

University of Miami Special Collections

Finding Aid - Erl Roman papers (ASM0164)

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Erl Roman papers

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Miami Special Collections
Title:	Erl Roman papers
ID:	ASM0164
Date:	1935-1964 (date of creation)
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Physical description:	Boxes
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Before working at the University of Miami, Erl Roman established a reputation as a fisherman and writer. He fished throughout the United States, in Canada, Mexico, the Bahamas and the West Indies, and held several fishing records. Roman also launched a crusade for fresh water conservation in Florida and contributed to the passage of state conservation game and fish laws. Roman also played a key role in promoting the University of Miami. He held a public relations position in the University's Office of Public Information from 1946-64, promoted the University of Miami football team and publicized the Marine Laboratory. Roman also taught a fishing course, coached the polo team and contributed to the university in numerous ways.

Roman's knowledge of sport fishing led to a successful writing career. After graduating from Baltimore City College, he wrote Fishing for Fun in Salty Waters. Numerous outdoor magazines also published his articles. For 17 years, Roman was fishing editor for the Miami Herald, and he held positions as second fishing editor of America and editor of Outdoorsman Magazine.

In addition to fishing, Roman displayed an avid interest in college football. He first supported the University of Miami team during the early 1930's, initiating a lifelong connection with the University. In 1933 Roman helped organize and promote the first "Palm Festival" game which brought the school national publicity and set the precedent for what became known as the "Orange Bowl Game." Roman also aided the team through his donation of the mascot "Touchdown Tommy"--a small canon decorated in school colors.

In 1935, a University of Miami cheerleader originated the practice of firing a canon whenever the football team scored. Two years later Erl Roman painted a salute gun and presented it to the team. The canon, named "Touchdown Tommy," was fired "...on the opening kickoff, on the advent of all scores, at the opening of the second half, and at the end of the game, steadily building up a tradition..."

He also organized "The Quarterback's Club" in 1938, to garner financial support for the team. The Club familiarized Dade County residents with the University of Miami, increased game attendance, raised funds for the football team, and provided aid for players. An "Entertainment Committee" planned events for visiting squads, and organized dinners and awards banquets. The "Publicity Committee" advertised the club, and the "Block Membership Committee" focused on soliciting large donations from "business firms, movie houses, et cetera...to be used in obtaining outstanding football talent." The club paid for players' hospitalization insurance and trips home, and for coaches' scouting expenses. Club members entertained and acquainted players with the Miami area, and placed them in jobs during school vacations and after graduation.

Roman actively promoted University of Miami football in his capacity as a publicist and in personal and business correspondence. In his letters Roman often discussed attendance at football games and described the excitement of the crowds. In an attempt to interest a journalist in Miami football, Roman wrote that "Football enthusiasm here really is excessive. It's the damndest thing I've ever seen anywhere...I'll get busy and dig up dope for the article on the football games and crowds, and I'll predict that it will make the most interesting football story ever carried in the Post."

In 1946, University of Miami President Bowman F. Ashe requested that Roman work for the University's Office of Public Information. Roman accepted the public relations position which involved the promotion of numerous aspects of the university including those with which he was personally involved: polo, football, the Marine Laboratory and Adult Division Courses. He also wrote or obtained press releases covering university news.

While at the University of Miami, Roman introduced a "Fresh and Salt Water Fishing Class" offered through the Physical Education Department and by the Adult Education Division. For ten years Roman taught this two credit course which drew Dade County residents and tourists as well as students. The polo team, organized in 1947, became another of Roman's projects. He coached the team, leading it to a number of National Championship victories and issued press releases to popularize the sport. Roman also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the first chapter of a national fraternity on campus, and he founded the Symphony Club to aid the developing orchestra.

In his official capacity as publicist, Roman concentrated on public relations in two areas. In correspondence dated 1953 Roman reported that he was "...mainly concerned with the Marine Laboratory and the athletic department..." two areas he "always sort of specialized in." Using his organizational and publicity skills as he had on behalf of the football team, Roman increased financial backing of the Marine Lab and promoted the institution. When the lab was founded in 1942, it lacked funds, buildings and staff. Roman introduced the lab's director to donors who funded the construction of three buildings as well as numerous research projects. Roman participated in and advertised much of this research. The lab, originally staffed by two scientists and housed in an abandoned boathouse on Miami Beach, rapidly became a productive research center with a forty member team. Following his retirement in 1964, Roman continued to raise money for this facility, later known as the Marine Institute, and to promote the University of Miami.

