



# Guide to the Brenda Schoonover Papers, 1994-2008

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

Brenda Schoonover papers, 1994-2008

**Creator:**

Schoonover, Brenda Brown

**Abstract:**

Brenda Schoonover was the former ambassador to Togo (1998-2000) and the interim ambassador to Belgium (2003-2004). Accession (2009-0259) (1000 items; 2.1 lin. ft.; 1994-2008) consists largely of speech files and other items created by Schoonover during the latter part of her career in the U.S. Foreign Service, including her ambassadorship to Togo, her time as Diplomat-in-Residence at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and her subsequent post as Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Belgium, where she became interim ambassador in 2003. Speech topics range from international diplomacy, the Peace Corps, September 11th, trade, foreign relations, and West Africa development. Also included are media articles, the majority from Belgium newspapers in 2003-2004; miscellaneous photographs and letters; and numerous videocassettes documenting ceremonies and programs during her time in Togo. Acquired as part of the John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American History and Culture.

**Extent:**

2.1 Linear Feet  
1000 Items

**Physical Location:**

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

**Language:**

English

**Language:**

Material in English, French

**Collection ID:**

RL.01150

**Permalink:**

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/schoonoverbrenda/>

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Brenda Schoonover Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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## Background

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### Scope and Content

This collection is divided into 4 series: **Speeches and writings**, **Media coverage**, **Miscellaneous materials**, and **Videotapes**. The materials all date from the latter part of Schoonover's career, especially focusing on her time at UNC Chapel Hill and at the American Embassy in Belgium.

The majority of this collection consists of the texts of speeches, public remarks, and presentations made by Schoonover, beginning in 1997 with a few items from her Senior Seminar studies in Washington, D.C. Materials from her years in Togo are fairly light, with only a few embassy speeches. Her time as Diplomat-in-Residence at Chapel Hill and as Charge d'Affaires at the Belgium Embassy are strongly represented, with a variety of speeches discussing her Togo ambassadorship, conditions in West Africa, terrorism (both the Kenyan embassy bombings and September 11th), trade missions, and her Peace Corps experiences. Her remarks also reference her embassy activities in Belgium, both as Deputy Chief of Mission and interim ambassador. Audiences include Fulbright recipients and committees, the American-Belgium Association, schools and students, and businessmen. There are special speeches for Armistice Day and Flanders Field, as well as the Marine Corps anniversary celebration.

Videotapes make up another significant portion of the collection, and the majority deal with Schoonover's ambassadorship in Togo. Most appear to be recordings of her participation in ceremonies and events, including her presentation of credentials, receptions, interviews, and press conferences.

The media coverage of Schoonover covers her time in Togo, Chapel Hill, and Belgium, with the majority of the materials being from Belgian coverage of her interim ambassadorship.

The miscellaneous materials series includes official portraits, photographs, and certificates of Schoonover in various events and ceremonies; a booklet that she

wrote about her aunt's life in 2008; and miscellaneous letters and brochures, dating from 1994-2004.

## **Biographical/Historical**

Brenda Schoonover was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and attended Morehouse College. She was a charter member of the Peace Corps, which sent her to the Philippines in 1961. After her volunteer service, she continued to work for the Peace Corps in a variety of capacities. She also worked for Arlington County, Virginia, as the county's affirmative action officer in the 1970s.

Schoonover met and married her husband, Richard (Dick) Schoonover, during her time in Africa. He was a Foreign Service officer in the United States Information Agency. She joined the Foreign Service as well and worked in a variety of administrative positions in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and for the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs. Schoonover was the Chief of Personnel for the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs from 1988-1991, and was the Deputy Director for the Office of Joint Administrative Services at the U.S. Embassy in Belgium from 1992-1996.

In 1997, Schoonover participated in the State Department's Senior Seminar, a highly selective professional development program for senior foreign policy and national security officers. She subsequently participated in the National Defense University's Capstone Program for military officers and their civilian equivalents.

She was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Togo in January 1998, where she served until July 2000.

Following her ambassadorship, Schoonover spent a year at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a State Department Diplomat-in-Residence, where she taught classes, led discussions, and promoted study abroad.

She began a three-year tour as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Belgium in 2001. In 2003, Ambassador Stephen Brauer left the post, and the intended replacement, Jeffrey Marcus, was forced to withdraw from consideration for personal reasons. Schoonover served as the interim ambassador until 2004, when Tom C. Korologos assumed the post. Schoonover then retired from the Foreign Service and returned to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with her husband.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Statement**

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### **Access Restrictions**

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### **Use Restrictions**

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### **Acquisition Information**

The Brenda Schoonover Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 2009.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Meghan Lyon, December 2009

Encoded by Meghan Lyon, December 2009

Materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Videotapes
- Togo -- Politics and government
- Belgium -- Politics and government
- Embassy buildings -- Togo
- Embassy buildings -- Belgium
- Diplomacy -- Africa, West
- Diplomacy -- Belgium
- Schoonover, Brenda Brown
- Schoonover, Brenda Brown
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- United States. Dept. of State
- Peace Corps (U.S.)

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## Collection Inventory

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### Speeches and writings, 1997-2007

**Physical Description:** 16 folders

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Washington, D.C., 1997           | Box 1 |
| Togo, 1998-1999 (2 folders)      | Box 1 |
| North Carolina, 2000             | Box 1 |
| North Carolina, 2001 (2 folders) | Box 1 |
| Belgium, 2001                    | Box 1 |
| Belgium, 2002                    | Box 1 |
| Belgium, 2003 (3 folders)        | Box 1 |
| Belgium, 2004 (3 folders)        | Box 1 |

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| North Carolina, 2005      | Box 1 |
| North Carolina, 2006-2007 | Box 1 |

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### **Media coverage, 2000-2004**

**Physical Description:** 3 folders

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Togo, 2000                | Box 1 |
| North Carolina, 2000-2001 | Box 1 |
| Belgium, 2003-2004        | Box 1 |

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### **Miscellaneous materials, 1994-2008**

**Physical Description:** 3 folders

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Official portraits, photographs, and certificates            | Box 1 |
| Miscellaneous letters and brochures, 1994-2004               | Box 1 |
| "Miss Myrtle, A Memoir" (by Schoonover about her aunt), 2008 | Box 1 |

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### **Videotapes, 1998-2007 and undated**

**Physical Description:** 1 box

**Access Restrictions:**

[Original audiovisual materials are closed to use. Use of these materials may require production of listening or viewing copies. Please contact Research Services before coming to use this collection.]

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| The Ambassador's visit to Kpalime, 1998 Jan. 16                | Box 2 |
| Taking Aim at Small Arms: Defending Children's Rights (UNICEF) | Box 2 |
| Presentation of credentials                                    | Box 2 |

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|--|-------|
| Ambassador at Prime Minister; NDI press conference | Box 2 |
| Reception and interview, 1998 July 3               | Box 2 |
| NDI  | Box 2 |
| Unlabelled tape                                    | Box 2 |
| International Women's Day, 1999 March 16           | Box 2 |
| Flag presentation, 2007 July 28                    | Box 2 |
| Togo ceremonies, Fall 1999                         | Box 2 |
| Ambassador's arrival reception, 1998 Jan. 27       | Box 2 |

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