1976, 31 items

Includes local option sales tax presentation, October 9th celebrations

vm_box Fldr1 10- 1977, 56 items
11

Includes St. Patrick's Day parade and River Street/Rousakis Plaza dedication, Symphony dinner and River Street.

vm_box Fldr1 12- 1978, 71 items **View online.**
13

Includes Jimmy Carter, St. Patrick's Day parade, and groundbreaking for EM Laboratories, Pulaski Memorial ceremonies and Candler Hospital groundbreaking.

vm_box Fldr1 14- 1979 February-May, 79 items
15

includes St. Patrick's Day parade and City Council inauguration, trip to Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and China.

vm_box Fldr

1 16 1980, 28 items

Includes St. Patrick's Day parade, "USCM" parade in Washington state, and cooking at Dr. Beren's house.

vm_box Fldr

2 1-2 1981, 51 items

Includes National League of Cities, Night In Old Savannah, and St. Patrick's Day parade, visiting Ft. Stewart and Democratic National Convention.

vm_box

2 1982

1982, 55 items

Includes St. Patrick's Day parade, *Captain Sam* christening, and Irish Tourist Board reception, Hyatt party and inauguration.

Victory party, 67 items

vm_box Fldr2 6-7 1983, 50 items **View online.**

Includes Georgia Day, St. Patrick's Day parade, Jerry Lewis Telethon, and Democratic Mayor: Urban Hearings, International Union of Local Authorities photo album, photos were taken out of album and photocopies made of any identifying information written in album.

vm_box Fldr

2 8-9 1984, 53 items

Includes reception for Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Sir Patrick Gilbert, St. Patrick's Day parade and Aldo Cella, visiting Daufauskie Island's oldest resident (Mrs. Lilly), and reception on *Captain Sam* boat, Housing Authority ceremony.

vm_box Fldr

2 10 1985, 44 items

Includes Symphony dinner, St. Patrick's Day parade, Resource Recovery groundbreaking ceremony, and trip to Greece.

vm_box Fldr2 11-14 1986, 105 items **View online.**

Includes U.S. Conference of Mayors, Savannah Gas Company ceremony, St. Patrick's Day parade, and campaign party, parking garage dedication and reception for Shimizu Port Administration Bureau (?), miscellaneous unidentified, groundbreaking for Paulson Park.

vm_box Fldr

2 15 Inauguration, 1986., 34 items

vm_box

3 1987

1987, 35 items. **View images: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5.**

Includes St. Patrick's Day parade and announcement of St. Louis Cardinals buying Savannah baseball team, reception at City Hall for new gold dome and Nursing Home Week, miscellaneous unidentified.

Opening of Paulson Park (softball complex), April, 53 items

Bridge dedication, November 3rd, new Talmadge Bridge groundbreaking ceremony, 37 items

vm_box Fldr

3 6 1988, 47 items **View online.**

Includes receiving Mayor of Hiratsuka, Japan, St. Patrick's Day greening of the fountain and parade, and Democratic Convention.

vm_box Fldr

3 7 1989, 49

Includes tuba ensemble, St. Patrick's Day parade, visiting Ft. Stewart, and Mrs. Wilkes Boarding House.

vm_box Fldr

3 8 1990, 14 items

Includes Kennedy Park dedication and Atlanta Allies reception.

vm_box Fldr

3 9 1991-92, 18 items

Includes St. Patrick's Day parade.

vm_box Fldr

3 10 Campaign, 1996., 37 items

vm_box

3 Undated

Johnny Mercer Theatre dedication, (circa 1972)., 17 items

Jimmy Carter, 4 items

Shriners, 4 items

Air Force reception, 7 items

Miscellaneous, 46 items

Family photographs, 3 items

vm_box Fldr

3 18 Printing plates, 7 items

Artifacts

A-1678-001 Campaign button for John Rousakis **View online.**

A-1678-002 Ribbon for the dedication of the Rousakis Riverfront Plaza **View online.**

A-1678-003 John Rousakis' American Legion cap **View online.**

A-1678-004 Embroidered fabric badge for the 1996 Olympic Games **View online.**

A-1678-005 Ribbon badges with pins for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Yachting event in Savannah **View online.**

A-1678-006 Name tag for John Rousakis **View online.**

A-1678-007 Medal awarded to the Atlanta Organizing Committee for the 1996 Olympics from Delta Airlines **View online.**

A-1678-008 Pins for the bidding of Athens as host city of the 1996 Olympic Games **View online.**

A-1678-009 Pins for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia **View online.**

A-1678-010 Badges from the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay through Savannah, Georgia **View online.**

A-1678-011 Pin for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games with an image of a racing yacht and the logo for Savannah Electric **View online.**

A-1678-012 Pin for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games with an image of a sailboat and the logo for Savannah Electric **View online.**

A-1678-013 Pins for the 1996 Olympic Games with a green sailboat with three hearts **View online.**

A-1678-014 Pin for the 1996 Olympic Games with the symbols of the country of Chile and the Coca-Cola logo **View online.**

A-1678-015 Pin for the 1996 Olympic Games with the symbols of the country of Cameroon and the Coca-Cola logo **View online.**

A-1678-016 Pin for the Greek Olympic team in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games **View online.**

A-1678-017 Pin for the British bid for the 1996 games to be held in Manchester **View online.**

A-1678-018 Pin for the bidding of Atlanta as the host city of the 1996 Olympic Games **View online.**

A-1678-019 Pins for the bidding of the host city of the 1996 Olympic Games **View online.**

A-1678-020 John and Elizabeth Rousakis' name badges from the session to bid for the 1996 Olympic Games, held in Tokyo in 1990 **View online.**