

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Ken Auletta  
Papers, 1975-1995**

**William Stingone  
March 1997**

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## Summary

- Main Entry:** Auletta, Ken
- Title:** Papers, 1975-1995
- Size:** 15.5 linear feet (39 boxes)
- Source:** Gift of Ken Auletta, August 8, 1996
- Description:** The Ken Auletta Papers (1975-1995) consist of correspondence; research material for and typescripts of his writings; notebooks (1983-1993) in which Auletta collected information for his weekly *Daily News* column; a video; and sound recordings. The correspondence consists primarily of letters reacting to Auletta's books, feature articles, and newspaper columns, from prominent figures in politics, business, and the media. Research material includes notebooks, recordings and transcripts of interviews, and subject files. Typescripts and galleys are corrected, emendated, and/or edited by Auletta, Jason Epstein, his editor at Random House, or both. Most of the sound recordings are research material (i.e. interviews) for Auletta's books and articles.

## Biographical Note

Ken Auletta was born on April 23, 1942 in New York and grew up in Coney Island. He received his B.A. from State University of New York College at Oswego and his Masters in political science and public administration from Syracuse University. Between 1965 and 1974 Auletta taught and trained Peace Corps volunteers; served as special assistant to the United States Under Secretary of Commerce; worked on Robert F. Kennedy's presidential campaign; was Howard J. Samuels's campaign manager through two unsuccessful gubernatorial candidacies; and was the first executive director of the New York Off Track Betting Corporation, which he had helped create.

In 1975, frustrated with life in government and politics, he began his journalistic career. After a short stint at *The New York Post*, he split his time between two staff positions—as contributing editor at *New York* and staff writer at *The Village Voice*—and freelance work. At the *Voice* Auletta covered New York's fiscal crisis, the subject of his first book, *The Streets Were Paved with Gold* (1979), and Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign. In 1977, the year he married Amanda J. Urban, Auletta began writing a weekly political column for the *New York Daily News* and became a staff writer at *The New Yorker*.

For the first twenty years of his career, Auletta's work dealt with political, governmental, and economic matters and often focused on New York. He has contributed regularly to a variety of publications, including *Esquire*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *More*, and was the co-host of a weekly WNET-TV interview program. Since 1991, Auletta has been primarily concerned with the media, and since 1993 he has written almost exclusively about the news, TV, and film industries for *The New Yorker*.

While Auletta always enjoyed the journalistic immediacy of his political column, his longer assignments for magazines provided him more time for thorough research and careful writing. For *The Underclass* (1982), an in-depth study of hard-core poverty in the United States, he scrutinized job training programs operated by the federally funded Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. He spent seven months in New York City with one group of 26 long-term welfare recipients, street criminals, addicts, and drifters attending classes designed “to instill the habit of work and expunge bad habits.” He spent five months with Ed Koch and almost an entire year with Mario Cuomo while writing their respective profiles for *The New Yorker*. Because of Auletta's reputation as a journalist and his political past, both men allowed Auletta unusually intimate and revealing views of both themselves and their administrations.

All six of Auletta's books emerged from journalistic pieces. Besides *The Streets Were Paved with Gold* and *The Underclass*, Auletta's other books are *Hard Feelings: Reporting on the Poles, the Press, People and the City* (1980), a collection of columns and profiles; *The Art of Corporate Success: The Story of Schlumberger* (1984), a profile of the multinational oil service company and its head Jean Riboud; *Greed & Glory on Wall Street: the Fall of the House of Lehman* (1986), which examines the power struggle at Lehman Brothers between Lewis Glucksman and Pete G. Peterson; and *Three Blind Mice: How the T. V. Networks Lost Their Way* (1991).

## **Scope & Content Note**

The Ken Auletta Papers (1975-1995) consist of correspondence, research material for and typescripts of his writings; notebooks (1983-1993) in which Auletta collected information for his weekly *Daily Dews* columns and other journalistic pieces; a video; and sound recordings. The correspondence consists primarily of letters reacting to Auletta's books, feature articles, and newspaper column from prominent figures in politics, business, and the media—three areas that Auletta has often written about—as well as from ordinary citizens. Research material, which Auletta often categorized and sometimes indexed, includes notebooks, recordings, and transcripts of interviews, and research files containing clippings, news releases, and some correspondence. All typescripts and galleys in the collection are corrected, emendated, and edited by either Auletta or his editor at Random House, Jason Epstein. Most of the sound recordings are research material—interviews and speeches—for specific pieces; others are recordings of interviews or speeches given by Auletta, and tapes relating to general topics.

