



Guide to the Johnny LaVoie Papers on the Culinary Workers Union Local 226

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**University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special
Collections and Archives.**

Box 457010

4505 S. Maryland Parkway

Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-7010

special.collections@unlv.edu

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	LaVoie, Johnny, 1947-
Title:	Johnny LaVoie Papers on the Culinary Workers Union Local 226
ID:	MS-00895
Date [inclusive]:	1958-1993
Physical Description:	8.17 Cubic Feet (13 boxes)
Physical Description:	7.49 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Johnny LaVoie Papers on the Culinary Workers Union 226 (1958-1993) contain photographs of Culinary Union meetings; Culinary Union strikes at the MGM Hotel, Frontier Hotel, and other Las Vegas, Nevada hotels; agreements; by-laws; and Culinary Union collective bargaining booklets. Also included are negatives that correspond to the photographs, audiovisual material, newsletters from the Culinary Union and Catering Industry Employees, pins, buttons, and postcards.

Preferred Citation

Johnny LaVoie Papers on the Culinary Workers Union Local 226, 1958-1993. MS-00895. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Born in Las Vegas, Nevada on March 3, 1947, Johnny LaVoie has spent the majority of his working life involved in union endeavors. He worked for the Culinary Union Local 226 from 1981 to 1985 and again from 1987 to 1993. He started as a Union Business Agent and spent his last six years as the administrative director, overseeing 29 business agents and five department heads. After leaving the union, he was the labor specialist for the Tropicana Hotel from 1993 to 1996 and then from 1997 to 2014 he was the human resources manager for British Belting and Aviation North

America (BBA). As of 2019, LaVoie is an independent contractor for BBA Aviation, Signature Flight Support, Aircraft Service International, United Service Workers, Local 74.

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Scope and Contents Note

The Johnny LaVoie Papers on the Culinary Workers Union 226 (1958-1993) contain photographs of Culinary Union meetings; Culinary Union strikes at the MGM Hotel, Frontier Hotel, and other Las Vegas, Nevada hotels; agreements; by-laws; and Culinary Union collective bargaining booklets. Also included are negatives that correspond to the photographs, audiovisual material, newsletters from the Culinary Union and Catering Industry Employees, pins, buttons, and postcards.

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Arrangement

Material remain as they were received.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Collection was donated in 2018 and 2019 by Johnny LaVoie; accession numbers 2018-043, 2019-016.

Processing Note

In 2019, Joyce Moore processed the collection and created the finding aid in ArchivesSpace. Photographic albums, negatives, and print from the 2019-016 addition were reboxed by Tammi Kim and the finding aid updated. No other work has been performed on the materials.

Historical Background

The Culinary Workers Union Local 226, the largest local union of UNITE HERE (the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees), is located in Las Vegas, Nevada and represents over 55,000 hotel, food service, and hospitality workers in Southern Nevada. The Culinary Union, in Las Vegas, was founded in 1938 soon after the passage of the federal National Labor Relations Act. In 1954, union members elected Al Bramlet as Secretary-Treasurer in Las Vegas, and under his leadership the union grew from 1,000 members to 16,000 members by the time of his death in 1977. Bramlet actively recruited African American workers from Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, diversifying both the Culinary Union and the work force of Nevada's hospitality industry. The Culinary Union and the casinos of Las Vegas had a symbiotic relationship under Bramlet's leadership.

In 1967 and 1969, Nevada legislature passed two corporate gaming acts that allowed public corporations to own and operate casinos. These laws changed not only the gaming industry but the labor union strategies and relationships between workers and casino management.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Culinary Union adapted to the new corporate ownership of Las Vegas casinos. The Culinary Union exercised their right to strike in 1976, joining the Bartenders and Musicians Unions in a seventeen-day strike against fifteen hotels that refused to sign new union contracts. This economically devastating and violent strike ended in compromise with new contracts for Culinary Union workers. The conflicted relationship between the Culinary Union and casinos resulted in another strike in 1984. The Culinary Union walked out against multiple Nevada Resort Association (NRA) properties in a strike that lasted two months. Police arrested over 900 strikers over the course of the strike and six hotels refused to sign contracts.

