

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Archives and Special Collections**

**Mary Leite Fonseca papers
1932 – 2006**

Manuscript Collection – MC 55

Extent: 21 linear feet (6 manuscript boxes, 13 oversize boxes, 3 record cartons, 3 photo boxes)

Biographical note: Mary Leite Fonseca (1912-2005) served as a Democratic Massachusetts state Senator for the First Bristol District in Southeastern Massachusetts for 32 years. A pioneer in the Massachusetts Legislature, she was the first person of Portuguese descent to serve in the state Senate. She was appointed Second Assistant Majority Leader by Senate President Kevin Harrington in 1973, and later that year became the first woman appointed Assistant Majority Floor Leader — Senate Majority Whip. She held that position for the rest of her career in the senate.

Mary Leite was born in Fall River on March 30, 1912, to Portuguese immigrants Mary B. and Joseph Leite. The second-oldest child in a family of 12, she attended Fall River public schools and graduated from B.M.C Durfee High School in 1932. Before beginning her political career, she worked as a secretary, a translator and at the Fall River Public Library. In 1938 she married John C. Fonseca Jr. Together they had two children, a daughter, Irene V. Fonseca, and a son, John G. Fonseca.

In 1945, she earned her first political appointment by winning a seat on the Fall River School Committee. Her first run at the Massachusetts state Senate came in 1952 with a successful, low-budget campaign for the seat in the Second Bristol District. She served on many committees while in the Senate, including the Education and the Ways and Means committees. See appendix A for a complete list.

Fonseca was a supporter of many women's rights bills. She was a vocal proponent of equal pay for women and the right for women to keep teaching after marriage. Fonseca served as the chair of the Massachusetts Special Commission on the Status of Women – a commission formed in 1964 by Gov. Endicott Peabody to study and file legislation concerning women's equality issues.

Although she never went to college, she was known as a champion for public education in southeastern Massachusetts — from elementary schools to universities. Fonseca was instrumental in crafting legislation that would convert the former Southeastern Massachusetts Technical Institute into Southeastern Massachusetts University. The university recognized her efforts by presenting her with an honorary degree in 1974.

Fonseca was a board member of the Fall River chapter of the Portuguese American Civic League. She received many awards over the years. In 1980, the Portuguese-language newspaper *O Jornal* presented her with the Luso American of the Year Award for her contributions to the Portuguese community.

Though Fonseca's political career ended in 1984 in an unsuccessful bid for re-election, she remained active in the Southcoast community. Fonseca died on June 13, 2005 at the age of 90.

Scope and contents note: The collection consists of correspondence, legislative and committee notes, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, awards, photographs, and four of Fonseca's trademark hats. There are some personal records, as well as records of the Portuguese American Civic League. The collection is divided into ten series and spans the period from 1932 until 2006. Series I are personal records; Series II are legislative records; Series III are speeches; Series IV are political records, events, and banquets; Series V are photographs; Series VI are scrapbooks of newspaper clippings; Series VII are awards and certificates; Series VIII are published material; Series IX are ephemera; and Series X are Portuguese American Civic League records.

Acquisition: Gift of Irene V. Fonseca, January 2006, Accession # 06-16.

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Processed: Processing completed October 2006 by Mike Pacheco '06, Judy Farrar, and Maura McGurk G '07.

Access: Unrestricted.

Language: Materials predominantly in English, with some materials in Portuguese.

Repository: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Claire T. Carney Library Archives and Special Collections, 285 Old Westport Road, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747.
Telephone: 508-999-8686.

