

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES

**Guide to the Papers of
NORMAN L. CHRISTELLER
1960-1998**

Record Group 17: Personal Papers

**September 29, 2000
Revised November 10, 2015
Updated 2018**

Montgomery County Archives
Montgomery County Records Center
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Norman L. Christeller was born in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1923, and graduated from Oberlin College in 1943. After serving in the U.S. Army he married his wife, Lois, in 1946, and received a law degree from George Washington University. The couple moved to Montgomery County in 1951. They had two sons and one daughter.

His political career included terms as president of the Montgomery County Council and chairman of the County's planning board. His earliest political activity in the County was in the 1950s, when he served on the Substandard Housing Study Committee. Later, in the 1960s, the open-housing movement attempted to eliminate racial discrimination in the real estate market, and Mr. Christeller helped to secure federal funds to rebuild the Montgomery County community of Scotland, a poor African-American neighborhood in Potomac. In 1974, he was instrumental in the passage of a pioneering law that required large-scale developers to include moderate-priced homes. The law made Montgomery County a nationally-recognized leader in the encouragement of low- and moderate-income housing.

He was appointed to the Montgomery County Council in 1972 and elected in 1974. He served as its president in 1976 and also served on the board of the Metro transit system. He quit the Council in 1978, anticipating an appointment to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which did not materialize. He remained active in county affairs, chairing advisory committees, serving on the Democratic Central Committee and in other party posts. From 1981 to 1989 he headed the bi-county Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission and its Montgomery planning board affiliate.

In 1989, Mr. Christeller helped organize the Montgomery Housing Partnership, a nonprofit corporation working to preserve and encourage housing for families of modest means. He was its president from 1989 to 1992.

His honors included awards from the federal and county government, the Montgomery teachers association, the American Planning Association and civil rights groups. Mr. Christeller died on March 10, 1999, at age 75.

A transcript of an oral history interview of Mr. Christeller conducted in 1992 is on deposit at the Montgomery County Archives in the Oral History Record Group.

EXTENT

0.1 cubic feet: 1 ½-sized letter-size Hollinger box

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Papers of Norman Christeller comprise material dating from 1960 to 1998. The papers include correspondence, speeches, newspaper clippings and biographical information. Due to the small size of the collection, they have not been organized into series.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open for research.

LANGUAGE

English.

PROVENANCE

The papers of Norman Christeller were donated to the Archives on June 16, 2000, by Mr. Christeller's widow, Lois Christeller. The papers are photocopies of original documents retained by the family.

USING THESE RECORDS

To request records listed in this finding aid, the following information should be given to the archivist:

Record Group 17, **Papers of Norman Christeller**, Series Number and Name, Box Number and Folder Title(s).

The preferred citation for materials from these records is:

Montgomery County Archives; Gaithersburg, Maryland. Record Group 17: Personal Papers.
Records Title: Papers of Norman Christeller. Series number and series name. Subseries number and subseries name, if applicable. Box number and folder title, if appropriate.

PROCESSING PROCEDURES

Preservation photocopying onto acid-free paper was completed before the original documents were returned to the family.

PROCESSING STAFF/FINDING AID AUTHOR

MCA staff.

BOX INVENTORY

Box 1

Articles, [n.d.], 1978

Biography, [n.d.], 1999

Correspondence, 1960-1998

News Clippings, 1968-1978

Oral History Transcript, 1992 [moved to Record Group 16]

Speeches, [n.d.], 1978-1997