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Papers, 1966-1989.  0.50 linear ft.

Abstract

Hope College history professor 1966-1986; interpreter for 
Presidents Carter and Reagan; founded the May Term in Yugoslavia 
program at Hope College.  Contains newspaper clippings, news releases, 
photographs, obituaries, tributes, and a sampling of his history course 
outlines and exams.

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Provenance: Hope College  
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Biography

Miodrag “Michael” B. Petrovich was born September 29, 1933, in Zemun, Yugoslavia. He came to the United States in 1956 at the age of 21. Petrovich worked for the State Department from 1960 to 1966 as an escort interpreter for high ranking diplomats. In 1966, Petrovich joined the faculty of Hope College as an associate professor of history, specializing in Belkan, European, Russian and Soviet History. He also taught courses at Grand Valley State University in the mid to late 1970s. Petrovich was repeatedly appointed to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (H.E.W.) panel which studied proposals for projects abroad and foreign curriculum and language training.

In 1978, Petrovich served as an interpreter between Jimmy Carter and Marshall Tito, Yugoslavia’s president at that time. In addition to this service, he was often called to the aid of the government for interpretation, including service to President Ronald Reagan during a state visit by Yugoslavian Prime Minister Milka Paninc. At times, he was even required to fly from Yugoslavia, where he was studying with Hope College students, to Washington and then back to Yugoslavia within just a few days.

Petrovich founded Hope College’s “Rendezvous with History” and the Mediterranean May Term. He was devoted to Hope College students and held a strong belief that young people should experience international travel. He even supported this belief during the time of increased terrorist threats in the 1980s.

In 1985, Petrovich was severely injured in multi-car accident that resulted from poor driving conditions and a jack-knifed semi truck. On July 11, 1986, at the age of 52, Michael Petrovich passed away due to a brain hemorrhage he sustained in the car accident.

A scholarship was established in the memory of Michael Petrovich in 1987. The scholarship was earmarked for students who intended to study abroad, particularly in Yugoslavia or Eastern Europe.

Scope and Content
This collection contains personal information and information regarding the classes that Michael Petrovich taught while at Hope College between the years 1970 to 1986. There are several news clippings dealing with Petrovich’s studies and travels in Eastern Europe. The news clippings also focus on the highlights of Petrovich’s career, including his many governmental appointments and interpreting assignments. Many of these deal with the country of Yugoslavia, where Petrovich organized a Hope study program. The collection of tributes showcases how strongly he was valued by his students, fellow faculty, friends, community people, and government leaders.

Container List

Article, “A Retreat from Power: The Serbian Orthodox Church and Its Opponents, 1868-1889,” 1981
Biographical, 1966-1989 (2 folders)
Course Outlines, Samples, 1970-1986
Examinations, Samples, 1970-1979
Family Memories/U.S.A. Trips, n.d. (DVD)
Personal Information, includes Curriculum Vitae from 1982
Tributes, 1986