

Frank Stanton Papers
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Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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Collection Summary

Title: Frank Stanton Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1908-2006

Bulk Dates: 1926-1979

ID No.: MSS85394

Creator: Stanton, Frank, 1908-2006

Extent: 14,200 items

Extent: 41 containers plus 1 classified and 1 oversize

Extent: 16.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2008085394>

Summary: Broadcast executive. Correspondence, memoranda, subject files, speeches and writings, minutes of meetings, drafts, testimony, typescripts, reports and studies, interviews, transcripts, awards and citations, press clippings and releases, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating primarily to Stanton's career as president and vice chairman of the board of directors of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Buckley, William F., Jr., 1925-2008.
Burt, Harold E. (Harold Ernest), 1890- --Correspondence.
Cantril, Hadley, 1906-1969--Correspondence.
Dewey, Thomas E. (Thomas Edmund), 1902-1971--Correspondence.
Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969--Correspondence.
Ford, Gerald R., 1913-2006--Correspondence.
Godfrey, Arthur, 1903-1983--Correspondence.
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973--Correspondence.
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--Correspondence.
Lazarsfeld, Paul F., 1901-1976.
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994--Correspondence.
Paley, William S. (William Samuel), 1901-1990--Correspondence.
Stanton, Frank, 1908-2006.
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972--Correspondence.

Organizations

American National Red Cross.
Business Committee for the Arts.
Business Council (U.S.)
Carnegie Institution of Washington.
CBS Building (New York, N.Y.)
Columbia Broadcasting System, inc.
Harvard University.
United States. Advisory Commission on Information.
United States. Constitution. 1st Amendment.

Subjects

Advertising.
Broadcast journalism.
Broadcasting policy--United States.
Campaign debates--United States.

Freedom of the press.
Logos (Symbols)--Design.
Mass media.
Political science.
Presidents--United States--Election.
Propaganda, American.
Radio advertising.
Radio broadcasting.
Radio journalism.
Television advertising.
Television broadcasting.
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Press coverage.

Places

Europe--Description and travel.
United States--Foreign relations.
United States--Politics and government.

Occupations

Broadcast executives.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Frank Stanton, broadcast executive, were given to the Library of Congress by the inheritor and co-executor of his estate, Elisabeth Allison, and by Andrew H. Weiss, estate co-executor and trustee of the Frank and Ruth Stanton Fund, 2007-2008.

Processing History

The papers of Frank Stanton were arranged and described in 2011 by Michael McElderry with the assistance of Chanté Wilson-Flowers.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some photographs and drawings have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Audiotapes, videotapes, phonograph records, film reels, and compact disks have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Frank Stanton Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Frank Stanton in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Frank Stanton are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of security classified items in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified material.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Frank Stanton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1908, Mar. 20	Born, Muskegon, Mich.
1930	B.A., Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio
1931	Married Ruth Stephenson (died 1992)
1935	Ph.D. in psychology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1935-1938	Staff member, Research Department, Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc. (CBS Inc.)
1937	Developed with Paul Felix Lazarsfeld the program analyzer, a machine used to measure radio audience reaction to program content
1937-1940	Founder and associate director with Hadley Cantril of the Office of Radio Research, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
1938-1946	Appointed director of research, CBS Inc., and rapidly promoted through a series of corporate management positions including director of advertising, vice president and general executive, and vice president and general manager
1941-1945	Government consultant, Office of Fact and Figures, Office of War Information, Secretary of War, and Department of the Navy
1946-1971	President and chief operating officer, CBS Inc.
1948	Led effort to develop and establish standards for color television Advocated for the right of non-print media to broadcast editorials
1951	Reorganized CBS Inc., creating separate corporate divisions for radio, television, and research laboratories Directed the creation of CBS's eye logo
1952	Campaigned to repeal the "equal time" provision of section 315 of the Federal Communications Act
1953-1960	Founding chairman, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, Calif.
1956-1962	Administrator-designate, Emergency Communications Agency, Office of Civil Defense Mobilization
1957	Paul White Memorial Award (also awarded in 1971)
1959	George Foster Peabody Award (also awarded in 1960, 1961, 1964, and 1972) Emmy Award (also awarded in 1972)
1960	Initiated the first televised presidential debates between candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon
1961	Vice chairman, National Fund Committee of the American National Red Cross
1961-1967	Chairman, Rand Corp.
1962	Directed the development and design of network headquarters ("Black Rock"), New York, N.Y.
1964-1973	Chairman, United States Advisory Commission on Information
1967	Special Honor Award, American Institute of Architects
1969	Defended network news in response to Vice President Spiro Agnew's criticism of broadcast journalism

