

NEWS RELEASE

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JFK ASSASSINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD ACQUIRES PERSONAL PAPERS OF TOP WARREN COMMISSION ATTORNEY; AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC

The Assassination Records Review Board, an independent federal agency overseeing the identification, review, and release of records related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, announced today that the personal files of the late J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel of the Warren Commission, are available to the public at the National Archives.

"I am particularly gratified that the Board has acquired these files. They provide unique insight into the behind-the-scenes operations of the Warren Commission," said Dr. William Joyce, a member of the Review Board. "The materials offer a better understanding of the role that the Commission members played in the drafting of the final report on the assassination of President Kennedy. This is a most significant collection."

Rankin's personal papers were donated to the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection (JFK Collection) by his son, attorney James Rankin. They include memos and handwritten changes to the draft chapters of the final report that were recommended by Commission members, including Representative Gerald Ford (R-MI), John McCloy, and Allen Dulles. The documents also include the daily scheduling diary prepared by Mr. Rankin's secretary. There are approximately 40,000 pages in the Rankin collection.

The Rankin papers have been transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration for inclusion in the JFK Collection, which is housed at the National Archives facility in College Park, Maryland.

Copies of selected documents from the Rankin papers are available from the Assassination Records Review Board, 600 E Street, NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20530; telephone number: (202) 724-0088.

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The Assassination Records Review Board was established by the JFK Act, which was signed into law by President George Bush. The five members of the Board were

appointed by President Clinton, confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and sworn in on April

11, 1994. The law gives the Review Board the mandate and the authority to identify, secure, and make available all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. It is the responsibility of the Board to determine which records are to be made public immediately and which ones will have postponed release dates.

The Review Board consists of the following members:

Honorable John R. Tunheim, Chair; U.S. District Court Judge, District of Minnesota.

Dr. Henry F. Graff; Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University.

Dr. Kermit L. Hall; Dean, College of Humanities, and Professor of History at The Ohio State University.

Dr. William L. Joyce; Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections at Princeton University.

Dr. Anna K. Nelson; Distinguished Adjunct Historian in Residence at The American University.