



Finding Aid for

BERNICE KNIGHT LICARI COLLECTION, 1922-1989

Accession 2003.92

Finding Aid Published: 31 March, 2021

Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Boulevard · Dearborn, MI 48124-5029 USA
research.center@thehenryford.org · www.thehenryford.org

OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2003.92

CREATOR: Licari, Bernice Knight

TITLE: Bernice Knight Licari Collection

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1922-1989

QUANTITY: 1.6 cubic ft. (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: The Bernice Knight Licari Collection, 1922-1989, contains materials relating to Edsel and Eleanor Ford and their family. George Knight, Bernice's father, worked for Edsel and Eleanor Ford providing security for their children, and documented this experience in a reminiscence included in the collection. Other items include gift tags, newspaper clippings, and assorted invitations, announcements, and thank you cards.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Donated to The Henry Ford, 2003.
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- William Clay Ford Records, 1913-1981 (bulk 1953-1961), Accession 921
 - Henry Ford Clippings Series, 1987, Accession 1880
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 2003.92, Bernice Knight Licari Collection, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Natalie Walker, March, 2021.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared by Natalie Walker, and published in March 2021.
- Finding aid written by Natalie Walker, March 2021, and published in March 2021.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Elliott Knight (1888-1981) worked for Ford Motor Company, through which he became acquainted with Edsel and Eleanor Ford. In 1922, Edsel Ford asked George to help protect his children. George worked for the Fords until he retired in the 1950s. He had one daughter, Bernice Knight Licari, with his wife Bessie Mae Knight and lived in Detroit until his death in 1981.

Edsel Bryant Ford (1893-1943) was the only child of Henry and Clara Ford. He married Eleanor Clay (1896-1976) in 1916, and they had four children: Henry Ford II, Benson Ford, Josephine Clay Ford, and William Clay Ford. Edsel Ford died unexpectedly after an illness on May 26, 1943. Eleanor was a patron of the arts and made generous donations to the Detroit Institute of Arts upon her death in 1976. Their oldest son, Henry Ford II (1917-1987) served as president of Ford Motor Company from 1945-1960 and was remembered fondly by the company and employees upon his death in 1989. He married Anne McDonnell (1919-1996) in 1940, and they had three children: Charlotte McDonnell Ford, Anne Ford, and Edsel Bryant Ford II. Henry and Anne divorced in 1964, and Henry married twice more. Benson Ford (1919-1978) married Edith McNaughton in 1941. Josephine Clay Ford (1923-2005) was Edsel and Eleanor's only daughter, and her marriage to Walter Buhl Ford II (1920-1991) was well documented by the press. William Clay Ford married Martha Parke Firestone in 1947 and was the last of the third generation of the Ford family to work at Ford Motor Company with his retirement in 1989.

Note content adapted from the following sources:

- "Obituary for George Elliott Knight", *Detroit Free Press*, 15 April, 1981, accessed on March 10, 2021 at <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/39264113/obituary-for-george-elliott-knight/>
- Jeff Mortimer. "A simplified look at the Ford family tree." *Automotive News*, 16 June 2003. Accessed March 18, 2021 at <https://www.autonews.com/article/20030616/SUB/306160799/a-simplified-look-at-the-ford-family-tree>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Bernice Knight Licari Collection, 1922-1989, contains 1.6 cubic feet of materials gathered by Bernice Knight Licari about her father, George Knight, and his relationship to Edsel and Eleanor Ford and their family. The collection contains newspaper clippings about Edsel Ford, Eleanor Ford, Henry Ford II, Benson Ford, Josephine Ford, and William Clay Ford. Other items include gift tags from Edsel and Eleanor Ford, wedding invitations and announcements, thank you notes, and souvenir coins. An important item in the collection is a reminiscence written by George Knight about his time providing security for Edsel and Eleanor Ford's children. Also of note are two pieces of cake distributed at Henry and Clara Ford's 50th wedding anniversary in 1938 and Josephine Clay Ford and Walter Buhl Ford II's wedding in 1943.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Knight, George Elliott, 1888-1981
Firestone, Martha Parke, 1925-
Ford family
Ford, Benson, 1919-1978
Ford, Edith McNaughton, 1920-1980
Ford, Edsel, 1893-1943
Ford, Eleanor Clay, 1896-1976
Ford, Henry, II, 1917-1987
Ford, Josephine Clay 1923-2005
Ford, Walter Buhl, II, 1920-1991
Ford, William Clay, 1925-2014
Johnson, Anne McDonnell Ford, 1919-1996

Subjects

Autobiographical memory
Christmas
Families
Funeral rites and ceremonies
Honeymoons
Weddings

Geographic

United States, Detroit (Michigan)
United States, Grosse Pointe (Michigan)
United States, Grosse Pointe Farms (Michigan)
United States, Grosse Pointe Shores (Michigan)
United States, Akron (Ohio)
United States, Southampton, Long Island (New York)

Genre and Form

Clippings (information artifacts)
Greeting cards
Manuscript
Pamphlets
Publications
Souvenirs

CONTAINER LIST

Box no.	Description
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Box 1

George Knight oral reminiscence, May 1963
Fair Lane – Celebration of Henry Ford's 121st Birthday, July 29-30, 1984
Souvenir coins, 1929, 1933, and 1953
Gift tags from Ford family, 1930-1976
Invitations, announcements, and thank you notes (includes invitations from the weddings of Benson Ford and Edith McNaughton and Josephine Clay Ford and Walter Buhl Ford II)
Photographic prints, circa 1950

Box 2

Assorted articles and clippings
Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company
Ford family, 1953-1968 (includes articles on Edsel and Eleanor's grandchildren)
Edsel and Eleanor Ford, 1943-1976
Benson Ford, 1941
William Clay Ford, 1946-1989
Josephine Ford, 1942-1943
Henry Ford II, 1940-1987

Box 3

Cake (includes slices of cake in boxes from Henry and Clara Ford's 50th wedding anniversary in 1938 and from Josephine Ford's wedding in 1943)