



BELL, TERREL H.: Papers, 1981-1984

Finding Aid Type

Donated Collections

Subtitle/Office

Secretary of Education, 1981-1984

Disclaimer

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Record Type

Textual

Biography

Terrel H. "Ted" Bell (November 11, 1921-June 22, 1996) was a career-long educator and education administrator. He was the second Secretary of Education, after serving as the United States Commissioner of Education (a precursor to the Secretary of Education) from 1974-1976.

Bell was born in Lava Hot Springs, Idaho. Bell graduated from Lava Hot Springs High School and graduated from the two-year teacher's training program at Albion State Normal School in Albion, Idaho. Leaving teacher's college, Bell enrolled in the

Marines in 1942 and served in the Pacific. He was discharged in 1946 as a 1st Sergeant.

Returning to his education on the G.I. Bill, Bell finished his B.A. degree at Southern Idaho College of Education in 1946. Bell then began his education career teaching high school and driving a truck to improve his modest circumstances.

Bell obtained a Master's degree from the University of Idaho in 1954 and then spent most of the rest of his education career in Utah. He was at various times an athletic coach and a science teacher. Bell also served as the superintendent of Weber School District in Utah from 1958 to 1962. In 1961 he completed his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Utah.

In the 1970s, Bell began his national education career for Republican administrations. He served as Deputy Commissioner for School Systems in the U.S. Office of Education from 1970 to 1971. He was appointed to the head of this office in 1974 and served until the end of the Ford Administration (1976) as U.S. Commissioner of Education.

Returning to Utah, Bell served as the Commissioner of Higher Education for the state of Utah.

President Ronald Reagan appointed Bell as the Secretary of Education in January 1981. His mandate from Reagan was to *close* the Department, fulfilling a Reagan campaign promise. Instead, Bell used the position to campaign and advocate for higher U.S. school standards.

Bell convinced President Reagan to recognize existing programs as a new sub-cabinet foundation, but Congress rejected this approach and the Department of Education was left intact. Bell was under constant criticism from conservative leaders in Congress and the education community as he championed spending increases. These budget appropriations saved several federal education programs such as bilingual education, federal educational research and aid to local school programs. Under the Bell leadership, educational spending increased from \$14.8 billion in fiscal year 1981 to \$18.9 billion in fiscal year 1985. He did reduce the size of the Department from 7,000 to 5,000 employees.

While suffering criticism for keeping the Department of Education open, Bell did advocate for many popular conservative education ideas including tuition tax credits, the voucher system, tax advantaged savings accounts for tuition, local control of school prayer, and the use of the computer in the classroom. Bell also created the National Blue Ribbon schools program in 1982.

Bell's major achievement as Secretary of Education was his creation of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission published a widely acclaimed report in April 1983 titled, *A Nation at Risk*. The report warned of a "rising tide of mediocrity" in U.S. schools. This report sparked a nationwide drive to raise school standards and helped reverse President Reagan's poor standing on educational issues in public opinion polls.

Bell left his post on December 31, 1984 to return to Utah to farm and teach at the University of Utah, School of Administration. In 1988, he published his memoir entitled *The Thirteenth Man: A Reagan Cabinet Memoir*. Bell was inducted into Idaho's Hall of Fame in 1987.

Bell published seven other books during his career, covering topics such as improving child intellectual development and reforming the educational process. His last book in 1993, written with his business partner Dr. Donna Elmquist at his nonprofit company T.H. Bell and Associates in Salt Lake City, made new recommendations for improving the US education system.

"There are three things to emphasize in teaching: The first is motivation, the second is motivation, and the third is (you guessed it) motivation."

The Department of Education gives an award named after Bell to recognize "outstanding school leaders and the vital role they play in overcoming challenging circumstances." At the first ceremony on November 3, 2009, the award was given to eight U.S. public school principals. Concurrent with the award, the department issued a press release which stated, "The late Secretary Terrel H. Bell held education as his highest priority, trusting that all students would find it their personal key to success as he had."