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series I: Personal Records, 1932 – 2006

5	77	BMC Durfee High School, Class of 1932 Reunion documents, 1957 – 1982
	78	BMC Durfee High School, Class of 1937 Reunion documents, 1972
	79	BMC Durfee High School yearbook, (photocopies), 1932, with added notes
	80	Correspondence, 1949, 1962, 1998
21 – 22		Hats, 4
5	81	Portuguese Alliance Benevolent Association application and Souvenir Book, 1952, 1954
	82	Souvenir Program, <i>Pioneers of Santo Christo Church</i> , 1976
19	2	Newspaper article, 2006

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series II: Legislative Records, 1953 – 1984

Committee Records

Education Committee

1	1	Notebook, 1953 7 ½" x 10", soft cover, brown Includes legislative acts, notes, various documents, most glued in
	2	Notebooks, 2, 1954 7 ½" x 10", soft cover, brown Includes legislative acts, notes, various documents, most glued in
1 - 2	3-14	Records, 1962 Legislative acts, notes, correspondence, various documents
2	15 –18	Records, 1976 Legislative acts, notes, correspondence, various documents

Public Safety Committee

	19-20	Records, 1962 Legislative acts, notes, correspondence, various documents
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Public Service Committee

	21	Notebooks, 2, 1953 7 ½" x 10", soft cover, brown Include legislative acts, notes, various documents, most glued in
20		3 black 3-ring binders which contained 1962 legislative materials
20		1 manila folder which contained Education documents

Other legislative records

2	22	Bradford Durfee/NBIT Merger, 1960
	23	Correspondence, 1953 - 1980
	24 – 26	<i>The Facts on Bay State Education</i> , 1961

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series II: Legislative Records, 1953 – 1984, continued

	27	Fall River Industrial Commission documents, 1950 - 1954
	28	Fall River Regional Vocational-Technical District documents, 1960
	29	Juvenile Delinquency Investigation, 1955
20		with labeled presentation binder, 9" x 11 ½", burgundy leather
		Legislation:
18	3	Chapter 168, 1973
	3	Chapter 188, Photostat, with correspondence, 1954
3	30	Senate # 184, Married Teachers Bill, 1953
18	3	Yeas and Nays, 2 versions
3	31	Various, 1980
		Southeastern Massachusetts Technological Institute, 1961 – 1969
	32	Name change, 1968 – 1969
	33	Newspaper clippings, 1961 – 1965
3	33A	Newspaper clippings, 1952 – 1976
19	2	Oversize clippings, 1944 - 1984
19		Metal lithographic plates, 2, from Boston Globe, 10/11/1984

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series III: Speeches, 1959? – 1984

		General
3	34	Speeches on government and politics, undated
	35-36	Speeches on education, 1969, 1974, 1978, undated
	37	Speeches, notes, fact sheets on women in the workforce [post-1973]
	38	Speeches from convocations, undated
		Speeches, Graduation
3	39 – 40	College and post-secondary, 1959 – 1979, undated
	41 – 42	Junior and Senior High School, 1965 – 1970, undated
	43	Unknown audience, 1964
	44	General, undated
4	45	excerpts, 1965, 1968, 1969, undated
	46	Notes, 1963
	47	Commencement Programs, 1965 – 1969
		Speeches, Other
	48 – 54	Speeches, other topics, 1964 – 1980
	55	Speech excerpts, undated
	56	Speeches by others, 1944 – 1977 and undated
	57	Speech duplicates
	58	Collected sources for speeches, mostly undated, 1982, 1984

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series IV: Political Records, Events, Banquets, 1944 – 1997

4	59 – 63	Banquets and events, various 1944 - 1997
		Campaign material, 1952 – 1976?
	64	Biographical information, political career, [circa 1984]
	65	Bumper stickers [post- 1952],
	65	Campaign literature e, 1952 – 1976?
	65	Cards 1952-?

Box #	Folder#	Description
Series IV: Political Records, Events, Banquets, 1944 – 1997, continued		
4	66	Correspondence re: Victories, 1954 – 1982
	67	Campaigns, others, various documents, undated
19		Posters, 14" x 22", [1970s?]
		Democratic National Convention documents, 1960 – 1972
19	6	Campaign literature, 1960
4	68	Correspondence, policy statements, booklets, various, 1960
	69	<i>Directory, Democratic National Convention, 1960</i>
	70	Program: <i>Democrats in Convention, 1972</i>
		Dighton Rock
	71	Documents, 1960s – 1972
19	3	Oversize newspaper clippings
Photo Box 2-3		Photographs, 44 b/w 8" x 10", 1973 – 1978