## **Arrangement Note**

The Ken Auletta Papers are arranged in the following series:

- I. Correspondence
- II. Writings
- III. Notebooks
- IV. Sound Recordings / Video

## Series Descriptions

### I. CORRESPONDENCE, 1975-1993

This series consists mostly of letters to Auletta reacting to his books, articles, and *Daily News* column. Most of the letters are from notable figures in politics, the media, and business. Often it was people directly involved with the subject of Auletta's work who wrote him to dispute facts, claims, and opinions. Correspondents include Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1981-1984, 1990, 1992), Tom Wolfe (May 1988), Abbie Hoffman (June 1981), Liz Smith (January 1986), A. M. Rosenthal and other *New York Times* editors, Tom Brokaw (n.d.), Peter Solomon, James W. Glanville (1985-1986), Peter G. Peterson (SEE ALSO: *Greed & Glory on Wall Street*, Research Files). Auletta integrated some letters he received while writing a piece, or expanding an article into a book, into his research files. The series includes two separate files Auletta kept for his correspondence with Ed Koch and Mario Cuomo. These files include computer printouts of some of Auletta's columns regarding each figure. Letters responding to Auletta's works fall roughly into the following time frames: Edward Koch *New Yorker* Profile: September - October 1979; *The Underclass*: 1981-1982; Mario Cuomo *New Yorker* Profile: April - May 1984; *Greed & Glory on Wall Street*: February 1985 - July 1986; *Three Blind Mice*: June 1991 - September 1992.

### II. WRITINGS

The Writings series is made up of Auletta's notes and research files for and typescripts and galleys of his articles and books. The research files consist of clippings, press releases, copies of speeches, government publications, brochures and policy proposals. Often this material was sent to Auletta, especially in the case of his Koch profile, by the subject(s) of his work. The most complete collection of these files exists for *The New Yorker* Profiles of Mario Cuomo and Ed Koch. Most of his books are represented by only a few research files, notebooks, cassettes, and typescripts, others by typescripts alone. Auletta often classified his research and notebooks, giving certain topics, people, files, cassettes, or notebooks an alphabetical or numerical designation; in some cases, he indexed his notes.

Letters reacting to an article often became research material for Auletta's book version. For instance, Pete G. Peterson's reaction to the *New York Times Magazine* article, "Greed, Glory and Power on Wall Street" became material for the book and his letters were used for fact checking (SEE Box 13). Auletta's "Add to..." files often contain letters pointing out errors in an early version or installment of a piece. Typescripts and galleys of Auletta's articles and books contain the corrections, comments, and emendations of either Auletta, his editor<sup>1</sup>, or both. Miscellaneous material includes reviews of Auletta's work and royalty statements.

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<sup>1</sup> Auletta's editor at Random House was Jason Epstein.

Auletta's works represented in his papers are, in alphabetical order (by book title in the case of articles expanded into books, by subject in the case of profiles): *The Art of Corporate Success: The Story of Schlumberger* (1984), which originally appeared as a two part profile of Jean Riboud in *The New Yorker* (June 6 & 13, 1983); *New Yorker* Profile of Mario Cuomo ("Governor," April 9 & 16, 1984); *Greed & Glory on Wall Street: The Fall of the House of Lehman* (1986), which originally appeared as a two part article in *The New York Times Magazine* (February 1985); *Hard Feelings* (1980); *New Yorker* Profile of Edward I. Koch (September 10 & 17, 1979); *The Streets Were Paved With Gold* (1979); *Three Blind Mice* (1991); *The Underclass* (1982), which began as a three part piece in *The New Yorker* (November 16, 23 & 30, 1981); and an Interview with Robert F. Wagner, Sr. (1986).

### **III. NOTEBOOKS, 1983-1993**

The notebooks consist primarily of Auletta's notes for his *New York Daily News* column, but also contain material he used in feature stories and books.

