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**Manuscript Group 240
Fred Rogers Collection**

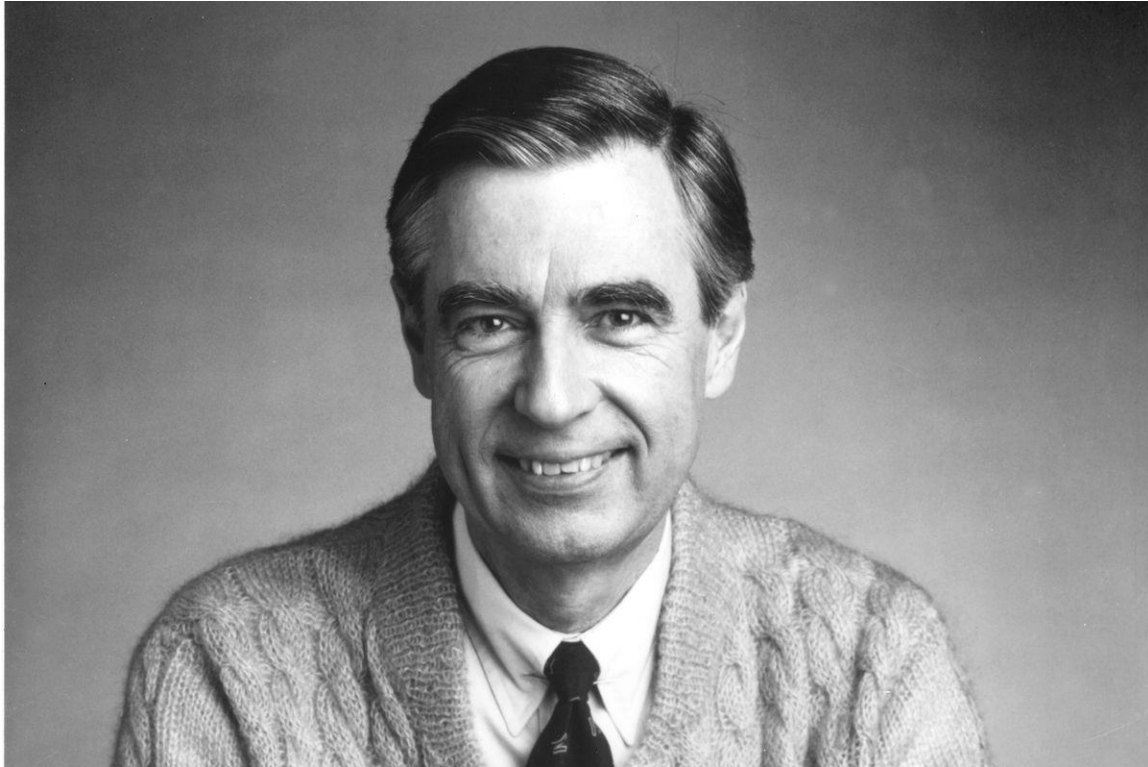
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**Fred Rogers Collection; Manuscript Group 240
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Special Collection and University Archives
Virtual Collection (only)**

Biographical Note

A native of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Fred McFeely Rogers (March 20, 1928 – February 27, 2003) was an American television personality, musician, puppeteer, writer, producer of children's programming, and he was an ordained Presbyterian minister. He was known as the creator, composer, producer, head writer, showrunner, and host of the preschool television series [Mister Rogers' Neighborhood](#) (1968–2001) which aired for 912 episodes. The show featured Fred Rogers's kind, neighborly persona, which nurtured his connection to the audience. He would end each program by telling his viewers, "You've made this day a special day, by just your being you. There's no person in the whole world like you; and I like you just the way you are."



Trained and ordained as a minister, Fred Rogers was displeased with the way television addressed children. He began to write and perform local Pittsburgh-area shows for youth. In 1968, [Eastern Educational Television Network](#) began nationwide distribution of Rogers's new show on [WQED](#). Over the course of three decades, Fred Rogers became a television icon of children's entertainment and education. Rogers advocated various public causes. He testified before a [U.S. Senate](#) committee to advocate for government funding of children's television.

