



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JUNE 23, 2026**

**FROM: MUSEUM DEPARTMENT      WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: APPROVE ACCESSION INTO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF ARCHIVAL ITEMS INCLUDING ONE (1) RUBY'S DRIVE-IN MATCHBOOK COVER, TWO (2) DOUBLE-SIDED BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTEST SIGNS, AND TEN (10) ITEMS RELATING TO RIVERSIDE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE WILLIAM ELLIS**

**ISSUE:**

Approve accession into the permanent collection of archival items including one (1) Ruby's Drive-In matchbook cover, two (2) double-sided Black Lives Matter protest signs, and ten (10) items relating to Riverside County Superior Court Judge William Ellis.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council approve accession into the permanent collection of archival items including one (1) Ruby's Drive-In matchbook cover, two (2) double-sided Black Lives Matter protest signs, and ten (10) items relating to Riverside County Superior Court Judge William Ellis.

**BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

At a special meeting on February 4, 2026, the Museum of Riverside Board, with nine (9) members present for this vote, approved a recommendation to accession into the permanent collection archival items including one (1) Ruby's Drive-In matchbook cover, two (2) double-sided Black Lives Matter protest signs, and ten (10) items relating to Riverside County Superior Court Judge William Ellis.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Ruby's Drive-In matchbook cover was purchased online and is in excellent condition.

The Black Lives Matter protest signs were donated by their user. The materials relating to Judge William Ellis were donated by a relative.

## **DISCUSSION:**

To “accession” an object is the process of including it formally in a museum’s permanent collection, which is the category of collection for which the greatest effort will be made to preserve the object in perpetuity and document it fully.

### LOT 1: One (1) Ruby’s Drive-In matchbook cover

The matchbook was marketing material for Ruby’s Drive-In restaurant on 13<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets in Riverside. The local eatery was a community gathering place for years. Ruby’s was the first drive-in restaurant in Riverside, opening in 1939, one year before the McDonald brothers opened their restaurant in nearby San Bernardino. Ruby’s closed in the 1960s.

The Museum’s holdings do not include many items from the mid- to late twentieth century, especially compared to other periods of Riverside’s history. Specifically, there is little representing the fast-food industry, which in some respects originated in southern California. This item represents Riverside business and commerce during a period of rapid change and economic growth, when many businesses were budding and opening.

### LOT 2: Two (3) double-sided Black Lives Matter protest signs

These signs were used by the donor and his friend in the summer of 2020 to protest police brutality experienced by Black people across the United States. In correspondence, the donor referred to it as the “George Floyd summer,” in reference to the murder of George Floyd by former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin, which triggered international protests including several in the City of Riverside. The protests took place at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic with one protest taking place on June 1, 2020. The signs were used at local protests during the summer of 2020.

The Museum lacks much material from this historical moment, primarily because physical materials specific to this time were ephemeral, used, and discarded. These two signs represent the local reaction to an international movement that has had a lasting impact far beyond Riverside. This donation reflects Riverside’s role and supports the Museum’s mission to preserve the local history of this City. The objects are in good, stable condition.

### LOT 3: Ten (10) items relating to Riverside County Superior Court Judge William Ellis

The materials comprise one (1) scrapbook of correspondence, one (1) leather-bound funeral book, and eight (8) black-and-white photographs. All materials were donated by Judge Ellis’s great-grandson. William Ellis was a Riverside County Superior Court Judge in the 1920s, working out of the Riverside County Courthouse. The scrapbook of correspondence includes items relating to his work in the area of child labor law, a major focus of his. The eight photographs are professional shots of Judge Ellis, many of which include him in his office, at the courthouse; some are of his funeral. He passed away in 1928 and had a large funeral at Evergreen Memorial Historic Cemetery. The leatherbound book was distributed at his funeral.

This collection has a direct connection to Riverside and offers a unique perspective into the formation of certain laws during the 1920s, from the perspective of one man in the legal profession. The materials would also add a story of another Riversider to the Museum’s archives that reflects both a single person’s life and social realities of his time.

The items are in stable condition although the Judge William Ellis scrapbook is assembled with poor quality paper and may be submitted for a conservator's analysis and recommendation.

