Paul Gerhart Hatfield was born April 29, 1928 in Great Falls, Montana. He graduated from Great Falls High School in 1947 and attended the College of Great Falls for pre-law training until 1950. In 1951, he entered the U.S. Army and served in the Signal Corps in Korea from 1952 to 1953. He attended the University of Montana—Missoula’s Law School, and graduated in 1955.

He was associated with the law firms of Hoffman and Cure and Jardine, Stephenson, Blewett and Weaver from 1955 to 1958 and became partner in the law firm of Hatfield and Hatfield in 1959. That same year, he became Chief Deputy County Attorney in Cascade County, Montana, and served until 1960. He was then elected 8th Judicial District Judge, and served until 1976. In 1976, he was elected Chief Justice of the Montana Supreme Court, and served in that position until 1978.

In 1978, he was appointed to the U.S. Senate to the Second Session of the 95th Congress, to complete the term of Senator Lee Metcalf, who died in office. In the Senate, he served on the Armed Services Committee and the Judiciary Committee. He was chairman of the Subcommittee on Penitentiaries and Corrections.

Following his time in Congress, Hatfield was appointed as judge to the U.S. District Court in Great Falls, Montana. He served in that position until his death.

Subgroup 1: U. S. Senate, Series I: Correspondence, 1978
21.0 linear feet

This series consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence from Senator Hatfield’s office. Materials include correspondence with constituents, field experts, and fellow congressional members. Correspondence materials primarily consist of incoming letters from constituents and outgoing inquiries on behalf of or responses to constituents. Though more limited in numbers, this series also contains correspondence with other political representatives and consultants regarding legislative strategies and broad Congressional issues. Materials in this series are arranged alphabetically by general topic areas. Included in this series are several boxes with letters in support of or opposition to the Panama Canal treaties.