

**President James M. Kieran Collection
1929-1933
Finding Aid**



JAMES M. KIERAN

Archives and Special Collections



TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information	3
Biographical Sketch	4-5
Scope and Content Note	6
Series Description	7
Container List	8-11

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 99-30

Size: 3.6176 cu. ft.

Provenance: Hunter College Office of the President

Location: Range 4 Section 1 Shelves 4-5

Restrictions: None.

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistant: Mr. Manuel Rimarachin

Date: September, 2001

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March, 2011

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Michael Kieran, the son of Michael and Catherine (Lynch) Kieran was born on August 23 1863, in New York City. He was educated in the primary and secondary schools in New York City. As an alum of Public School 32 Kieran had maintained a lifelong interest in the school's affairs. His presence was so influential that a unanimous resolution was passed by the alumni association changing the name of Public School 32 from the William Wood Grammar School to the James Michael Kieran Grammar School.

Kieran received an A.B. from the College of the City of New York in 1882, and subsequently obtained an A.M. from St. Francis Xavier in 1887. He later pursued additional graduate studies at Columbia University and Fordham University where he acquired an L.L.D. in 1905 from the latter institution.

Kieran's teaching career was spent entirely in New York City. He taught public schools from 1883-1904, attaining the rank of Principal in 1900. He came to the Normal College of the City of New York (renamed Hunter College in 1914) in 1904, and was appointed professor of philosophy and education. He developed a course of study in education which was later copied by other educational institutions. Kieran was instrumental in organizing and directing the Department of Education, and took delight in being able to apply the theoretical methods of pedagogy. He served as Dean of the College from 1927-1928, acting president in 1928, and was inaugurated as the third president of Hunter College in 1929.

By 1929, Hunter College had become the largest municipal women's college in the United States. President Kieran inherited an institution with a teaching staff of 894 members, and with a student body of 22,000. He also spearheaded the task of expanding the physical plant of the College. Enrollment at Hunter College had increased so significantly that annexes were opened to accommodate the overflow of incoming freshmen. In 1927, the City fathers assigned a thirty acre site in the Bronx for the construction of newer facilities. Construction of the new campus began in 1929, with the completion of Gillet Hall in 1931; Davis Hall, Student Hall, and the power plant were completed in February 1932; the Gymnasium was completed later in the year.

In September 1933, President Kieran announced his retirement from Hunter College to devote his last years to literary studies of the 13th and 14th Centuries. He asserted that he would turn to literary life and travel and, as he put it "...absorb more knowledge." When his associates urged him to stay he replied: "I think I've done all I can up there, and I don't want to die in harness. I want to have a little fun, and I am going to study and do a little writing." Upon retiring from Hunter College Kieran decided to live with his son Leo and entertain travel options. In his latter years his doctor warned him to give up some of his activities due to his poor health.

James Michael Kieran had a long and distinguished career as an educator and academician. In his fifty years of teaching he won the admiration and respect of his former pupils. He assisted in establishing the system of general teaching appointments and supervision from an eligibility list. He labored to increase salaries and enhance tenure for New York City teachers. He revised the Hunter

College curriculum and established a Department of Education of collegiate rank at a time when the usual teacher training courses were low in standards.

Aside from his professional career Kieran also maintained an active private life. He married Kate Donahue in 1890, and subsequently fathered seven children. Miss Donahue graduated from the Normal College in 1881. At the time of her death in 1931, she was one of the oldest living alums of the College. Life as an educator and husband/father weren't enough to daunt his interest in educational issues and events. In his younger days he was known as "Fighting Jimmy" Kieran. He was the organizer and the first president of Catholic clubs in non-Catholic colleges. He was a member of the American Association of College Professors and the Association of College Professors of Education and the Catholic Writers Guild. At the time of his death, he was a trustee of the Academy of Public Education of New York City.

Kieran remained current and youthful in spirit and mind throughout his life. Three years before his wife's death, Mr. and Mrs. Kieran won first prize in a dancing contest aboard a cruise ship. Kieran left an indelible imprint on the people he touched and the students he taught. His wife once summed up his life by saying that "Dr. Kieran is like a happy country; neither has any history."

James Michael Kieran, President Emeritus of Hunter College died of a stroke and complications on April 25, 1936, in his home at 575 Park Avenue. He was 72 years old. Dr. Kieran had sufficiently recovered from a slight illness about six weeks before his death to join a son on vacation. He had just returned from the vacation trip when he was stricken with his final illness.

Manuel Rimarachin
Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The President James Michael Kieran Collection reflects an important era in the evolution and physical expansion of Hunter College. The records relate primarily to Dr. Kieran's tenure as president of Hunter College and his private life from 1927 to 1933.

The bulk of the collection documents the inauguration of James Michael Kieran as the third president of Hunter College on March 26, 1929. Inaugural addresses, correspondence, and newspaper articles highlight this historic event.

One key component of the collection consists of the Report of the Evening and Extension Sessions of Hunter College from February 1930 to January 1934. The reports provide an array of monthly and yearly statistics that document the number of matriculated and non-matriculated students, residence of students, course enrollments, degrees held by instructors and courses taught, etc.

