PATTERSON, EUGENE C.  
(EUGENE CORBETT), 1923-2013.  
Eugene C. Patterson papers, 1940s-2000s

Emory University  
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Patterson, Eugene C. (Eugene Corbett), 1923-2013.  
Title: Eugene C. Patterson papers, 1940s-2000s  
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 1380  
Extent: 50 linear feet (51 boxes, 7 oversized papers boxes and 1 oversized papers folder (OP), and AV Masters: .5 linear feet (1 box)  
Abstract: Professional and personal papers of journalist Eugene Patterson including professional files from his time at various newspapers, personal papers, awards and honors, printed material, and photographs and audiovisual material.  
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access  
Unrestricted access.  
Collection stored off-site. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance to access this collection.

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**Source**
Gift, 2016

**Custodial History**
The Eugene Patterson papers were gifted to by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies which the held, organized, and preserved the papers until their transfer to Emory University in 2016.

**Citation**
[after identification of item(s)], Eugene C. Patterson papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**
Arranged and Described at the series level by Carrie Hintz, November 2016.

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**Collection Description**

**Biographical Note**
Eugene Corbett Patterson (1923-2013) was born in Valdosta, Georgia to William C. and Annabel Corbett Patterson. He spent most of his youth on a small farm near Adel, Georgia. Patterson attended the North Georgia College at Dahlonega before transferring to the University of Georgia at Athens where he earned a degree in journalism in 1943. Upon graduation, Patterson joined the United States Army and became a tank platoon commander, fighting in the Battle of the Bulge under General Patton. He continued in the service after the war, becoming an Army pilot, until he ultimately left the Army in 1947 to pursue a career in journalism.

Patterson started his journalism career as a reporter for the *Temple Daily Telegram* in Texas and the *Macon Telegraph* in Macon, Georgia before he joined the United Press in 1948, working as a journalist in Atlanta, New York, and London before moving to the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1956. He became editor of the *Constitution* in 1960, following in the footsteps of his friend and mentor, Ralph McGill.

While editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* Patterson wrote a daily editorial column, including a column written after the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing in Birmingham Alabama entitled “A Flower for the Graves” that Patterson read, at the invitation of Walter Cronkite, on the CBS Evening News. Patterson won a Pulitzer Prize in 1967 for editorial columns.

Patterson was an outspoken supporter of civil rights. In 1964 Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Patterson as vice chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, a position he held until 1968.

In 1968 Patterson left the *Constitution* to take on the position of managing editor at the *Washington Post*, a position he held until 1971 when he left the *Post* to teach at Duke University. Patterson remained at Duke one academic year, but returned to newsrooms in 1972 when he became editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* and its associated publications, *The Evening Independent* in St. Petersburg and the *Congressional Quarterly*, a publication covering politics.
and government. He became chairman of the board of the company upon the death of Nelson Poynter, the owner of the company, in 1978. Patterson retired in 1988.

Patterson was an active member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), serving as president of that organization in 1977-1978. He was a member of the Pulitzer Prize Board from 1974-1985, a member of the board of the Poynter Institute, and a trustee of Duke University.

Patterson married Mary Sue (Sue) Carter in 1950. She died in 1999. The couple had a daughter, Mary Patterson Fausch. Patterson died on January 12, 2013 in St. Petersburg, Florida from complications of cancer.

Scope and Content Note
This collection consists of the papers of Eugene Patterson from the 1940s through the 2000s. It includes Professional Files, Personal Files, Awards and Honors, Printed Material, and Photographs and Audiovisual Material. Professional Files comprise the bulk of the collection and consist of correspondence, memos, reports and planning documents, and some writings and columns. Correspondence in the collection includes letters with colleagues, readers, and professional organizations. The correspondence files generally include carbons of Patterson’s outgoing correspondence, as well as incoming letters and notes. The correspondence and business files are arranged roughly chronologically and include material directly relating to the running of the newspapers Patterson edited, as well as correspondence and files related to other personal organizations and Patterson’s charitable work on various boards and advisory councils. Personal papers include letters and notes from family and friends, material relating to Patterson’s time in the army, and family history material.

Arrangement Note
Arranged by record type, and chronologically within record types.
## Container List

### Professional Files

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Presidential and other important letters</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Atlanta Constitution—Correspondence and Invitations, 1956-1968</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Atlanta Constitution, 1956-1968</td>
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<td>Atlanta Constitution—Correspondence A-L, 1956-1968</td>
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<td>Atlanta Constitution—Correspondence M-Z, 1956-1968</td>
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<td>Board and Civic Engagement—Correspondence, 1957-1964</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Correspondence C-E, 1968-1978</td>
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<td>1963 Birmingham Bombing Column and Responses, 1963</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>Pulitzer Prize Congratulatory Notes, 1967</td>
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<td>Atlanta Constitution Columns, 1960-1967</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1967-1971</td>
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<td>Washington Post Correspondence and Memos, 1968-1971</td>
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<td>Duke University teaching and administrative material, 1971</td>
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<td>Patterson Memos, 1970s</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1970s</td>
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<td>American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1970s (including Patterson’s trip to China)</td>
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21 - Correspondence U-Z, 1980s
22 - Correspondence S-U, 1970s
23 - Correspondence, 1980s-2004
37 - Correspondence, 1980s (Including Ralph McGill correspondence)
30 - Congressional Quarterly, 1980s
31 - American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1980s
33 - Congressional Quarterly, 1980s
26 - Correspondence, 1980s-1990s
28 - Duke University, 1990s
28 - Collins Center, 1990s
8 - Pulitzer Prize Board
5 - Speeches and Speech-related correspondence and notes
5 - General Material
8 - Poynter Fund and Poynter Institute

Personal Files
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2 - World War II
OP8 - World War II Scrapbook
4 - Family and financial material
37 - Correspondence- Personal, 1950s-2000s
38 - Correspondence and Records- Personal, 1990s-2000s
41 - Patterson- Biographical Information
41 - Patterson- Financial Information
41 - Patterson- Retirement
42 - Correspondence, 2000s
44 - Family Correspondence and Genealogical Materials

Photographs and Audiovisual Material
2 - Photographs
OP1 1 Photographs
OP2 1 Photographs
49 - Audiovisual Material
AV1 - The Happy Birthday Grandaddy Tape, Eugene C. Patterson, October 1991 [original: VHS]

Awards and Honors
50 - Awards and Honors
OP1 - Awards and Honors
OP2 1 Awards and Honors
Awards and Honors
Academic Robes

Printed Material
Printed Material
Printed Material
Printed Material-- Newspapers
Original Patterson columns, 1960-1964
Original Patterson columns, 1965-1968
Original Patterson columns, 1972-1985