1970	Tiffany Design Award
1971	Defended freedom of the press against government prosecution relating to the CBS television documentary <i>The Selling of the Pentagon</i>
1971-1973	Vice chairman of the board, CBS Inc.
1972	Freedom of Press Award
1972-1974	Chairman, Business Committee for the Arts
1973	Four Freedoms Award Retired from CBS Inc.
1973-1979	Chairman and principal officer, American National Red Cross
1978-1984	Overseer, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1983-1990	Member, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities
1986	Elected to the Hall of Fame of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences
1993	First Amendment Award, Radio-Television News Directors Association
2006, Dec. 24	Died, Boston, Mass.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Frank Nicholas Stanton (1908-2006) span the years 1908-2006, with the bulk of the material dating from his matriculation at Ohio Wesleyan University in 1926 to his departure as chairman of the American National Red Cross in 1979. Following the completion of his doctoral research into the habits of radio listeners in 1935 for the psychology department at Ohio State University, the Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc. (CBS Inc.) offered Stanton a position in its research department. Stanton was promoted to vice president in 1942 and selected president of the network in 1946 at the age of thirty-eight. Upon his retirement from CBS Inc. in 1973, Stanton was appointed chairman of the American National Red Cross by President Richard M. Nixon, serving in that capacity until 1979. While the collection explores Stanton's legacy as the broadcast executive who, along with colleague Chairman William S. Paley, is credited with molding CBS Inc. into a national network empire, the documentation is often uneven, containing a limited number of fully developed files and few references to his personal life. The papers contain correspondence, memoranda, speeches and writings, subject files, reports and studies, transcripts, testimony, drafts and typescripts, press clippings and releases, printed matter, and miscellaneous material and are organized into the following series: [Executive Files](#), [Subject File](#), [Speeches and Writings](#), [Miscellany](#), [Classified](#), and [Oversize](#).

In 1973, Stanton left CBS Inc. at the mandatory retirement age of sixty-five and became chairman of the American National Red Cross. The [Executive Files](#) consist largely of papers and records created and received by Stanton as corporate executive during this transition, primarily for the years from 1970 to 1973. In addition to the American National Red Cross, Stanton pursued multiple opportunities in business, education, government, and the arts upon his retirement and served on the boards and advisory councils of a variety of private corporations, foundations, and nonprofit organizations. The Executive Files pertain chiefly to these organizations, the most prominent of which include the American National Red Cross, Business Committee for the Arts, Business Council, Carnegie Institution of Washington, and Harvard University. The series sheds light on the operations and policy decisions of these and other organizations and the role played by Stanton as director and advocate. Typescripts and transcripts from speaking engagements and congressional testimony supplement similar material arranged in the [Speeches and Writings](#) series.

The United States Advisory Commission on Information, established in 1948, is composed of five representatives from business, public service, and the communications media appointed by the president for three-year terms. It functions as an advisory body and recommends policies and programs to the United States Information Agency for broadcasting information about the United States to foreign countries. Stanton served as chairman of the commission, 1964-1973, and the [Executive Files](#) contain material relevant to both organizations. In addition, the series also includes a file regarding William F. Buckley (1925-2008), Stanton's colleague and fellow board member on the commission. A staunch proponent of broadcast journalism and defender of First Amendment rights, Stanton testified often before Congress on freedom of the press issues and sought, on behalf of the broadcast industry, protections equal to that of the printed press. Subject headings located in the Executive Files address these concerns.

While the [Subject File](#) is largely devoted to Stanton's corporate career with CBS Inc., papers relating to his research projects are also of interest. In 1937, Stanton began a collaboration with Paul Felix Lazarsfeld resulting in the invention of

the program analyzer, an audience measuring device that could determine the probability of a radio program's public appeal and advertising potential that was later expanded for television and used by CBS Inc. for several decades. As network president, Stanton focused on organizational and policy issues, leaving entertainment programming to Chairman William S. Paley. As early as 1948, he fought for the right of broadcasters to present editorials and to be accorded the same rights as print journalists. An advocate for technological improvements, he championed the development of color television. Stanton reorganized the company in 1951 and directed CBS Inc. through a period of diversification and corporate expansion by decentralizing its administration and acquiring new business investments, including the New York Yankees in 1964, to create a media conglomerate. While all of these topics are touched on in the Subject File, none are covered in great depth. Limited correspondence exchanged with popular show host Arthur Godfrey and with William S. Paley is also contained in the network's files.