Fred Rogers received the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), 40 honorary degrees, including one from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) in 1992, and a [Peabody Award](#). He

was inducted into the [Television Hall of Fame](#). Several buildings and artworks in Pennsylvania are dedicated to his memory, and the [Smithsonian Institution](#) displays one of his [trademark](#) sweaters as a "Treasure of American History". On June 25, 2016, the Fred Rogers Historical Marker was placed near Latrobe, Pennsylvania in his memory.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Rogers

For more information about Fred Rogers, visit the Fred Rogers Center for early learning and children's media at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, which also contains the Fred Rogers Archive, <http://www.fredrogerscenter.org/>

Scope and Content

This collection includes digital copies of the commencement address that Fred Rogers gave at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) on May 16, 1992.

Provenance

This collection was created after a presentation by Karen Struble Myers from the Fred Rogers Center on April 30, 2019.

Restrictions

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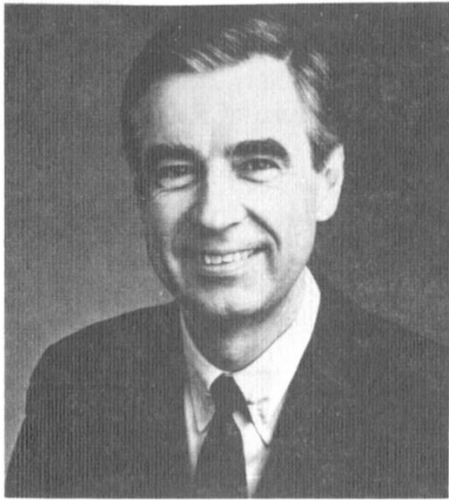
Processor

The collection was organized and the finding aid was updated by Harrison Wick on May 2, 2019.

Container List

1. Digital Copy of the IUP Commencement, May 16, 1992, at which Fred Rogers was concerned an honorary degree, and gave the commencement speech at Miller Stadium. A digital copy of the video is available on the Knowledge Repository
2. 1992 Commencement Program (see Record Group 35), page four from the program lists Fred Rogers as the Honorary Doctorate Recipient and Commencement Speaker (see below)

Fred McFeely Rogers
Honorary Doctorate Recipient and Commencement Speaker



Fred McFeely Rogers was born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music composition. Immediately after graduating, he joined NBC-TV as assistant producer on "The Voice of Firestone" and the "NBC Television Opera Theater." Later promoted to network floor director, he supervised, among other programs, "Your Lucky Strike Hit Parade," and "The Kate Smith Hour." In 1953 he returned to Western

Pennsylvania and joined WQED-TV, America's first community-supported public broadcasting station. He was responsible for setting up the station's programming schedule.

His first children's program developed from his assignment. He wrote, produced, and performed "Children's Corner," which was first broadcast in April, 1954, and continued to run for a period of seven years.

In addition to becoming creator and producer of children's programming, he also found time to attend the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and was ordained a minister in the United Presbyterian Church. His charge was unusual: to continue his ministry to children and families through mass media.

In addition to the television program "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," he has also produced television specials such as "Mister Rogers Talks With Parents About . . .," a program concerning problems such as children going to school for the first time, and "Old Friends . . . New Friends," a series with a central theme that each person makes a difference in this world--by making a difference in the lives of others.

Mr. Rogers has also written numerous articles and research papers which have made him a major contributor to healthy and constructive programming through television and a wide variety of media, including videocassettes, audiocassettes, records, books, booklets, and posters.

Mr. Rogers has received many awards for his work, including a George Foster Peabody Award, a *Saturday Review* television award, a General Federation of Women's Clubs Award, the Ralph Lowell Award for outstanding service to public broadcasting, and two Emmy Awards for outstanding individual performance in children's television. He has also received numerous honorary doctoral degrees and an adjunct professorship at the University of Pittsburgh.