### **IV. SOUND RECORDINGS / VIDEO**

Most of the sound recordings are interviews Auletta conducted or speeches he recorded as research for his writings. Other tapes contain more general material, not linked to any specific project, about the media or politics, or interviews or addresses given by Auletta himself. The video is a tape of a Friday Forum at the City Club of New York at which Ken Auletta was the speaker (December 19, 1995. Broadcast live on CUNY-75).

## Container List

### I. Correspondence

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1		1975-1991
2	1	1992-1993
	2	Not Dated
	3	Cuomo, Mario, 1984-1990
	4	Koch, Edward I., 1979-1990

### II. Writings

#### ***The Art of Corporate Success: The Story of Schlumberger (1984)*<sup>†</sup>**

3	1	Notebooks, October 1981-December 1982
	2	Outlines, Notes
	3-6	Typescript Drafts
4	1-5	Typescript Drafts
	6-7	Revised <i>New Yorker</i> Galleys

#### ***Cuomo, Mario, New Yorker Profile Of (April 1984)*<sup>†</sup>**

5	1	Notebooks, September 1982-December 1983
	2	Outlines
		Research files
	3-4	1. Cuomo the Man
	5-6	2. Philosophy
	7	3. Matilda
	8	4. Running for Lieutenant Governor
6	1	5. As Secretary of State
	2	6. As Lieutenant Governor
	3-4	7. 1980 Campaign
	5	8. Weaknesses
	6	9. Cuomo-Carey
	7	10. 1977 Campaign
7	1-2	11. [Political Cuomo]
	3	12. Ossining and Prisons
	4	13. The Early Days and the New Spirit
	5	14. Governor Cuomo as Manager
	6	16. Cuomo and the Legislature
	7	17. State Government
8	1	18. Appointees
	2	19. New York State
	3	20. State and Federal
	4	21. Cuomo and Politics
	5	22. Cuomo and the Press
	6	23. Cuomo and Race
	7	24. Cuomo and Judiciary
	8	25. Death Penalty



	9	26. Lewis Lehrman
	10	29. Future Issues
	11	30. Cuomo Views Before 1983
	12	31. Importance of Personality
	13	32. Economic Development - General
	14	33. Education
9	1	34. Homeless
	2	35. Sports Betting
	3	36. Mental Health
	4	37. Medicaid
	5	38. Energy
	6	39. Transportation
	7	40. A Day in the Life of Governor Cuomo
	8	41. [Minorities]
	9	43. Campaign Promises
	10	111.
	11	YY. Special Interest & Budget
	12	QQQ. Other State Budgets
	13	Add to Part I
	14	Add to Part II
	15	People to See
	16	Unsorted Research Material
10	1-4	Unsorted Research Material
	5	Interview Questions
11	1-3	Interview Transcripts
	4	Original Typescript
	5-6	Final Draft
	7	Galley Proof [1 of 2]
12	1	Galley Proof [2 of 2]
	2	Inserts
	3-5	Page Proofs

***Greed & Glory On Wall Street: The Fall Of The House Of Lehman (1986)***<sup>†</sup>

13	1-2	Notebooks, April 1984-January 1985
	3	Indexes and Outlines
	4-6	Research Material
	7	Typescript, <i>New York Times</i> article
14	1-3	Typescript Draft, Book
	4-5	Final Typescript Draft, Book

***“Governor” (1984) See: Cuomo, Mario***

***Hard Feelings: Reporting On Pols, The Press, People & The City (1980)***

15	1-3	Setting Copy
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**Koch, Edward I., New Yorker Profile Of (September 1979) †**

16	1	Notebooks, Summer 1978-Summer 1979
	2	Index to Research and Notes
		Research Files
	3	A-Z
	4	AA-ZZ
	5	AAA-ZZZ
	6	Add to Profile
	7	Anti-defamation League
	8	Appointments of Women and Minorities
	9	Bio
	10	Bi-weekly Report
17	1	Blacks
	2	Bellamy, Carole
	3	Borough Park
	4	Brigham, James R., Jr., Memos, 1978
	5	Brown, David
	6	Budget
	7	Budget, Fiscal 1980
	8	Budgets, Layoffs
	9	Cabinet Members
	10	Campaign Promises
	11	Carter, Jimmy, Koch's Support of
	12	Citizens Budget Commission, April 1979
	13	City Hall Staff
	14	Coppie, Comer S.
	15	Federal Memo Critical of Koch
	16	Fire Hydrant Incident
	17	Inspector General Program
	18	Margolis, David
	19	Mayor's Action Center
18	1	Memoirs
	2	Municipal Assistance for the City of New York
	3	New York City Sells Notes
	4	New York City Bond Prospectus, August 1978
	5	Oberst, Lee
	6	Planning Commission / "Capital Needs & Priorities"
	7	Police Department
	8	Rent Control
	9	Rohatyn, Felix
	10	Rosenthal, Benjamin S.
	11	Sanitation Department
	12	Schedule, October 16-November 28, 1978
	13	Schwartz, Sidney [1 of 2]
19	1	Schwartz, Sidney [2 of 2]
	2	South Bronx
	3	State of the City Address, February 1979
	4	Unions
	5	Welfare Benefits, Increase in
	6	Ward, Haskell G.
	7	Unsorted
	8-9	Typescript

