

# Sheriff Gayle E. Ray Collection

ca. 1997-2002

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Sheriff Gayle E. Ray Collection

**Summary:** The collection is comprised of career memorabilia of Gayle E. Ray, including several recognition plaques that were presented to her during her service as Davidson County Sheriff.

**Physical Description:** 1 linear foot, 2 boxes

**Language:** English

**Stack Location:** MSS-

**Repository:** Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville & Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN, 37219.

**Biographical/Historical Note:** Gayle E. Ray was Nashville's first woman to be elected Davidson County Sheriff, serving eight years in office, from 1994 to 2002. Among her many accomplishments was the accreditation of the Metro jail system. It was a first jail system in the U. S. to be fully accredited. She also developed systems to help offenders with mental illness, initiated graduated sanctions and started several rehabilitative programs to help offenders enter the community. After eight years as sheriff, Ray announced for the Senate

Gayle Elrod (maiden name) grew up in Murfreesboro and attended Central High School. She graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a degree in English, and a master's degree from the University of Arkansas. She taught for three years at Louisiana State University, where she met her husband, Norman Ray. The couple returned to Nashville and raised two children. Ray became very active with outstanding community leadership in volunteer work, such as Project PENCIL and Parents for Public Education. She served as President of the League of Women Voters of Nashville from 1984-86. In 1991, Ray ran for Metro Council and as Council Woman focused her time and energy on improving the schools. Ray has received many awards and recognitions, such as recipient of the ATHENA Award in 1997 and the Apollo Award for Community Leadership by the Nashville Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America at the Parthenon Awards Dinner in 2001.

In 2002 Davidson County Sheriff Gayle Ray announced her candidacy for U. S. Congress representing the 5<sup>th</sup> District, Democratic Party. She finished third in the race. Ray was named by Governor Phil Bredesen as one of the distinguished volunteers to advise on government issues. In 2004 Ray was named deputy commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Correction and later began her new role as Interim Commissioner on January 1, 2010.

Ray was nominated by Mayor Karl Dean to fill an open seat on the Metro Board of Fair Commissioners; her appointment started on May 17, 2011.

In 2012, Gayle E. Ray was elected to the board of Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

**Scope and Content:** The collection is comprised of career memorabilia of Gayle E. Ray, including several recognition plaques that were presented to her during her service as Davidson County Sheriff.

**Restrictions:**

**Restrictions on Access:** In library use only. Access is available by appointment during Metro Government Archives' open hours, which can be found at [http://www.library.nashville.org/locations/loc\\_all.asp](http://www.library.nashville.org/locations/loc_all.asp). Please inquire in advance of visiting Metro Government Archives as items are in closed stacks.

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**Administrative Information:**

**Copyright:** Metro Government Archives of Nashville & Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions may apply.

**Provenance:** Created by Sheriff Gayle E. Ray.

**Processing Information:** Processed and arranged in 2014 by Leanne Garland.

**Accruals:** None expected.

**Detailed Description of the Collection:**

**Box 1 of 2: Career Memorabilia of Gayle E. Ray**

- **Folder 1:** Wooden holder, 1 item
- **Folder 2:** Gayle E. Ray desk nameplate
- **Folder 3:** Plaque (glass) presented by Davidson County Sheriff's Office to "Sheriff Gayle Ray, for your outstanding support and dedication to the Chaplains Program, December 13, 1997."

**Box 2 of 2: Career Memorabilia of Gayle E. Ray**

- **Folder 4:** Plaque "presented by C. P. Sheffield, Governor, Her Majesty's Prison and Young Offender Institution, Hindley, Jan. 1999
- **Folder 5:** Plaque "presented to sheriff Gayle Ray and the Davidson County Sheriff's Office, in appreciation for hosting the 2000 Annual Conference of the N.I.A.I.A. in Nashville, TN, National Internal Affairs Investigators Association, October 1-4, 2000
- **Folder 6:** Desk paperweight "Criminal Justice Center and Hill Detention Center, American Correctional Association Accreditation, March 13, 2002

