

## Guide to the Ralph Denton Legal Papers

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Denton, Ralph, 1925-2012
<b>Title:</b>	Ralph Denton Legal Papers
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00440
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1950 to 1993
<b>Physical Description:</b>	25.90 Cubic Feet (38 boxes)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	21.66 Linear Feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1216 Digital Files (24.3 GB) JPG
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Ralph Denton Legal Papers (1950-1993) consist of case files and legal briefs of civil rights attorney Ralph Denton. The cases largely involve civil rights issues and property claims in Las Vegas, Nevada. The files include cases representing individuals as well as companies such as Henderson Telephone Company, Lephrechaun Mining Company, and the Jockey Club Casino.

### Preferred Citation

Ralph Denton Legal Papers, 1950-1993. MS-00440. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Biographical Note

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Ralph Lloyd Denton was a famed civil rights attorney in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was born in Caliente, Nevada in 1925 to a political family that had been involved in Democratic and populist campaigns since William Jennings Bryan's first presidential run in 1896. While in high school, Denton won a summer job as an elevator operator in the United States Senate building in Washington, D.C. In 1943, he graduated high school and enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps, where he served in World War II. After the war, Denton attended the Washington College of Law where he graduated in 1951 with a juris doctorate degree. While in law school, Denton got

to know Democratic Senator for Nevada Pat McCarran, who helped him get a clerking position in Nevada with U.S. District Judge Roger T. Foley.

Upon his return to Las Vegas in 1955, Denton became more involved in Democratic politics. In 1958 he was elected as District Attorney of Esmeralda County, Nevada. He was heavily involved in John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign, helping him to carry the state in the close contest against Vice President Richard Nixon. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Denton was a passionate defender of the Civil Rights movement, and offered his legal services to help desegregate hotels and casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. He was known for his support of liberal causes, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the Peace Movement during the Vietnam War. His progressive activism earned him the nickname of "the liberal conscience of Nevada." In 2008, Denton retired from practicing law and moved to Boulder City, Nevada. Although retired, he continued to offer legal advice to residents of Southern Nevada. He passed away at his home in Boulder City in 2012. The Ralph Denton Professorship was established at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Boyd School of Law in his honor.

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## Scope and Contents Note

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The Ralph Denton Legal Papers (1950-1993) consist of case files and legal briefs of civil rights attorney Ralph Denton. The cases largely involve civil rights issues and property claims in Las Vegas, Nevada. The files include cases representing individuals as well as companies such as Henderson Telephone Company, Lephrechaun Mining Company, and the Jockey Club Casino.

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## Arrangement

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Materials remain in original order.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

Collection is open for research. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information.

### Publication Rights

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### Acquisition Note

Materials were donated to the Boulder City Museum and Historical Association in 2001 by Sara Denton and were transferred to UNLV Special Collections in 2001 by Dennis McBride; accession number 2001-026.

### Processing Note

Material was processed by UNLV Special Collections staff in 2001. In 2014, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Ian M. Baldwin wrote the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards. Subsequently, Ian M. Baldwin entered the data into ArchivesSpace. In 2020, Sarah Jones rehoused the collection, updated the collection description, and due to insurmountable preservation issues, digitized select materials from the collection for preservation purposes and discarded the originals.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Collections

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

Ralph Denton oral history interview, 2000 January 10. OH-00434. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ralph Denton oral history interview, 2007 June 05. OH-02547. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Sara P. Denton oral history interview, 2015 July 13. OH-02452. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Legal Cases -- Las Vegas -- Nevada
- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- History
- Civil rights
- Lawyers -- Nevada -- Clark County -- Biography
- Nevada -- Politics and government -- 20th century

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Containers
Aladdin Hotel: case file, 1968	box 01
Victory Uranium Corporation and Sherwin, Charles: case file, 1954 to 1958	box 01
City of Caliente and Arnoldus, Hans J.: case file, 1956 to 1958	box 01
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