Box #	Folder#	Description
Series V: Photographs, 1953 – c. late 1970s, early 1980s		
18		EG&G Meeting at Fall River, b/w, signed, matted, 10" x 8", 1982
19	5	Massachusetts Senate, b/w photos,
18		25" x 10", 1953 – 1954
		20" x 16" mounted on board, 1961
mezzanine		21 ¼" x 17 ¼", framed, 1967 – 1968
18	5	20" x 16", 1967 – 1968
18	2	Massachusetts Senate Ways & Means Committee, 6 b/w photos, 11" x 14", 1959 – 1976
		Miscellaneous
18		3 women taking oath with 3 men, mounted on board, b/w, 10" x 8", undated [circa
1950s]		
18		Ships in harbor, photographer's label on back, color, 14" x 11", undated
		Scrapbook pages
18		b/w, with newspaper caption and paper mat [scrapbook page], 10" x 8", 1973
18		2 b/w 5" x 7" photos, undated:
		Senator Fonseca at a signing ceremony with Governor Dukakis and others
		Senator Fonseca with Ted Knight and unknown man
18		"Pat O'Brien, Mike Douglass, Sen. Fonseca, Sen. Rurak, March 1965", b/w,
		labeled, 10" x 8", 1965
		Senator Fonseca with:
18		Governor King and Sri Lankan visitors, b/w, 8" x 10", 1979
18		2 men, color 8" x 10", undated
18		2 women [one is Mary Monroe? of New England Telephone Co.], one man
		[at IAPW Meeting?], b/w, mounted and matted, 12" x 10", undated
18		8 men, 2 women, and plaque, mounted on board, color, 10" x 8", undated
19	1	Portrait, Color, 16" x 20", undated
18		unknown man, b/w, mounted, 12" x 9", undated
18	4	SMTI, Senator Fonseca and others breaking ground, b/w, 14" x 11", (Deb has another copy,
		with mat)
18		SMU campus, mounted with signed mat, b/w, 16" x 20", 1978
Photo Book 1		Various, 36, some signed or labeled
Photo Book 2		Various, 58, some signed or labeled
18		Photocopy of a framed piece? And photocopy of back

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series VI: Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, mostly about legislative career, 1944 – 1984

7		November 1944 – March 1947 12 ½" x 12 ¾" Brown embossed leather, bound with two metal rings, "Scrap Book" in gold
7		1948 - ? [post-1952] 12 ½" x 12 ¾" Black, embossed leather with turquoise and gold emblem, bound with string Articles, photocollage
8		1951 – 1979 11 ½" x 14 ½", Green A few pasted in, most loose
9		January 1973 – September 1973 19" x 16 ½", black
10		September 1973 – October 1973 11 ½" x 14 ½", Green
11		January 1974 – May 1974 Black, 16" x 12"
11		April 1974 – July 1974 Black, 16" x 12"
8		July 1974 – May 1975 11 ½" x 14 ½", Green
10		June 1975 – March 1976 11 ½" x 14 ½", Green
12		March 1976 – October 1976 11 ½" x 14 ½", Green
13		November 1976 – February 1977 12" x 14 ¾", brown leather with gold trim
13		February 1977 – April 1977 12" x 16", brown leather with gold trim
14		April 1977 – August 1977 12" x 16", brown leather with gold trim
14		September 1977 – November 1977 12" x 16", brown leather with gold trim
15		November 1977 – April 1978 12" x 16", brown leather with gold trim
15		April 1978 – July 1978 12" x 16", brown leather with gold trim

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series VI: Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, mostly about legislative career, 1944 – 1984, continued

16		July 1978 – August 1978 13" x 15", black
9		August 1978 – October 1978 18 ¼" x 16 ½", black
16		January 1979 – April 1979 13" x 15", black
16		March 1979 – June 1979 13" x 15", black
shelved		June 1979 – April 1981 18 ¼" x 16 ½", black
17		April 1981 – October 1981 12" x 13", black
12		May 1982 – December 1982 12 ¼" x 14 ¼", red
shelved		December 1982 – June 1984 19 ¾" x 24", black
shelved		July 1984 – December 1984 19 ¾" x 24", black

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series VII: Awards and Certificates, 1953 – 1995