Scope and content

The papers of Erl Roman, well known sport fisherman and skilled writer and publicist, provide information about the sport of angling and about the University of Miami's early years. The records, dated 1935-64, are divided into four series. SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE and SERIES IV: SCRAP BOOKS, document Roman's fishing career as well as laws and events influencing the sport. SERIES II:

TOPICAL FILES relate to fishing and to Roman's involvement with the University of Miami. SERIES III: PRESS RELEASES contains the press releases issued by Roman for the University of Miami Office of Public Information.

Notes

Title notes

Arrangement

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE contains letters and records dated 1947-64. The majority of the papers in this series, dated 1956-64, involve the Cat Cay Key International Tuna Tournament. Letters, various tournament programs and several issues of a tournament newsletter "Cat Cay Key Hole" document this event.

The remaining correspondence concerns other fishing tournaments, a proposed fishing school at the University of Miami, and Roman's publicity of the University of Miami Marine Laboratory and football team. Information on Roman's angling classes, "fan mail," inquiries about fishing, and business correspondence are also included in this series.

SERIES III, PRESS RELEASES consists of news releases prepared for newspaper and magazine publication and occasionally for radio and television broadcasting. Numerous articles, dated 1951-58, concern the University of Miami Marine Laboratory. Others dated 1947-48 promote Roman's "Angling Class" offered through the university, and those dated 1949-52 publicize various other facets of the University of Miami. This series also contains records and press releases from 1948-54 regarding The Quarterback's Club, and a description of the proposed Gulf Stream Aquarium to be located on Key Biscayne.

SERIES III provides information about the University of Miami, the curriculum, student activities, efforts to meet the needs of working students and veterans, and the university's expanding community role. The majority of the press releases involve topics with which Roman was personally connected, such as the polo team, the Marine Laboratory, the University of Miami Adult Division and the football team. Other subjects covered include the library, fraternities, commencement and homecoming, registration and orientation, construction, and the G.I. Education Bill.

Press releases also relate to special course offerings such as television courses and stewardess training classes. Performances and shows including Ring Theater productions, University of Miami symphony performances, music school recitals, and art gallery shows are described. Several articles involve academic topics such as the hiring of faculty, research projects, university publications and new departments and schools.

Press releases describe the contributions of The Quarterback's Club. Additional documents such as minutes of meetings and membership cards record club activities, and club records include photographs (contained in box 10, folder 85) of the football team's "Touchdown Tommy."

A "Report on the Proposed Gulfstream Aquarium, Virginia Key, Dade County Florida," also appears in this series. The report, written in 1949 by the project's consulting engineers, describes the aquarium and predicts its role in the community. A plot plan of the area, and letters from "prominent citizens" including the mayor, city manager, and Eddie V. Rickenbacker are also included.

SERIES IV: SCRAPBOOKS consists of twenty-five scrapbook albums dated 1935-42. Daily entries in each book cover a 2-4 month period. Contents include newspaper clippings of Roman's Miami Herald column "Angler's Notes," later entitled "Ocean, Bay and Stream." In addition to Roman's articles, the books contain cartoon strips dealing with sport fishing; others illustrate a "world championship fisherman," possibly modelled on Roman. Clippings from various magazines and newspapers provide coverage of Roman's fishing activities.

Roman's Miami Herald column reported fishing news, covered tournaments and other events, and noted celebrities who fished in Miami. The column also notified sport fishers of new regulations and presented views on the issues of fish conservation, boat licensing and salt water fishing laws. Roman often discussed the contribution of angling to Miami's tourist industry. In a 1940 article, Roman asserted that "Fishing has proved to be a great attraction to this area. That Miami has grown to such fine proportions, is largely due to the excellent salt water angling available here..."

A 1948 issue of Ashaway Sportsman Magazine also appears in this series. Roman's article, "Angling Now Accepted College Course" explains the objectives of Roman's University of Miami class. In addition to fishing technique Roman taught students "how fishing camps are operated, how to become a successful fishing guide, how to qualify for work in a ...summer camp or for a job as public playgrounds manager." He also emphasized the importance of conservation and tried to cultivate an appreciation of the outdoors.

Restrictions on access

This collection is open for research, but is kept in an off campus storage facility. Please allow up to 72 hours for delivery of requested materials.