Bell was married and had four sons. Bell died in his sleep at age 74 of pulmonary fibrosis at his home in Salt Lake City on June 22, 1996.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of papers from Dr. Bell's tenure during Ronald Reagan's first term as President. It is a duplicate of a collection currently housed at NARA or the Department of Education. The J. Willard Marriott Library, Manuscripts Division at the University of Utah has Dr. Bell's complete personal papers collection.

The collection consists of six series.

Series List

SERIES I: DAILY SCHEDULE

This series consists of Dr. Bell's daily schedule of appointments; monthly calendar; meeting agendas; attendee lists; resumes and biographies of meeting participants. Included with the daily schedules are daily summaries providing a daily hour-by-hour list of Dr. Bell's appointments for each day of the years.

Also included is material regarding Dr. Bell's remarks and talking points for speaking engagements. Material covering education issues and the Department of Education include issue papers; consultant reports; newspaper articles; correspondence from subordinate offices; and agency testimony before Congress.

SERIES II: SPEECHES

This series consists of Dr. Bell's speeches, his testimonies before Congress and public hearings.

SERIES III: BIOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

This series consists of material regarding Dr. Bell's nomination for U.S. Commissioner of Education for the Nixon and Ford Administrations and for Secretary of Education for the Reagan Administration. The material also includes photographs; clippings; personal correspondence and various biographies

published during Dr. Bell's career.

SERIES IV: SUBJECT FILES

This series consists of formal reports from the Department of Education; priorities, initiatives and goal planning for the Department of Education; issue material regarding women, Indians, vocational and master teachers; and miscellaneous publications and material from the Department of Education.

SERIES V: NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION (NCEE)

This series consist of material relating to the establishment, functioning and running of the National Council for Excellence in Education including hearings; press releases; meeting information; briefings; reviews; reports; correspondence and papers. The series includes the final report of the Council entitled, *A Nation At Risk*.

SERIES VI: DAILY EDUCATIONAL NEWS

This series consists of copies of the "Daily Education News." The "Daily Education News" was an in-house Department of Education publication consisting of a compilation of news articles from newspapers and magazines regarding education issues.

Last Modified Date

2024-05-16

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Box 1**Status****Title**

OPEN

Daily Summaries 1981-1982

Box 2**Status****Title**

OPEN

Daily Summaries 1983-1984

Box 3**Status****Title**

OPEN

Daily Summaries 1984 and 01/29/1981-02/18/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 4**Status****Title**

OPEN

02/19/1981-02/27/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 4A**Status****Title**

OPEN

03/02/1981-03/16/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 5**Status****Title**

OPEN

03/17/1981-04/07/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 6**Status****Title**

OPEN

04/08/1981-04/15/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 7**Status****Title**

OPEN

04/16/1981-05/07/1981, Daily Schedules

Box 8**Status****Title**

OPEN

05/11/1981-06/03/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 9**Status****Title**

OPEN

06/04/1981-06/14/1981 Daily Schedules

Box 10

Status	Title
OPEN	06/15/1981-07/06/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 11	
Status	Title
OPEN	07/07/1981- 07/23/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 12	
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OPEN	07/24/1981-08/31/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 13	
Status	Title
OPEN	09/01/1981-09/15/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 14	
Status	Title
OPEN	09/17/1981-10/08/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 15	
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OPEN	10/09/1981-11/09/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 16	
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OPEN	11/10/1981-12/14/1981 Daily Schedules
Box 17	
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OPEN	12/15/1981-01/22/1982 Daily Schedules
Box 18	
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OPEN	01/25/1982-02/20/1982 Daily Schedules
Box 19	
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OPEN	02/22/1982-03/12/1982 Daily Schedules
Box 20	
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OPEN	03/15/1982-04/05/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 21**Status****Title**

OPEN

04/06/1982-04/25/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 22**Status****Title**

OPEN

04/26/1982-05/05/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 23**Status****Title**

OPEN

05/06/1982-05/21/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 24**Status****Title**