5	72	Acushnet Democratic Town Committee Statement, 1966
	72	American Legion, Citation of Appreciation, 7" x 9 ¼", 1981
	72	Bishop Connolly High School Century Club, election to Hall of Famed Associates, 11" x 8 ½", 1981
18	6	Bristol Community College, Distinguished Citizen Award, 10 ½" x 14", 1981
	6	Comendador da Ordem do Infante Dom Henrique, 9 ¼" x 13, 1972
		Commonwealth of Massachusetts
	6	Certificate of Appreciation, 14" x 11", 1995
	6	Certificate of Recognition, 11" x 14", 1973
	6	Golden Dome Citation, 23" x 17 ½", 1984
	6	Governor's Certificate of Congratulations, with correspondence, 11" x 14", 1981
	1	Governor's Commission on Status of Women, Appointment to, 12" x 19", 1971
	6	House of Representatives Official Citation, 11" x 14", 1981
	6	Medal of Merit, 11" x 14", 1985
	6	Resolutions, 11" x 14", 1981
5	72	Corky Row Ladies Auxiliary Award, 11" x 8 ½", 1981
	72	Department of Education certificate, completion of "Legislative Procedure" course, 1953
	72	Distinguished Service Award for contributions to public education, 11" x 8 ½", undated
	72	Distributive Education Clubs of America, Certificate of Appreciation, 8 ½" x 11", 1973
	72	Espirito Santo Federal Credit Union, Certificate of Appreciation, 8 ½" x 11", 1983
	72	Fall River, City of, Official Citation, 8 ½" x 11", 1981
		Fall River, School Board
	72	Certificate of Service in the Field of Education 11 ¾" x 8 ¾", [1953?]

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series VII: Awards and Certificates, 1953 – 1995, continued

5	72	Election certificate, 1949
	72	Fall River, Teachers Association, Honorary Membership, 11" x 7 1/2", undated Friendship Dinner, 1966
	73	Documents
Photo Binder 3 mezzanine 23		Photograph Greater Fall River Chamber of Commerce, Framed newspaper collage, 16 1/4" x 23", 1978 Letorneau School commemorative plaque, 1976 Luso-American Award, 1981
5	74	Thank you speech
Photo Binder 3 20 20		B/W Photos, 5" x 8" (3) and 4" x 5" (30) Framed plaque, 10 1/4" x 13" [says 1980] Massachusetts Secondary School Principals' Association, Citation plaque, 10" x 12", 1972
5	72	Massachusetts CUNA Credit Union Association, Certificate of Appreciation, 8 1/2" x 11", 1976
	72	National Federation of the Blind of MA, Certificate of Appreciation with Braille card, 11" x 8 1/2", 1977
	72	Plymouth County Teachers Association Citation, 8 1/2" x 11", 1964
	72	Portuguese-American Federation Tribute, 11" x 8 1/2", 1981
18	6	Rhode Island, State of, Proclamation, 8" x 13", 1981
5	72	Sacred Cod Club, membership certificate, 9" x 12", undated Second Bristol Senatorial District
18	1	Certifications of Election, 9 1/2" x 15", 1953, 1973
5	72	Tribute booklet, Second Bristol District, 1973
20		Senior Citizens & Associates of America, Public Service Award plaque, 10" x 12", 1966 Southeastern Massachusetts University
mezzanine		Foundation, Wooden plaque with whip, 19" x 25 1/2", undated
5	75	Honorary Degree documents, 1974
21		Student Body, Distinguished Service Award plaque, 12" x 15", undated University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Reception, 1996
5	76	Documents
Photo Binder 3		Photographs: 1 b/w, 9" x 7", Color, 9, 4" x 6"

Box #	Folder#	Description
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Series VIII: Published Material (most books are signed by the author), 1952 – 1981 (publication dates)