The illustrations below reflect only a selection from the materials relating to Judge Ellis.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

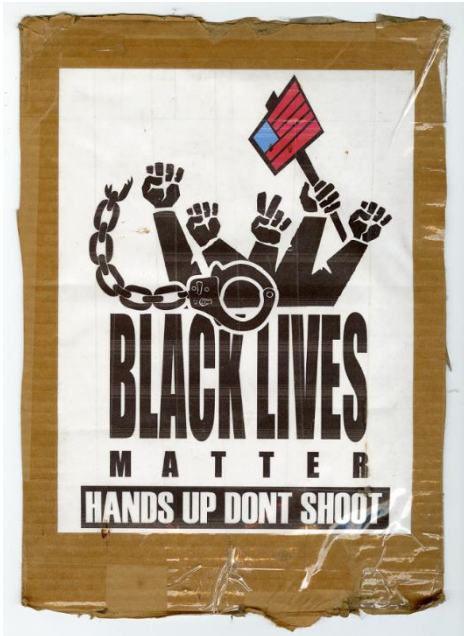
Prepared by:	Robyn G. Peterson, Museum Director
Reviewed by:	Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney
Reviewed by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager

Attachments: 20260204.Minutes, MUS board FINAL

LOT 1:



LOT 2:



Sign 1, front



Sign 1, back

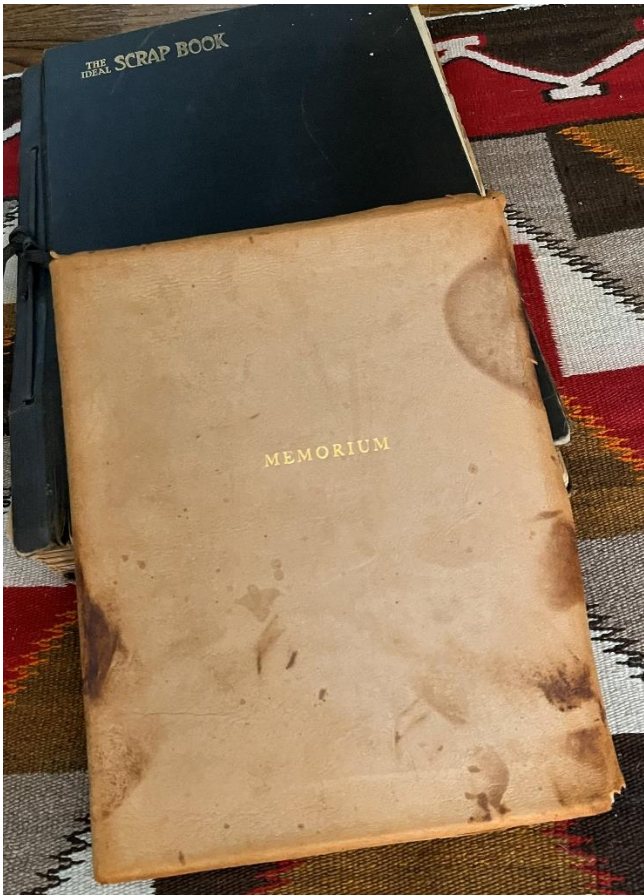


Sign 2, front

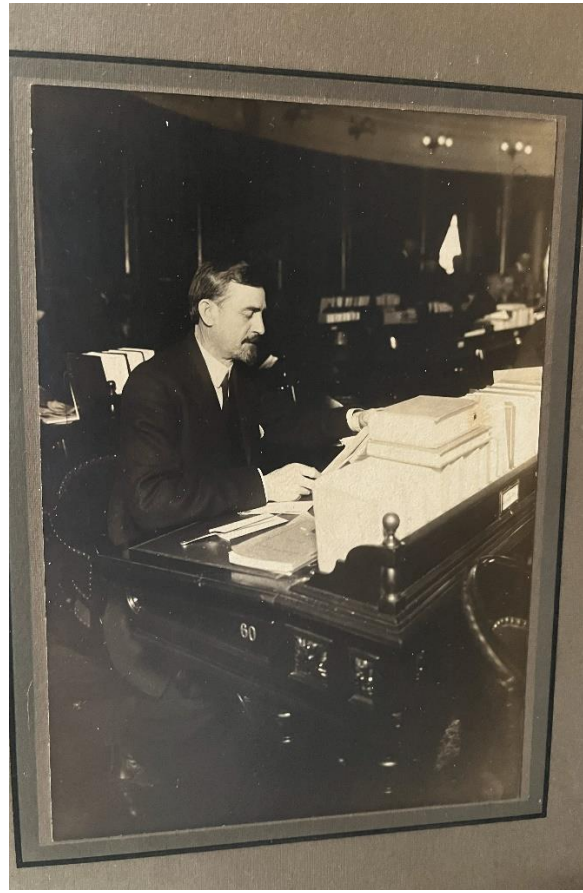


Sign 2, back

LOT 3:

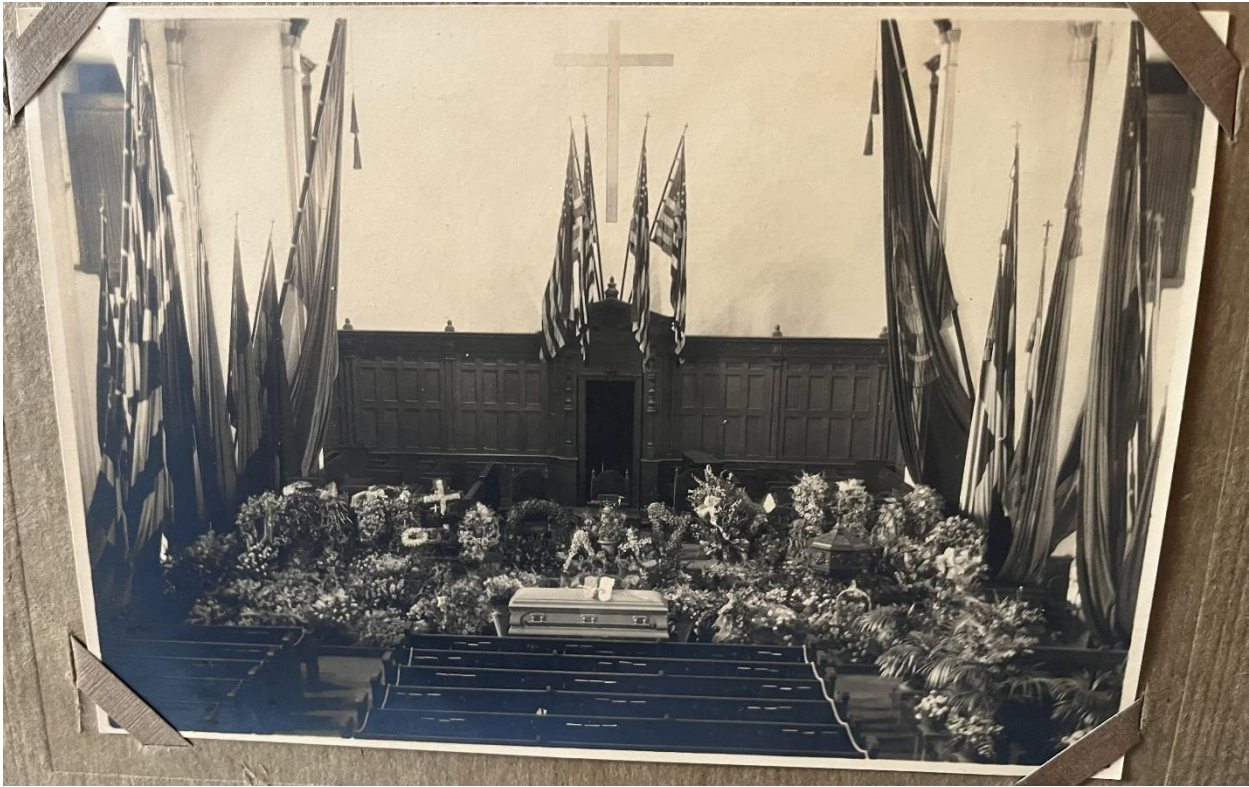


The scrapbook of correspondence and funeral book



Ellis at work





Ellis's funeral in Riverside