OPEN

05/24/1982-06/16/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 25**Status****Title**

OPEN

06/17/1982-07/12/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 26**Status****Title**

OPEN

07/15/1982-08/04/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 27**Status****Title**

OPEN

08/05/1982-09/16/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 28**Status****Title**

OPEN

09/18/1982-10/08/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 29**Status****Title**

OPEN

10/09/1982-11/05/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 30**Status****Title**

OPEN

11/08/1982-12/01/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 31**Status****Title**

OPEN 12/02/1982-12/28/1982 Daily Schedules

Box 32

Status

Title

OPEN 01/03/1983-01/21/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 33

Status

Title

OPEN 01/21/1983-02/10/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 34

Status

Title

OPEN 02/11/1983-03/01/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 35

Status

Title

OPEN 03/02/1983-03/21/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 36

Status

Title

OPEN 03/21/1983-04/11/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 37

Status

Title

OPEN 04/12/1983-04/25/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 38

Status

Title

OPEN 04/26/1983-05/21/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 39

Status

Title

OPEN 05/24/1983-06/16/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 40

Status

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OPEN 06/16/1983-07/13/1983 Daily Schedules

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OPEN 07/14/1983-07/25/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 42

Status	Title
OPEN	07/27/1983-09/02/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 43

Status	Title
OPEN	09/06/1983-09/19/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 44

Status	Title
OPEN	09/20/1983-09/29/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 45

Status	Title
OPEN	10/05/1983-10/20/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 46

Status	Title
OPEN	10/21/1983-11/10/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 47

Status	Title
OPEN	11/14/1983-12/09/1983 Daily Schedules

Box 48

Status	Title
OPEN	12/12/1983-01/13/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 49

Status	Title
OPEN	01/16/1984-02/09/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 50

Status	Title
OPEN	02/10/1984-02/28/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 51

Status	Title
OPEN	02/29/1984-03/14/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 52

Status	Title
OPEN	03/15/1984-03/30/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 53

Status	Title
OPEN	04/02/1984-04/23/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 54

Status	Title
OPEN	04/24/1984-05/15/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 55

Status	Title
OPEN	05/16/1984-06/16/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 56

Status	Title
OPEN	06/08/1984-06/27/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 57

Status	Title
OPEN	06/28/1984-07/26/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 58

Status	Title
OPEN	07/27/1984-09/07/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 59

Status	Title
OPEN	09/11/1984-10/09/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 60

Status	Title
OPEN	10/10/1984-10/30/1984 Daily Schedules

Box 61

Status	Title
OPEN	10/31/1984-12/18/1984 Daily Schedules

SERIES II: SPEECHES

This series consists of Dr. Bell's speeches, his testimonies before Congress and public hearings.

Box 61, cont.

Status	Title
OPEN	January 1981-July 1981 Speeches

Box 62

Status	Title
OPEN	August 1981-December 1982 Speeches

Box 63

Status	Title
OPEN	January 1983-December 1983 Speeches

Box 64

Status	Title
OPEN	January 1984- December 1984 Speeches

Box 65

Status	Title
OPEN	1981 Speech Index
OPEN	1982 Speech Index
OPEN	1983 Speech Index
OPEN	1984 Speech Index
OPEN	Testimony 1981-1984 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Testimony Index 1981-1984
OPEN	Budget and Appropriations Testimony 1981-1983 (1)(2)
OPEN	Compendium of Quotations on Education Issues August 1983 (1)(2)
OPEN	Compendium of Quotations on Education Issues July 1983-December 1984 (1)(2)

SERIES III: BIOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

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Box 66

Status	Title
OPEN	1975-1984 Biographic Material, Includes 2 Photographs
OPEN	1970-1984 Biographic Material
OPEN	Federal Government Application Documents
OPEN	1970-1976 Biographic Materials, Includes 3 Photographs
OPEN	Nomination/ Entrance on Duty 1970-1974
OPEN	Preliminary Information (re: Commissionership)
OPEN	Newspaper Clippings 1970-1976
OPEN	Miscellaneous Correspondence 1970-1976
OPEN	Dr. Bell Philosophy/ Positions/ Priorities 1973-1975 (1)(2)
OPEN	Who's Who-Assorted 1981-1984

SERIES IV: SUBJECT FILES

This series consists of formal reports from the Department of Education; priorities, initiatives and goal planning for the Department of Education; issue material regarding women, Indians, vocational and master teachers; and miscellaneous publications and material from the Department of Education.