In 1960, Stanton aided in initiating the first televised presidential debate between candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon by persuading Congress to suspend the "equal time" provision of section 315 of the Federal Communications Act, which requires networks to grant equal time to all political candidates. Material concerning the 1960 telecast, for which Stanton won the second of his three personal George Foster Peabody Awards, and subsequent unsuccessful efforts to televise debates in the 1964, 1968, and 1972 presidential campaigns is arranged within the CBS Inc. files.

Stanton's primary interest was centered on promoting and protecting the network's news division. In the late 1960s he withstood pressure from the Johnson administration for allowing CBS News to air critical reports on the Vietnam War. In 1971, Stanton risked the threat of jail defending the CBS documentary *The Selling of the Pentagon*, which exposed the use of public funds by the Defense Department to promote a public relations campaign in support of the Vietnam War. Stanton challenged a federal suit brought by Congress and refused a subpoena from the House Commerce Committee demanding the news sources used in the documentary, successfully arguing that the information was protected under the freedom of the press provision as guaranteed by the First Amendment. The controversy is fully documented in the [Subject File](#), including the proceedings and testimony from the congressional hearings.

Displaying a wide range of interests and possessing broad artistic and conceptual abilities, Stanton was known for his sense of corporate style and often became involved in the creation and development of the company's imagery from the construction of network headquarters in New York ("Black Rock") to the design of the company's iconic eye logo. "Black Rock," designed by Eero Saarinen, was opened to acclaim in 1964 and received several architectural awards that are referenced in the [Subject File](#) along with Stanton's drawings for the building's interior design.

Due to his position as a broadcasting executive and his many appearances before Congress, Stanton was known to major political figures, and the [Subject File](#) contains letters to him from presidents Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, and Gerald R. Ford. Papers relating to Lyndon B. Johnson, who shared a long, and at times adversarial, relationship with Stanton, are the largest of the presidential files. Copies of transcripts of Stanton's interviews recorded as part of the oral history program conducted under the auspices of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library are included here and provide insight into their personal association and the interplay between the media and the White House. In addition, material concerning a controversial three-year contract between Johnson and CBS Inc. that gave the company the exclusive rights to a series of interviews with the former president is also located in the Subject File.

Stanton lectured widely on freedom of the press issues and the First Amendment, government and the media, television journalism, and politics and kept a full schedule of speaking engagements and radio and television appearances as well as appearing as a participant on numerous discussion panels and in seminars. Because Stanton was recognized as a major spokesperson for the broadcasting industry, his opinions were often sought, his speeches frequently quoted, and his testimony in many appearances before Congress part of the public record. The [Speeches and Writings](#) series is the largest and most comprehensive in the collection consisting largely of the drafts, typescripts, and printed copies of his speeches, statements, and testimony before Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.

Stanton was recognized with awards and tributes from many organizations and received honorary degrees from various colleges and universities as listed in the [Miscellany](#) series. The series also contains juvenile memorabilia and school records as well as journals, scrapbooks, and photographs composed as travelogues from two trips to Europe taken by Stanton as a young man. Occasional letters exchanged with Harold E. Burt and Hadley Cantril, early mentors of Stanton, and with Thomas E. Dewey are contained in the Miscellany series as well.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [Executive Files, 1960-2001](#)
- [Subject File, 1930-2004](#)
- [Speeches and Writings, 1933-2004](#)
- [Miscellany, 1908-2006](#)
- [Classified, 1957-1971](#)
- [Oversize, 1962-1979](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-11	<p><u>Executive Files, 1960-2001</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, agenda and minutes of meetings, telegrams, drafts, typescripts, reports and studies, financial records, testimony, speeches and statements, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items maintained by Stanton relating primarily to his service on the boards and advisory councils of various private corporations, foundations, and nonprofit organizations, and as chairman of the American National Red Cross.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by name of organization, person, or subject.</p>
BOX 11-20	<p><u>Subject File, 1930-2004</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, transcripts, statements and remarks, testimony, reports and studies, financial and legal records, press clippings and releases, newsletters, diagrams, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by subject or topic.</p>
BOX 20-33	<p><u>Speeches and Writings, 1933-2004</u></p> <p>Correspondence, drafts, typescripts, printed copies, notes, transcripts, printed matter, and miscellaneous items relating to Stanton's articles, interviews, radio and television broadcasts and editorials, speeches and statements, and speeches and writings by others.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material and therein chronologically.</p>
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Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-11	Executive Files, 1960-2001 Correspondence, memoranda, agenda and minutes of meetings, telegrams, drafts, typescripts, reports and studies, financial records, testimony, speeches and statements, notes, printed matter, and miscellaneous items maintained by Stanton relating primarily to his service on the boards and advisory councils of various private corporations, foundations, and nonprofit organizations, and as chairman of the American National Red Cross. Arranged alphabetically by name of organization, person, or subject.
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Executive Files, 1960-2001