After the unsuccessful 1984 strike the Culinary Union reorganized and elected new leadership. The union organization shifted from top-down to rank-and-file leadership, greatly democratizing the union of nearly 18,000 workers. Union members elected Jim Arnold as Secretary-Treasurer in 1987. Arnold, along with union President Hattie Canty, successfully negotiated numerous bargaining agreements with Las Vegas Strip and Downtown hotels and casinos in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 1991, Culinary Union members began a strike on the Frontier Hotel after the owners removed significant benefits from worker contracts. The Frontier Strike became one of the longest lasting strikes in United States history, ending in 1998 after the Elardi family sold the Frontier Hotel to Phil Ruffin, who quickly signed a union contract.

In recent years, the Culinary Union focused on building relationships and contracts that mutually benefitted both worker and corporation. The Culinary Union also established a Culinary Training Center, the Citizenship Project, and the Housing Trust Fund. These projects help workers learn new skills, gain U.S. citizenship, and purchase homes. The Culinary Union's

endorsement of political candidates is also significant. In 2008, Las Vegas hosted the 2008 Democratic Caucus, where the Culinary Union, on behalf of UNITE HERE, became the first major union to endorse eventual President Barack Obama. As of 2014, union membership reached 55,000 members.

Source:

Kraft, James P. *Vegas at Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy, 1960-1985*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:

Culinary Workers Union Local 226 Las Vegas, Nevada Photographs. PH-00382. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Names and Subjects

- Labor union locals -- Nevada
- photographs
- Strikes and lockouts
- Las Vegas Strip (Nev.)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Photographs of strike activities, social gatherings, and Union meetings, 1984-1992	box 01

box 02

box 03

box 04

box 05

<i>Catering Industry Employees</i> newsletters, 1985 to 1993	box 07
<i>Culinary Topics</i> newsletters, 1965 to 1991	box 07
Culinary Union topics, various newsletters, 1965 to 1991	box 07
<i>Union Pride</i> newsletter, 1991 to 1992	box 07
Frontier Hotel strike photographs, 1992	box 07
Strike materials for public meetings and photographs of various picketers, 1990 to 1992	box 07
Invitations to hotel celebrations and Clinton/Gore rally photographs, 1974 to 1990	box 07
MGM promotional materials, undated	box 07
Al Bramlet photographs, undated	box 07
<i>Grievance and Arbitration Trends within the Culinary Workers Union Local 226</i> by Vincent Eade, 1970 to 1990	box 07
<i>Agreement of Wage Scales and Working Conditions Between a Joint Executive Board of Hotel and Restaurant Employees International, Southern Nevada Restaurant and Bar Association</i> , 1958 March 10	box 07
Grievance fact sheets, undated	box 07
Union agreements, constitutions, bylaws, and booklets, 1967 to 1991	box 08
Palm Hotel training, 1988 February Physical Description: 1 Photographic Slides	box 07
Culinary Union 226 building photographic slides, undated Physical Description: 2 Photographic Slides	box 08
Unlabeled slides, undated Physical Description: 10 Photographic Slides	box 08
Lech Walesa, Address to a Joint Meeting of the Congress of the United States, 1989 November 5 Physical Description: 1 Audio Cassettes	box 08
<i>Law for the Layman</i> , KLVX Television, 1990 August 17 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 08
<i>Above the Law</i> , Culinary Workers Union Local 226, undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 08
<i>Las Vegas Summer: Hotter than Ever</i> , 1989	box 08

Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Jesse Jackson, 1990 June 15	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
<i>Turning Point: Justice at the Horseshoe</i> , undated	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Florian fight, undated	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Commission meeting, 1989 March 28	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Roso/Loker kick-off, undated	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Culinary Union arrests, undated	box 08
Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	
Badges, undated	box 09
Pins, undated	box 09
Game tokens, undated	box 09
Small union giveaways, scissors, magnifiers, undated	box 09
Al Bramlet stamp, undated	box 09
Johnny LaVoie's business cards, undated	box 09
Postcards, undated	box 09
Photographic negatives that correspond to photographs, 1984-1992	box 10
Physical Description: 5 Files	box 11
Culinary Workers Union Local 226 strike photograph albums, Barbary rally	box 12
photographic negatives and print, 1990	box 13