		Newsletters and Booklets
5	83	<i>Alpha Upsilon Baystater</i> , 1969, 1973
	84	<i>Congressional Record</i> , 1972, with correspondence, 1981
6	85	<i>Directory of Massachusetts Legislators and Other Elected Officials</i> , 1969 - 1970
	85	<i>Massachusetts Legislators and Other Elected Officials</i> , 1973 – 1974
	86	<i>President-elect John Fitzgerald Kennedy's speech to a joint convention of the Two Houses of the General Court of Massachusetts</i> , 1961
	87	<i>State House Reporter</i> , 1954
	88	<i>Tax Talk</i> , 1952 – 1954
	89	<i>Vocational Education in Massachusetts</i> , 1952
shelved with collection		Books
		<i>Azores/Açores</i> , 1980, (2), with dedications, one with translation of dedication
		<i>Portuguese Pilgrims and Dighton Rock</i> , M.L. da Silva, 1971
		<i>Mom, They Won't Let Us Pray</i> , Rita Warren, 1975, with correspondence and clippings, inscription
		<i>Business and Academia</i> , ed. Hoy and Bernstein, 1981, with correspondence
		<i>A Memory of John F. Kennedy</i> , [1964]

Box #	Folder#	Description
Series VIII: Published Material (most books are signed by the author), 1952 – 1981 (publication dates)		
shelved with collection		<i>Kennedy Campaigning</i> , Murray B. Levin, 1966, inscribed by Donald Carvalho, with notes throughout <i>No Retreat From Tomorrow: President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1967 Messages to the 90th Congress</i> , with White House correspondence <i>The Professional: Lyndon B. Johnson</i> , William S. White, inscribed by Johnson, with White House correspondence, 1964 <i>The Speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy Presidential Campaign of 1960</i> <i>The Strategy of Peace</i> , John F. Kennedy, 1960, inscribed by Kennedy <i>The Road From Here</i> , Paul Tsongas, 1981, inscribed by Tsongas <i>How to Win in 1952: Campaign Handbook, Democratic National Committee</i> <i>The Control of Urban Schools</i> , Joseph M. Cronin, 1973, inscribed by Cronin <i>The Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention, 1976</i>
Box #	Folder#	Description
Series IX: Ephemera, mostly undated, 1968 – 1975		
6	90	Notes and various documents Portuguese-American napkin Invitation cards, 1975
18	1	Funeral elogy for Robert F. Kennedy by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, 12" x 18", 1968
18	1	<i>Address to the Great and General Court of Massachusetts, by President-elect John Fitzgerald Kennedy</i> , 1961 speech transcribed on parchment, 19" x 14", with correspondence, 1970
21		Laminated cartoon plaque, 9" x 8", undated
Box #	Folder#	Description
Series X: Portuguese American Civic League records, 1935 – 1995, bulk 1935 – 1949		
6	1	Constitution and By-laws booklets, 1935, 1939, 1947
	2	Conventions, 1939 – 1947
	3 – 5	Correspondence, 1943 – 1995, undated
	6	Documents, various, 1995
		Lists
	6	Officers and directors, 1937, 1940
	6	Members, undated
	8	<i>Lus•Us</i> newsletter, 1995
	7	Meeting Notes, undated
	7	Minutes, 1945, 1946
	7	Report, State Meeting, 1949
	6	Roll call and attendance, 1948 and undated
	9	Newspaper clippings, 1942 – 1962 and undated
7		Scrapbook: 11 ¼" x 12 ¾", black, embossed with gold emblem, bound with string Contains a few clippings from 1950
19		Photographs b/w, Portuguese American Civic League banquet, 20" x 10", 1941 b/w, Portuguese American Civic League banquet, 20" x 10", 1947 b/w, Portuguese American Civic League banquet, 20" x 8", 1949 b/w, "Testimonial Dinner for Fonseca", 20" x 10", 1950

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder#</u>	<u>Description</u>
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Series X: Portuguese American Civic League records, 1935 – 1995, bulk 1935 – 1949, continued

19		b/w, Portuguese American Civic League banquet, 20" x 8", 1952 b/w group photo [PACL Banquet?], inscribed "Senator—Mary Fonseca, February 15, 1953", 20" x 12", 1953
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Awards

5	72	Certificate of Recognition of Achievements, 11" x 8 ½", 1981
Mezzanine		Metal and wood plaque, 15" x 13 ¼", 1985