Box 67

Status	Title
OPEN	Vocational Education Reauthorization (1)-(3)
OPEN	Major Issues (1)(2)
OPEN	U.S. Department of Education Annual Report, 1982
OPEN	Goals and Priorities 1983 (1)(2)
OPEN	U.S. Department of Education Annual Report, 1983
OPEN	Secondary Schools Recognition Program, 1983 (1)(2)
OPEN	Goals and Priorities 1984 (1)(2)
OPEN	Planning Guidance Memo for 1983-1987 (March 1983)
OPEN	Briefing for Women Elected Officials-1984 (1)-(4)

Box 68

Status	Title
OPEN	Indians (1)-(3)
OPEN	Law Related Education

Status	Title
OPEN	Master Teachers (1)(2)
OPEN	Miscellaneous Programs (1)(2)
OPEN	Miscellaneous Pamphlets (1)-(5)
OPEN	NCEE (National Commission on Excellence in Education) Report
OPEN	Report on Excellence in Education, 1983

SERIES V: NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION (NCEE)

This series consist of material relating to the establishment, functioning and running of the National Council for Excellence in Education including hearings; press releases; meeting information; briefings; reviews; reports; correspondence and papers. The series includes the final report of the Council entitled, *A Nation At Risk*.

Box 69

Status	Title
OPEN	Public Hearings 03/11/1982 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Public Hearings 04/16/1982 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Public Hearings 05/12/1982 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Public Hearings 06/23/1982 (1)-(4)

Box 70

Status	Title
OPEN	Public Hearings 09/18/1982 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Public Hearings 10/15/1982 (1)-(6)
OPEN	Establishment and Organization NCEE (1)-(3)
OPEN	NCEE (National Commission on Excellence in Education) (1)(2)
OPEN	Press Releases (1)-(3)

Box 71

Status	Title
OPEN	Meetings (1)(2)
OPEN	Briefing Package (1)-(3)

Status	Title
OPEN	Educational Reviews (1)-(3)
OPEN	Educational Reports (1)(2)
OPEN	Papers: Table of Contents
OPEN	Papers (1)-(6)

Box 72

Status	Title
OPEN	Papers (7)-(18)
OPEN	Reports (1)(2)

Box 73

Status	Title
OPEN	Correspondence (Bell) (1)-(3)
OPEN	<i>A Nation at Risk</i>

SERIES VI: DAILY EDUCATIONAL NEWS

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Box 74

Status	Title
OPEN	January 1981-March 1981

Box 75

Status	Title
OPEN	April 1981-June 1981

Box 76

Status	Title
OPEN	July 1981-September 1981

Box 77

Status	Title
OPEN	September 1981-December 1981

Box 78

Status	Title
OPEN	January 1982-March 1982
Box 79	
Status	Title
OPEN	April 1982-June 1982
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Status	Title
OPEN	July 1982-September 1982
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Status	Title
OPEN	October 1982-December 1982
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Status	Title
OPEN	January 1983-March 1983
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Status	Title
OPEN	April 1983-May 1983
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Status	Title
OPEN	June 1983-July 1983
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Status	Title
OPEN	August 1983-September 1983
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Status	Title
OPEN	October 1983-November 1983
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Status	Title
OPEN	December 1983-February 1984
Box 88	
Status	Title
OPEN	February 1984-April 1984

Box 89

Status	Title
OPEN	May 1984-July 1984

Box 90

Status	Title
OPEN	July 1984-September 1984

Box 91

Status	Title
OPEN	October 1984-December 1984