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Speeches and Writings, 1933-2004

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BOX 33	Appointment books 1947-1953 (2 folders)
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BOX 35	Art, antiques, and design, 1954-1958, 1972, 1995, 2004 Awards, citations, and tributes Advertising Council Public Service Award, 1969-1970 Advertising Gold Medal Award, 1959-1960 Art Directors Club of Philadelphia Grand Award, 1965 Four Freedoms Award, 1972-1973 <i>See also Oversize</i> Freedom of the Press Award, 1972 George Foster Peabody Broadcasting Awards, 1960-1964, 1971-1972 <i>See also Oversize</i> Honorary degrees and awards, colleges and universities

Miscellany, 1908-2006

Container

Contents

	Emerson College, Boston, Mass., 1973
	Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oreg., 1973
	Miscellaneous, 1946-1949, 1958-1986, 1998 <i>See also Oversize</i>
	A-L
	(2 folders)
BOX 36	M-U
	(2 folders)
	International Emmy Award, 1980
	Miscellaneous <i>See also Oversize</i>
	1951-1979
	(3 folders)
BOX 37	1981-2000
	Paul White Memorial Awards, 1957, 1971
	Tiffany Design Award, 1970
	West Side Association of Commerce National Gold Medal Award, 1974
	Biographical material, 1944-1959, 1975-2006, undated
	(3 folders)
	Cards and invitations, 1946, 1955-1959, 1999
	Certificates and memberships, 1929-1932, 1950, 1960-1969, 1990
	Childhood and school papers
	Board of Education, Dayton, Ohio, 1929-1932
BOX 38	College and university papers
	Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
	General, 1931-1935, 1986-1989, 2005
	“Memory for Advertising Copy Presented Visually vs. Orally,” 1933
	Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, 1926-1931, 1942, 1959
	Elementary and high school, 1915-1926
	Miscellany, 1926, 1932
	Correspondence
	Burt, Harold E., 1932-1937, 1990
	Cantril, Hadley, 1930, undated
	Dewey, Thomas E., 1947-1948
	Miscellaneous, 1931, 1937-1942, 1949-1959, 1965-1971, 1977-1987, 1993-1994, 2004
	Drawings and diagrams, undated
	European trips
	1926, journal and photographs
BOX 39	1929, scrapbooks
	(2 folders)
	Family papers, 1908-1912, 1923, 1930-1931, 1941-1944, 1960-1964, 1970
	Financial and legal records, 1931-1940, 1958
BOX 40	Notes and printed matter, 1944-1949, 1956-1960
	Press clippings and releases
	1926, 1934-1973
	(5 folders)
BOX 41	1974-2006, undated
	(2 folders)

Miscellany, 1908-2006

Container	Contents
	World War II service, 1941-1947
BOX CL 1	Classified, 1957-1971 Memoranda of conversations, correspondence, governmental memoranda, background and policy papers, testimony, and reports. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed
BOX CL 1	Executive Files Radio Free Europe, 1971 (Container 7) United States Advisory Commission on Information Congressional hearings Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 1971 (Container 9) Meetings Commission meetings, 1971 (Container 9) Director's staff meetings, 1970 (Containers 9-10) Soviet Union, 1970 (Container 10)
BOX CL 1	United States Information Agency General, 1971 (Container 10) Yugoslavia, federal secretary for information luncheon, 1971 (Container 11) Subject File Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, 1957-1959 (Container 18)
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1962-1979 Certificates of awards and honorary degrees. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Subject File Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc. Publications, 1962 (Container 15) Miscellany Awards, citations, and tributes Four Freedoms Award, 1973 (Container 35) George Foster Peabody Broadcasting Award, 1971 (Container 35) Honorary degrees and awards Miscellaneous, 1973 (Container 35) Miscellaneous, 1972 (Container 36)