

2009

# San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocations Records

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## Guide to the San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocations Records

SJSU Library Special Collections and Archives

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

San José State University

One Washington Square

San José, CA 95192-0028

Phone: (408) 808-2062

Fax: (408) 808-2063

Email: [special.collections@sjsu.edu](mailto:special.collections@sjsu.edu)

URL: [http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/special/special\\_coll/](http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/special/special_coll/)

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Collection number: MSS-2009-02-03



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Processed by:  
Jane Gilvin  
Date Completed:  
2009  
Encoded by:  
Lynn Sheehy

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocations Records

**Dates:** 1889-2009

**Bulk Dates:** 1956-1968

**Collection number:** MSS-2009-02-03

**Creator:** San José State University Academic Senate Commencement Committee & Academic Affairs Division

**Collection Size:** 14 boxes(11.92 linear feet)

**Repository:** San José State University. Library.

San José, California 95192-0028

**Abstract:** The San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocation Records, 1889-2009 (bulk 1956-1968) consist of programs, event planning paperwork, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks and correspondence for the university's commencement and honors convocation ceremonies. A small number of photographs and negatives are included in the records. This collection is arranged into two series: Series I. Academic Senate Commencement Committee, 1925-1978 (bulk 1956-1968); and Series II. Academic Affairs: Commencement & Honors Convocation, 1889-2009.

**Physical location:** For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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#### **Preferred Citation**

San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocations Records, MSS-2009-02-03, San José State University Library Special Collections and Archives.

#### **Project Information**

This finding aid was created as part of the Survey and Cataloging Project, a two-year San José State University Library grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project began in 2008. The Project Director is Danelle Moon. The Project Archivist is Erin Louthen.

#### **Processing Information**

Collection processed by Jane Gilvin. Finding aid EAD encoded by Lynn Sheehy. Reviewed by Danelle Moon and Erin Louthen.

#### **Organizational History**

In 1857 the San Francisco Board of Education established Minns' Evening Normal School for current and prospective teachers in the city. Named after its principal, George W. Minns, the institution was formally established as the first California State Normal School by the State Legislature in 1862. A decade later, the Legislature voted to move the Normal School to San José, and the school relocated to its new home on Washington Square prior to the fall term of 1872. After a fire destroyed the Normal School building in 1880, the Legislature authorized \$200,000 to construct a new building on the same site. Completed in 1881, the building was commonly referred to as the Second State Normal School. After several names and curriculum changes, Minns' Normal school is now San José State University, offering more than 134 bachelor's and master's degrees with 110 concentrations, and is recognized as one of the top public universities granting such degrees in the West.

Minns' Evening Normal School held commencement ceremonies in 1861 and 1862 with two graduating classes. After the institution became the California State Normal School, the first commencement was held on May 14th, 1863. The university's Honors Convocation was inaugurated in 1962 by the Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi and Phi Beta Kappa Faculty Club honor societies. The convocation is intended to recognize President's and Dean's scholars--undergraduate students who have earned a 4.0 or 3.65 grade point average or higher in at least two contiguous semesters of the three semesters prior to the Honors Convocation, respectively.

#### **Bibliography:**

Gilbert, Benjamin F., and Burdick, Charles. *Washington Square, 1857-1979: The History of San José State University*. San José, California: San José State University, 1980.

San José State University. About SJSU. [http://www.sjsu.edu/about\\_sjsu/](http://www.sjsu.edu/about_sjsu/).

Walsh, James P. *San José State University: An Interpretive History, 1950-2000*. San José, California: San José State University, 2003.

#### **Scope and Content**

The San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocation Records 1908-2007 (bulk 1956-1968) consist of programs, event planning paperwork, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks and correspondence for the university's commencement and honors convocation ceremonies. A small number of photographs are also included in the records as well as negatives and negative indexes document the commencement exercises. Letters inviting commencement speakers and copies of university presidents' speeches are also included. The extensive date range of commencement programs shows the growth of the student population and the evolution of the university's academic programs. Also documented is the move from three commencements per academic year to a single commencement ceremony. For many of the years covered in the records, event programs are the only items that exist documenting commencement and convocation ceremonies.

#### **Arrangement**

This collection is arranged into two series: Series I. Academic Senate Commencement Committee, 1925-1978 (bulk 1956-1968); Series II. Academic Affairs: Commencement & Honors Convocation, 1889-2009.

#### **Subject Headings:**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

San José State Normal School -- History

San José State Teachers College -- History

San José State College -- History

California State University, San José -- History

San José State University -- History

Commencement ceremonies -- California -- San José

**Related Material**

Scrapbook, 1878-1952. SJSU Commencement Programs. LD729.C99 C35x 1878.

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**Series I: Academic Senate Commencement Committee 1925-1978 (bulk 1956-1968)**

**Physical Description:** 5 Boxes

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains correspondence, manuscripts, programs, and scrapbooks from the San José State University Academic Commencement Committee. Letters inviting commencement speakers and copies of university presidents' speeches are also included.

Minns' Evening Normal School held commencement ceremonies in 1861 and 1862 with two graduating classes. After the institution became the California State Normal School, the first commencement was held on May 14th, 1863. The San José State University Commencement & Honors Convocation Records indicate that the school had winter, spring and summer commencement ceremonies each academic year until the 1971-1972 term. Today, commencement at San José State University occurs once in the spring.

**Arrangement**

This series is arranged chronologically by date.

Box 1 **Commencement Program Scrapbooks 1925-1956**

Box 2 **SJSU Presidents' Commencement Reports 1953-1964**

Boxes 3-5 **Commencement Programs, Correspondence & President's Reports 1951-1978**

**Series II: Academic Affairs: Commencement & Honors Convocation 1889-2009**

**Physical Description:** 9 Boxes

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains correspondence, clippings and programs from the Honors Convocation. Programs, negatives and negative indexes from commencement are also part of the series. The extensive date range of commencement programs shows the growth of the student population and the evolution of the university's academic programs.

The Honors Convocation was inaugurated in 1962 by the Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi and Phi Beta Kappa Faculty Club honor societies. According to the Office of the Provost, Honors Convocation is intended to recognize President's and Dean's scholars. President's scholars are undergraduate students who have earned a 4.0 grade point average at San José State University in at least two contiguous semesters of the three semesters prior to the Honors Convocation. Dean's scholars are undergraduate students who have earned a 3.65 or higher grade point average at San José State University in at least two contiguous semesters of the three semesters prior to the Honors Convocation.

**Arrangement**

This series is arranged chronologically by date.

Box 6 **Commencement & Senior Week Programs 1889-1980**

Boxes 7-9 **Commencement Programs 1924-1925, 1938-1998**

Box 10 **Commencement Programs & Photographs 1949, 1987 2003-2007**

Box 11 **Commencement Photographic Negatives & Graduate List 1991-1996**

Box 12 **Honors Convocation & Commencement Programs 1980-2009**

Box 13-14 **Honors Convocation Clippings, Programs & Correspondence 1962-1996**