Riboud, Jean - See: *The Art Of Corporate Success*

Schlumberger - See: *The Art Of Corporate Success*

***The Streets Were Paved With Gold (1979)***

- |    |     |                           |
|----|-----|---------------------------|
| 20 | 1-3 | Original Typescript       |
|    | 4-5 | Setting Copy [1 & 2 of 4] |
| 21 | 1-2 | Setting copy [3 & 4 of 4] |

***Three Blind Mice: How The T. V. Networks Lost Their Way (1991)***<sup>†</sup>

- |    |       |   |
|----|-------|---|
|    | 3     | Things to Do, People to See                                   |
|    | 4-6   | Indexes to Notebooks<br>Notebooks                             |
| 22 |       | A-FF, August 1986-December 1987                               |
| 23 |       | GG-JJJ, December 1987-March 1991                              |
| 24 | 1     | Outlines and Notes  |
|    | 2     | Legal Review, April 1991<br>Typescript Drafts<br>January 1990 |
|    | 3-17  | Chapters 1-15   |
| 25 | 1-13  | Chapters 16-28  |
|    | 14-15 | Jason Epstein's First Edits, Summer 1990 [1 & 2 of 6]         |
| 26 |       | Epstein's First Edits, Summer 1990 [3-6 of 6]                 |
| 27 |       | Auletta's Copy  |
| 28 | 1-3   | Edited Copy   |
|    | 4-5   | Epstein's Second Edits, Fall 1990                             |
| 29 |       | Epstein's Final Edits [1-4 of 6]                              |
| 30 | 1-2   | Epstein's Final Edits [5 & 6 of 6]                            |
|    | 3-4   | Final [1 & 2 of 6]  |
| 31 |       | Final [3-6 of 6]  |

### ***The Underclass (1982)***

- 32 1-2 Notebooks, November 1979 - March 1981  
3 Index to Notebooks  
4 Outlines for Article  
5 Book Comp. Lists  
6 To Add to Galleys  
7-8 Typescript of Article, Part III, September 22, 1981
- 33 1 Epstein's Changes to Manuscript, December 1981  
2-6 Typescript Draft

### ***Wagner, Robert F., Sr., Interview With (1986) †***

- 34 1-6 Transcripts of Interview, June - July 1986  
7-11 Edited Typescript  
12 Miscellaneous Material Related To Writings

### **III. Notebooks**

- 35 Not dated, April 20, 1983-January 11, 1989
- 36 January 1989-June 1993

### **IV. Sound Recordings / Videos**

- 36 Videos (1 VHS tape)  
City Club Of New York, Friday Forum with Ken Auletta, 12/19/1995
- 37 Sound Recordings  
General Tapes (12 cassettes)  
Appearances (3 cassettes)  
*Art of Corporate Success* (12 mini-cassettes)  
Carter, Jimmy c.1976 (3 cassettes)  
Cuomo, Mario (7 cassettes)
- 38 Cuomo, Mario (continued) (6 cassettes, 8 mini-cassettes)  
*Greed & Glory on Wall Street* (3 cassettes)  
Kennedy, Ted, March 18, 1980 (1 cassette)  
Koch, Ed I. (6 cassettes)  
*Three Blind Mice* - SEE Box 39  
Wagner, Robert F., Sr., Interviews with (2 cassettes, 5 mini-cassettes)  
"Wildcat," January - February 1980 (6 cassettes)
- 39 *Three Blind Mice* (12 cassettes, 75 mini-cassettes)