Conditions governing use

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Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Description identifier:** ArchonInternalCollectionID:131

Access points

- University of Miami -- Football -- History
- University of Miami -- History
- University of Miami. Marine Laboratory
- Articles (documentary form)
- Letters (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Press releases (documentary form)
- Scrapbooks (documentary form)
- Fishing (subject)

- Fishing -- Florida (subject)

Series descriptions

Series id181718: Correspondence

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id181719	File - General			1
id181720	File -	1947-1955		1 1
id181721	File -	1947-1955		1 2
id181722	File -	1947-1955		1 3
id181723	File -	1947-1955		1 4
id181724	File -	1947-1955		1 5
id181725	File -	1947-1955		1 6
id181726	File - General			2
id181727	File -	1956-1960		2 7
id181728	File -	1956-1960		2 8
id181729	File -	1956-1960		2 9
id181730	File -	1956-1960		2 10
id181731	File -	1956-1960		2 11
id181732	File -	1956-1960		2 12
id181733	File - General			3
id181734	File -	1961-1964		3 13
id181735	File -	1961-1964		3 14
id181736	File -	1961-1964		3 15
id181737	File -	1961-1964		3 16
id181738	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1956-1958		3 17
id181739	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1956-1958		3 18
id181740	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1956-1958		3 19
id181741	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1956-1958		3 20
id181742	File -			4
id181752	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964		4 21
id181753	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964		4 22
id181754	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964		4 23
id181755	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964		4 24

id181756	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964	4 25
id181757	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964	4 26
id181758	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964	4 27
id181759	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964	4 28
id181760	File - Cat Cay International Tuna Tournament	1958-1964	4 29

Series id181762: Topical Files

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id181761	File -			5
id181763	File - Angling Class			5 30
id181764	File - Biographical Sketch			5 31
id181765	File - Fourth Annual International Tuna Match	1961		5 32
id181766	File - Cat Cay Tuna Tournament Catalog			5 33
id181789	File - Cat Cay, Hatteras Venezuela, Panama	1961-1963		5 34
id181806	File - Contributions	1958-1964		5 35
id181812	File - Dormitory	1943-1944		5 36
id181815	File - Fishing Class Pictures	1949		5 37
id181818	File - Honorary Degrees: Commencement	1952		5 38
id181819	File - International Light Tackle Tournament	1961-1964		5 39
id181820	File - International Light Tackle Tournament	1961-1964		5 40
id181824	File - Marine Laboratory	1953-1954		5 41
id181827	File - Marron, Louis E.			5 42
id181828	File - Nova Scotia Tuna History			5 43
id181829	File -			6
id181832	File - Novel: unpublished			6 44
id181835	File - Polo	1948-1950		6 45
id181849	File - Polo Program	1949-1950		6 46
id181850	File - Preliminary Sketches of Aquarium and Marine Lab: Virginia Key	1944		6 47

Series id181918: Press Releases

Publication status:

Published

File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id181852	File - Press Releases			7
id181853	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 48
id181854	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 49
id181855	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 50
id181856	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 51
id181857	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 52
id181858	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 53
id181859	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 54
id181860	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 55
id181861	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 56
id181862	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 57
id181863	File -	Jan 1948-1949		7 58
id181872	File - Press Releases			8
id181874	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 59
id181875	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 60
id181876	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 61
id181877	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 62
id181878	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 63
id181879	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 64
id181880	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 65
id181881	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 66
id181882	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 67
id181883	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 68
id181884	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 69
id181885	File -	Feb 1949-Apr 1951		8 70
id181889	File - Publicity			9
id181893	File - Marine Laboratory	1954-1958		9 71
id181894	File - Marine Laboratory	1954-1958		9 72
id181895	File - Marine Laboratory	1954-1958		9 73
id181896	File - Marine Laboratory	1954-1958		9 74
id181897	File - Marine Laboratory	1954-1958		9 75
id181899	File - The Quarterback's Club: Touchdown Tommy	1948-1954		9 76
id181904	File - Press Releases			10
id181905	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952		10 77
id181906	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952		10 78

id181907	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952	10 79
id181908	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952	10 80
id181909	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952	10 81
id181910	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952	10 82
id181911	File -	May 1951-Aug 1952	10 83
id181912	File - Angling Class	1947-1948	10 84
id181914	File - Publicity	1953	10 85

Series id181920: Scrapbooks

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id181922	File - Scrapbooks			11
id181927	File -	Apr 1935-Dec 1936		11 86
id181928	File -	Apr 1935-Dec 1936		11 87
id181929	File -	Apr 1935-Dec 1936		11 88
id181930	File -	Apr 1935-Dec 1936		11 89
id181931	File -	Apr 1935-Dec 1936		11 90
id181923	File - Scrapbooks			12
id181932	File - Jan-Aug 1937			12 91
id181933	File - Jan-Aug 1937			12 92
id181934	File - Jan-Aug 1937			12 93
id181935	File - Jan-Aug 1937			12 94
id181924	File - Scrapbooks			13
id181936	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 95
id181937	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 96
id181938	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 97
id181939	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 98
id181940	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 99
id181941	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 100
id181942	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940		13 101

id181943	File -	Sep 1937-Jun 1940	13 102
id181944	File - Ashaway Sportsman Magazine	1948	13 103
id181925	File - Scrapbooks		14
id181945	File -	Jul 1940-Feb 1942	14 104