

Friday, Jan 13, 2017

Former Congressman Mike Rogers visits OU for opening of congressional collection

Leaders from Oakland University and surrounding communities gathered in the Kresge Library's Nyberg Room on Thursday, Jan. 12 to celebrate the formal opening of the Michael J. Rogers Congressional Collection at OU. Rogers, who served as a state senator before embarking on a 14-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives, was also in attendance as the collection was officially made available to the public.

"It's a body of work that represents America going through change," said Rogers, who spoke of his early days in the U.S. House of Representatives and how the 9/11 attacks shifted the country's focus to national security issues. "All of those issues are going to be very important to study."

Stephen P. Weiter, associate professor and dean of University Libraries at Oakland, added that the collection will serve as a valuable resource for "teaching, learning and researching the history and politics of this country."

The collection was acquired by the university in January 2015 at the initiative of the Political Science department and the University Library, and placed in the custody of Oakland University Archives and Special Collections.

About the Collection:

The collection consists of 11 boxes of documents and photos, 215 artifacts, and more than 27,000 digital files that come from Congressman Rogers' Washington and Lansing offices.

"The collection covers the Congressman's tenure in the Michigan Senate and his time in the United States House of Representatives," according to Dominique Daniel, associate professor, Kresge Library and coordinator of Archives and Special Collections. "It includes newsletters, press releases, speeches, and media appearances, as well as internal documents from the Congressman's office."

The collection has great research value for historians, political scientists and other scholars. It will also be used for teaching and other learning purposes at Oakland University. The collection features sweeping insider coverage of Rogers' state senate career, and the 2000 8th District election.

Visitors now have access to research and discussions about issues important in Michigan's early 21st century history, such as the prohibition of drilling on the Great Lakes in 2002, and Rogers' fight to ban Canadian trash from Michigan's landfills. There is also material about topics of national interest, including veterans' affairs, Indian gaming laws and the Benghazi hearings. In addition, researchers can see a definitive compilation of Rogers' press materials. These include video of Rogers' television appearances and full documentation of his speeches and newspaper clippings.

In the summer of 2015, an undergraduate student was hired through the Summer Student Campus Corps to start cataloguing the numeric images and videos in the collection. David Wagner, a part-time archivist and public historian was hired as project archivist. Wagner has worked on the digital files in the collection, creating an inventory, adding metadata to photos and videos, and developing web pages to promote the collection.



Former Congressman Mike Rogers, OU President George Hynd and University Libraries Dean Stephen Weiter examine part of the newly opened collection, which contains documents, photos, artifacts and digital files from Rogers' career in the Michigan Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.



Mike Rogers is pictured during the Jan. 12 opening of his congressional collection.

About Mike Rogers:

Mike Rogers was born on June 2, 1963 in Howell, Michigan. After serving as a commissioned officer in the United States Army through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Rogers became an FBI special agent. In 1995, he went into politics, and was elected as the state senator for Michigan's 26th District. He served as Majority Floor Leader between 1999 and 2000 before moving on to the national stage via the U.S. House of Representatives in 2001.

Rogers enjoyed a 14-year career in the House, as representative of Michigan's 8th District, before retirement in 2015. He is currently the host of a nationally-syndicated radio program on Westwood One, and has been a national security contributor on CNN. Rogers was among the more influential members of the U.S. House of Representatives during the first decade of the 21st century.

Throughout his career, Rogers was known for emphasizing bipartisanship, often working with Democrats on health legislation. In his time as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, the committee was an island of bipartisanship, in contrast to the rest of Congress, which Rogers claims felt like being "in a messy divorce, every day." Rogers managed to pass the first intelligence-funding bill in five years (in 2001) and several others over subsequent years.



Pictured from left: James Lentini, OU Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; Stephen Weiter, Mike Rogers and George Hynd.