



BHC-MSS 0091

Guide to the Records of Charles Tisdale's 1976 Congressional Campaign

By Meg Rinn

August 2020

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Charles B. Tisdale

Title: Records of Charles Tisdale's 1976 Congressional Campaign

Dates: 1974-1976

Quantity: 2 manuscript boxes

Abstract: Best known as the director of ABCD - Action for Bridgeport Community Development - Charles B. Tisdale was a giant in Bridgeport's community. In 1976, he ran a congressional campaign for the House of Representatives, making him the first African-American in Connecticut to win the democratic nomination. While he lost the race, the work done would catch the eye of President Jimmy Carter and see Tisdale serve at a national level within the administration for four years. The collection captures the work of the campaign itself and provides a snapshot of Tisdale's extensive career.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History:

Born in Chase City, Virginia in 1933, Tisdale's family moved to Bridgeport early on in Charles' life. He attended Warren Harding High School in Bridgeport, and went on to attend North Carolina A&T State University. He met his wife Jetty there, and the two went so far as to elope during their freshman year. The couple later returned to Bridgeport, and Charles began teaching science at the Columbus elementary school.

Jetty herself, known as Peaches, passed on May 14, 2004. Her career is as remarkable as her husband's. An educator with her master's and sixth-year certificate, she served as principle at Newfield, McKinley, Maplewood, and Longfellow schools in Bridgeport, taught science, acted as a guidance counselor at Warren Harding High School, participated in national level committees about education, and was a national level voice in discussions about education. Jetty and Charles had one daughter together, Stacy.

Tisdale was appointed to the position of Executive Director of Action for Bridgeport Community Development in 1968. He remained in the position during his congressional run, and only left it in 1977 when asked to join the Carter administration. Charles would later return in the same position in 1995, and remain until retiring in 2018. ABCD serves Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Norwalk, Stratford, Trumbull.

Charles B. Tisdale was a giant in Bridgeport's community, well known and well-loved. While best known as the director of ABCD - Action for Bridgeport Community Development - Tisdale worked as an economic policy advisor to President Jimmy Carter starting in 1977. Tisdale was first the

Director of Housing and Urban Development, then as staff director for the Federal Interagency Committee on Integration of Human Delivery System.

His work in the Carter administration was due to his work at ABCD and Tisdale's 1976 congressional campaign for the House of Representatives in the 4th district of the state. While Charles did not win the race, Tisdale held the honor of being the first African-American to get the Democratic nomination for U.S. Congress in Connecticut and beat out contenders in the Democratic primary.

In 1981, Tisdale became the U.S.A. field ministry director for World Vision, with a focus on urban development and encouraging entrepreneurship. However, Tisdale was not done with politics yet. He ran for mayor of Bridgeport in 1983, the first African American to do so in a highly diverse city. The race was tense and fraught, with ballot complications that impacted Charles' chance to win.

Two years later, Tisdale ran for the Democratic mayoral nomination in 1985, but lost to eventual mayor Tom Bucci. However, Charles was appointed to Bucci's administration, serving as directory of the Office of Policy and Development. In 1987, Tisdale founded the consulting firm JST Inc. where he remained until returning as ABCD's executive director in 1995. The firm helped with public and private initiatives.

Charles Tisdale died in August 25, 2019, only a year after retiring in 2018. His memorial service was attended by local leaders such as current Mayor Joe Ganim and Aurelius Piper Jr., Chief Quiet Hawk of the Golden Hill Paugussett Tribal Nation, state level leaders such as Senator Richard Blumenthal and Representative Jim Himes, and friends and fellow leaders such as Former New York Congressman Edolphus "Ed" Towns, as well as the many residents of Bridgeport who were impacted by Charles Tisdale's long, storied legacy of advocating for the city and those who live here.

