

**PRELIMINARY INVENTORY
K0084 (KA0150)
ELMER F. PIERSON PAPERS**

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City. If you would like more information, please contact us at kansascity@shsmo.org.

Introduction

Approximately 0.5 cubic feet of material was loaned for photocopying.

The papers consist of twelve photocopied scrapbooks compiled Elmer F. Pierson after his retirement from the Vendo Company, a manufacturer of vending machines. The scrapbooks contain items pertaining to Vendo and items concerning Pierson's philanthropic and civic activities.

Elmer F. Pierson was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on August 27, 1896. He graduated from the Kansas City School of Law in 1919. After graduation, Pierson worked in the real estate business and was associated with the Farm and Home Savings and Loan Association before founding the Vendo Company, a manufacturer of vending machines, with his brother, John T. Pierson, in 1937.

Pierson was active throughout his life in business and civic affairs in Kansas City, Missouri. He served as president of the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce in 1945, director of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1946, president of the National Automatic Merchandising Association in 1947, director and later vice president of the United States Chamber of Commerce in 1957 and 1960-1961 respectively.

Pierson's lifelong interest in the arts and education prompted him to donate time and resource to the University of Kansas City, later the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In particular, Pierson provided funding for the Pierson Auditorium in the University Center. Pierson also donated the Pierson Sculpture Garden and numerous works of art to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, land for a public park and for the Pierson Junior High School to the Turner Unified School District in Wyandotte County, Kansas. Additionally, Pierson established a distinguished professorship in music at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas.

Elmer F. Pierson's first wife was Marie Kahmann (1899-1969) and his second wife was Georgia Cox Spencer (1912-1997), whom Pierson married in 1970. Pierson died in Miami Beach, Florida on February 15, 1982, and is buried at the Forest Hill Cemetery in Kansas City, Missouri.

Donor Information

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Elmer F. Pierson on June 21, 1982 (Accession No. KAS0150).

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Copyright and Restrictions

The Donor has given and assigned to the University of Missouri all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Location Note

The collection is stored offsite and will need to be retrieved before viewing.

Box List

Box 1

Scrapbook I, 1938-1954

Items relating to the Vendo Company and its products, as well as the response of the company and Pierson to World War II.

Scrapbook II, 1947-1958

Items relating to the Vendo Company and Pierson's activities with the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Automatic Merchandising Association.

Scrapbook III, 1945-1946

Items relating to Pierson's work with the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce which he served as president during this time period.

Scrapbook IV, 1947-1958

Items relating to the Vendo Company, especially its involvement in the agricultural sector, and Pierson's work with Trinity Lutheran Hospital, the University of Kansas City, and the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Scrapbook V, 1958-1962 (3 folders)

Items relating to Pierson's work at Vendo and with the National Automatic Merchandising Association, as well as information related to the gift of Pierson Auditorium to the University of Kansas City and land for Pierson Junior High School to the Turner Unified School District. There are also items related to the Citation Dinner in 1960 at which Pierson received the Citation Award.

Box 2

Scrapbook V, 1958-1962

Items relating to Pierson's work at Vendo and with the National Automatic Merchandising Association, as well as information related to the gift of Pierson Auditorium to the University of Kansas City and land for Pierson Junior High School to the Turner Unified School District. There are also items related to the Citation Dinner in 1960 at which Pierson received the Citation Award.

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Scrapbook VI, 1960-1964 (3 folders)

Items relating to the following: Parkway Towers apartments; foreign trade promotions, especially through the United States Chamber of Commerce; donations to the University of Missouri-Kansas City; Pierson's work with the Eagle Scouts; Pierson's gift to the Turner Unified School District; and materials related to Pierson's receipt of the Mr. Kansas City Award and Horatio Alger Award.

Scrapbook VII, 1964-1975 (3 folders)

Items relating to the following: The Turner Unified School District; University of Missouri-Kansas City; Trinity Lutheran Hospital; The Nelson Gallery; the Horatio Alger Award; the death of Maria Kuhmann Pierson; the Law Day Award; the marriage of E.F. and Georgia Pierson; A Pierson speech entitled "Review of Automatic Merchandising in 1948"; and Pierson's admittance to the University Consulate of the University of Missouri.

Scrapbook VIII, 1970-1973 (3 folders)

Items relating to the following: The University of Missouri-Kansas City Law Day Award; congratulatory messages on the marriage of E. F. Pierson and Georgia Pierson; Pierson Sculpture Garden; the 1973 Jewel Ball.

Scrapbook IX, 1971-1972

Items relating to the Pierson Sculpture Garden.

Scrapbook X, 1963-1973

Items relating to Pierson's work with the Eagle Scouts.

Scrapbook XI, 1974-1979

Items relating to E.F. Pierson's retirement from Vendo; his receipt of the University of Kansas Service Citation; the visit of the King of Sweden to Bethany College in 1976; Pierson's 80th birthday; and the Nelson Gallery.

Scrapbook XII, 1981

Items relating to the Nelson Gallery and E.F. Pierson's handwritten autobiographical statement.