

University Archives

A Guide to the William B. Cockroft Forum for Free Enterprise

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Processed by:
Jeffrey Zines, Library Assistant
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Background

The William B. Cockroft Forum for Free Enterprise was founded in 1977 with initial funding from Dr. William D. Cockroft, a successful entrepreneur who did not enter the business world until after he retired and closed his successful dental practice. Dr. Cockroft then went on to create a \$500 million corporation that included furniture manufacturing and 40 hotels nationwide. The idea of the Foundation dedicated to free enterprise came from Dr. Wayne Robbins. As an aide to a U.S. Senator, Dr. Robbins saw the threat to free enterprise as “Educational in nature.” In the late 1970s, the free enterprise system in America was facing severe criticism that, for the most part, originated on college campuses.

The Foundation and the Cockroft Forums at selected colleges and universities around the country then “would encourage and help establish a meaningful dialogue between the business world and academic world.” Students and faculty would get the practical input which business leaders could offer, and equally as important, business leaders needed to hear the questions students were asking.

The Cockroft forum brought business and corporate leaders to college campuses to discuss the merits of the American system of free enterprise. The executives provided a valuable supplement to textbooks and lectures from their everyday perspective.

Scope and Content Note

Florida Southern College hosted the Cockroft Forum from 1985-2002. The Foundation encountered financial difficulties after 2002 and the forums were discontinued. Guest speakers included A. Thomas Young, president of Martin Marietta Aerospace, Dr. Joseph Boyd, chairman of Harris Corporation, and Dr. Alan Keyes, former ambassador, presidential candidate, and radio host. In most years, the Cockroft Forum was hosted twice, during the fall and spring semesters, respectively.

The materials in this collection consist primarily of correspondence between staff and faculty members of Florida Southern College and representatives of the Foundation regarding the details of each event. Within the correspondence there are also media articles and photographs documenting each event.

Arrangement

The materials in this collection are arranged by year. As two events could happen in the same calendar year, both can be found in the same folder. Please note that correspondence for a spring event could begin late in the previous year.

Access Restrictions

The collection is open and available on campus to researchers.

Acquisition Information

The materials in this collection, created by college employees, were transferred from the College Development Office to the McKay Archives in October of 2019.

Processing Information: These materials were processed by Jeffrey Zines, Library Assistant, Spring 2020.

Box #	Folder Titles	Contents
1	The William B. Cockroft Forum for Free Enterprise pamphlets	
1	Correspondence	1983-1985
1	Correspondence	1986
1	Correspondence	1987
1	Correspondence	1988
1	Correspondence	1989 (A)
1	Correspondence	1989 (B)
1	Correspondence	1990 (A)
1	Correspondence	1990 (B)
1	Correspondence	1991-1994
1	Correspondence	1995
1	Correspondence	1996
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2	Correspondence	2002
2	Correspondence	2003-2005