

# A Guide to the James B. Kenley Collection

James B. Kenley Collection 1981-1986  
1981-1986

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A Collection in Special Collections and Archives, Tompkins-McCaw Library 90/Dec/37  
Virginia Commonwealth University, Tompkins-McCaw Library  
2005

**Author:** Jody Romero

## History

**Processed by:** Jody Romero

## Title Statement

A Guide to the James B. Kenley Collection

**Subtitle:** Kenley, James B. Collection

**Collection:** 90/Dec/37

**Author:** Jody Romero

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2005 By Virginia Commonwealth University. All Rights Reserved.

**Publisher:** Virginia Commonwealth University, Tompkins-McCaw Library

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from typescript, created by Jody Romero, May 10, 2005

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

**2013-11-21** Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

## Descriptive Summary

### Accession number

90/Dec/37

### Language

English

### Physical Characteristics

0.4 linear feet, 55 items

### Repository

Special Collections and Archives, Tompkins-McCaw Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va.

## Administrative Information

## **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open to research.

## **Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

## **Acquisition Information**

Donation by Dr Kenley.

## **Preferred Citation**

James B. Kenley Collection, Accession #90/Dec/37, Special Collections and Archives, Tompkins-McCaw Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va.

# **Biographical/Historical Information**

Dr. James B Kenley was born 27 June, 1928 in Portsmouth Virginia. As a young man he often stated he wanted to be a doctor. After attending Asbury College in Kentucky, Kenley earned his MD at the University of Virginia. While a student intern, Kenley developed an interest in public health while working at Riverside Hospital in Newport News. In the Navy, he conducted research at the Naval Research Laboratory working with nuclear testing issues.

Kenley started his public health work when he joined the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) in 1956. Assigned to a rural district, he was instrumental in organizing and delivering the new Silk polio vaccine as well as immunizing for measles. At the time these vaccines needed refrigeration to be effective so the task was a great one. Due to Kenley's efforts, Virginia was the first state to provide measles immunizations at the local health department level.

Kenley, then the Director of the Division of Medical and Hospital Services, was assigned to implement the state's Medicare program. He oversaw the computerization of the entire Medicare process, another first that was soon copied across the country. Kenley was appointed by Governor Mills Godwin to be the State Health Commissioner in 1976. His next addressed the problem of pollution to shellfish and other seafood. He instituted a system of continuous evaluation for environmental programs which rapidly allowed the VDH to focus on the most dangerous pollutants.

In 1986, Kenley accepted an offer to be the Chairman of the Department of Preventive Medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University. During his time as chairman, Kenley wrote about public health issues such as AIDS, kepone, and lead poisoning. He retired from public service in 1992.

Born: 27 June, 1928 in Portsmouth Virginia.

Asbury College: BA Class of 1948.

Medical school: University of Virginia, Class of 1952

1954-1956: Navy. Naval Research Laboratory.

Masters in Public Health, Johns Hopkins, Class of 1959.

Health Director: Fluvanna-Goochland-Louisa Public Health District 1956-1960

Health Director: Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro Public Health District 1960-1963

Director: Bureau of Epidemiology, Virginia Department of Health (VDH) 1963-1965.

Director: Division of Medical and Hospital Services, VDH, 1966-1973.

Deputy State Health Commissioner, VDH, 1973-1976.

State Health Commissioner, VDH 1976-1986

Clinical Instructor in Preventive Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University. 1986-1992

Retired: 1992

## **Scope and Content**

This collection spans the length of Kenley's tenure with the Virginia Department of Health as well as some of his work with Virginia Commonwealth University. The bulk of the collection is speeches made from 1981-1986 while he was the Virginia Commissioner of Health.

## **Arrangement**

Records are arranged in chronological order.

## **Contents List**

## **A Professional History of Kenley. 1976-1986**

**Box-folder 1**

### **Scope and Content**

This series contains various items related to the history of Kenley while the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Health, and his tenure with Virginia Commonwealth University. Included are photographs, letters, newspaper clippings, and articles written by Kinley.

## **Speech Collection 1981-1986**

**Box-folder 2**

### **Scope and Content**

This series contains speeches given while Kenley was Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Health. Topics include Medicare cost concerns, sanitation, aging, and cooperation between the state and the localities. A list of the speeches is included.

### **1981**

**Box-folder 2.1**

### **1982**

**Box-folder 2.2**

### **1983**

**Box-folder 2.3**

### **1984**

**Box-folder 2.4**

### **1985**

**Box-folder 2.5**

### **1986**

**Box-folder 2.6**

## **Scrapbook October, 1963**

**Box-folder 3**

### **Scope and Content**

Scrapbook made by the Petersburg Health Department to commemorate the efforts concerning the measles and polio vaccines. Photographs, official paperwork, newspaper clippings, and articles included.