Bibliography

Charles B. Tisdale. (undated.) Huffington Post. Retrieved August 28, 2020, from <https://www.huffpost.com/author/charles-b-tisdale>

Charles Berkley Tisdale. (2019 August.) Legacy.com. Retrieved August 28, 2020, from <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/ctpost/obituary.aspx?n=charles-berkley-tisdale&pid=193751166&fhid=20377>

Cuada, Amanada and Koetering, Katerina. (2019, August 26). Bridgeport leader Charles Tisdale dies. *Connecticut Post*. <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Bridgeport-leader-dies-14377270.php>

Dixon, Ken. (2019, August 29.) City, CT Leaders pay tribute to Charles Tisdale. *Connecticut Post*. <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/City-CT-leaders-pay-tribute-to-Charles-Tisdale-14400375.php>

Hall, Phil. (2019, August 26.) Charles B. Tisdale, Bridgeport nonprofit exec and political pioneer, dies at 86. *Westchester and Fairfield County Business Journals*. <https://westfaironline.com/116159/charles-b-tisdale-bridgeport-nonprofit-exec-and-political-pioneer-dies-at-86/>

Scope and Content note:

This collection pertains exclusively to Charles Tisdale's 1976 congressional campaign. It includes

research on issues in the form of newspaper clippings, press releases from June to September of 1976, notes, and campaign work in the forms of flyers, mailing lists, and the like. It as a comprehensive snapshot of the work put into race, even though the collection is only a small fraction of Tisdale's incredible and extensive career.

Arrangement Note:

Subject file arranged alphabetically.

Administrative information:

Provenance: Gift of Charles B. Tisdale following the campaign (Accession #1976.45)

Preferred Citation:

Records of Charles Tisdale's 1976 Congressional Campaign (BHC-MSS 0091) Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal names

Tisdale, Charles B.

Corporate names

United States. Congress. House

Subject tracings

Bridgeport, Conn.

Campaign literature

Campaign management

Political campaigns--United States--History

Detailed box and folder listing

Box 1

1. AFSCME letter, 1976
2. Benefits, fundraisers, 1976
3. Black support, 1976
4. Business regulation, 1976
5. CCD package, 1975-1976
6. Canvassing, 1976
7. Carter-Mondale, 1976
8. Convention delegates , 1976list
9. (Town) Coordinators, 1976
10. Defense, 1976
11. Economic opportunity newsletter, 1976
12. Economy, 1976
13. Economy, 1976
14. Economy, 1976
15. Employment - Humphrey Hawkins Bill, 1976
16. Energy, 1976

17. Environment, 1976
18. FEC requirements re: fundraising, 1976
19. Finance committees, 1976
20. Foreign policy, 1976
21. Harris issues book, 1976
22. Healthcare, 1976
23. Housing, 1976
24. Issues, 1976
25. Issues – platform, 1976
26. Letters received, May-August 1976
27. Letters received, September-October 1976
28. McKinney, 1976
29. Morgan, 1976
30. Mailing lists, 1976
31. Meetings, 1976
32. Newsletters, 1976
33. Organization, calendar, 1976
34. Organization, staffing, coordination, biogs.,volunteers, 1976
35. Periodical list, 1976
36. Permits, posted, 1976

Box 2

1. Peterson, 1976
2. Peterson, 1976
3. Phone #s master, 1976
4. Poor people's platform, 1976
5. Post cards, 1976
6. Primary, 1976
7. Primary notice and corrected primacy notices, 1976
8. Printed labels, bumper stickers, 1976
9. Printed statements, 1976
10. Printed statements, 1974-1976
11. Publicity, 1976
12. Releases, June 1976
13. Releases, July 8-18, 1976
14. Releases, July 27-29, 1976
15. Releases, August 1-16, 1976
16. Releases, August 18-25, 1976
17. Releases, August 25-31, 1976
18. Releases, August 31-September 3, 1976
19. Releases, announcements of co-ord/endorsements, 1976
20. Research, 1976
21. Shine's letter to go out, 1976

22. Signatures, 1976
23. Stationary, 1976
24. Taxes, 1976
25. Transport, 1976
26. Urban problems, 1976
27. Voting analysis, 1976
28. Welfare-Social Security, 1976