Another important part of the collection are the records that document the planning and construction of Hunter College in the Bronx (a.k.a. the Bronx Campus) from 1927 to 1933. The documents in these folders are an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to trace the legal and logistical construction of the Bronx Campus. Researchers can examine resolutions, preliminary reports, blueprints, contracts, committee minutes, and correspondence that were associated with this building project. Hunter College in the Bronx remained part of Hunter College until 1968 when it became a separate institution of higher learning and was renamed Lehman College.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I – Inauguration

Series I documents the inauguration of James Michael Kieran as the third president of Hunter College. Included in this series is biographical information, addresses, correspondence of the Inauguration Committee, list of guests, the inauguration program, felicitation letters, and newspaper articles and clippings. The files are arranged alphabetically.

Series II – Administration

Series II consists of an array of addresses, correspondence, and reports. Key files in this series include the Reports of the Evening and Extension Sessions and the plans for the construction of Hunter College in the Bronx (aka Bronx Campus) from 1927 through 1932.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I - INAUGURATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Biographical Information
		Inauguration Committee
	2	Correspondence, 1928-1929
	3	Report on the Inauguration of James Michael Kieran as the Third President of Hunter College..., November 15, 1929
	4	Inauguration Program, March 26, 1929
	5	"Inauguration of Dr. James M. Kieran," by Mrs. Maxwell Hall Elliott (Marion Rhoads Elliott), October 2, 1929
	6	Inaugural Address by Dr. James Michael Kieran, March 26, 1929
	7-8	Inauguration of James Michael Kieran as the Third President of Hunter College of the City of New York, November 26, 1929
	9	Inauguration List of Guests
	10	Felicitation Letters, 1928
		Letters of Acknowledgment
	11	February 2-6, 1929
	12	February 7-25, 1929
	13	March 5-28, 1929
	14	April -July 1929
	15-16	Articles & Newspaper Clippings, March 1929

SERIES II - ADMINISTRATION

		Addresses
1	17	Kieran, James M. Address delivered to CBK Chapel, Dec. 4, 1929 ---. Address delivered at Hunter College Commencement, ca. 1929 ---. Address delivered at Radio Station WOV, February 15, 1930 ---. Address delivered at 60 th Birthday Chapel, February 19, 1930

SERIES II - ADMINISTRATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	18	Amendment to the By-Laws of the Board of Education-Discipline and Control of Students, September 19, 1933
	19	Analysis of License No. 1- By Examinations, January, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, January 19, 1932
	20	Brooklyn College of the City of New York Admission Requirements, 1933
		Correspondence
2	1	May-December 1930
	2	Brooklyn Teachers Association Roster as of June 24, 1921 Correspondence
	3	Incoming, April 1928-January 1933
	4	Outgoing, February 1928-September 1933
	5	Classrooms Available-Estimates for September 1932, Submitted March 7, 1932
		Correspondence
	6	Incoming, February 1928-January 1933 Outgoing, June 1930, November 1931
	7	Fiftieth Anniversary Program, February 11, 1920
		Hunter College in the Bronx-Construction
	8	Assignment of Jerome Park Reservoir Site to the Board of Trustees of Hunter College by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, May 4, 1927
	9	Blueprints, 1929
	10	Board of Higher Education, 1928
	11	Committee on Hunter College Lands and Buildings on Jerome Park Reservoir Tract, 1930-1931
		Correspondence
	12	Hill, Lewis D., June 1927-October 1930

SERIES II - ADMINISTRATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
		Hunter College in the Bronx-Construction Correspondence
		Kieran, James Michael
		Incoming
2	13	April 1927-December 1929
	14	January 1930-October 1932
		Outgoing
	15	May 1928-March 1930
	16	May 1931-October 1932
		Swift, Harry P.
3	1	Incoming, October 1928-July 1930
	2	Outgoing, January 1927-February 1931
	3	Thompson, Holmes, and Converse, 1928-1932
	4	Preliminary Contract for Architect's Services, June 22, 1927
		Final Contract for Architect's Services
	5	June 25, 1928
	6	August 8, 1929
	7	Resolutions, 1927-1929
	8	Miscellaneous Materials
	9	List of Married Women on Staff, 1930
	10	List of Matriculated Students in the Evening Session, February-June, 1922
	11	Members of the Staff not Residents of the City of New York, June 13, 1932
	12	Members of the Staff Who are Graduates of Hunter College, n.d.
	13	Miscellaneous Materials
	14	Opinion of Corporation Counsel on Jurisdiction of Board of Higher Education, June 5, 1931
	15	Percentage of Sections in each Department Containing Less Than Ten Students, 1928, 1929
	16	Percentage of Staff in Each Rank, April 1928-February 1930

SERIES II - ADMINISTRATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
3	17	Register of Day and Evening Session Students, 1929-1930
		Report of the Evening and Extension Sessions of Hunter College
	18	February-June 1930
	19	September 1930-January 1931
		Report of the Evening and Extension Sessions of Hunter College
4	1	February-June 1931
	2	September 1931-October 1932
	3	February-June 1932
	4	September 1932-June 1933
	5	February-June 1933
	6	September 1933-January 1934
	7	“Survey of Costs,” 1918-1931