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## FINDING AID TO THE SAMUEL D. CONTE papers, 1962-2002

**Purdue University Libraries  
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections  
Research Center  
504 West State Street  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058  
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Processed by: Stephen Horrocks, September 23, 2015

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator Information</b>	Samuel D. Conte, 1917-2002
<b>Title</b>	Samuel D. Conte papers
<b>Collection Identifier</b>	MSF 497
<b>Date Span</b>	1962-2002 (predominant 1962-1979)
<b>Abstract</b>	Correspondence, memos, reports, and other printed materials documenting Samuel D. Conte's tenure as the founding director of the Purdue University Department of Computer Science.
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 cubic feet (1 mss. box)
<b>Finding Aid Author</b>	Stephen Horrocks
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Repository</b>	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

## Administrative Information

<b>Location Information:</b>	ASC
<b>Access Restrictions:</b>	Collection is open for research.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	Records transfer from the Department of Computer Science, December 12, 2014.
<b>Accession Number:</b>	20141216
<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	MSF 497, Samuel D. Conte papers, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
<b>Copyright Notice:</b>	Purdue University

**Related  
Materials  
Information:**

David A. Studebaker Computer Science papers

[http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/fa/pdf/msa296\\_studebaker.pdf](http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/fa/pdf/msa296_studebaker.pdf)

Felix Haas Oral History Interview, Archives & Special  
Collections Oral History Program Collection (Box 3, Folder 6)

<http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/fa/pdf/oralhistory.pdf>

## **Subjects and Genres**

### **Persons**

Conte, Samuel Daniel, 1917-2002

### **Organizations**

Purdue University. Department of Computer Sciences. Software Engineering  
Research Center

American Federation of Information Processing Societies

### **Topics**

Computer science

Computers and education

### **Form and Genre Types**

Correspondence

Grade books

Memorandums

Obituaries

Reports

Rosters

## Biography of Samuel D. Conte

Samuel D. Conte was born on June 5, 1917 in Lackawanna, NY. Sam lived near Buffalo, NY throughout his childhood, and received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Buffalo State University in 1939. He stayed in town to work on his Master of Science degree in mathematics at the University of Buffalo, which he completed in 1943. With the onset on World War II, Conte joined the Army and served on the European front. After the war ended he stayed in Biarritz, France to teach mathematics to the G.I.'s who were waiting for transport home, and upon his return to the United States decided on a career in education. He began teaching at Wayne State University in 1946 while pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, which he completed in 1950. In 1956, Conte left Wayne State and moved to California for a job in the aerospace industry where he focused his mathematics skills on the relatively young field of computer science. It wasn't until 1962, after then-Dean Felix Haas approached him with a position, that Conte moved to Purdue as Head of the world's first Computer Sciences Department. There he played a fundamental role in the development of computer science curricula and programs not only at Purdue, but nationwide, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Conte held that position until 1979 and officially retired in 1982 (though he continued to teach until 1993). By the end of his tenure as Department Head, Computer Sciences at Purdue had over 20 faculty and over 300 undergraduate majors, had granted over 50 Ph.D.s and 300 M.S. degrees, and was ranked in the top 10 programs in the United States. Throughout his career Conte received many awards and accolades—a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Air Force Academy in 1982; named a Sagamore of the Wabash by Indiana Governor Frank O-Bannon in 1997 (the highest civilian honor bestowed by Indiana's Governor); a Distinguished Lectureship Series and Distinguished Professorship in Computer Science at Purdue bear his name—and his published work remained the field standard for nearly two decades. Samuel Conte passed away on July 1, 2002 in West Lafayette, IN.

*Source:* Rice, John R. "Memorial Resolution: Samuel D. Conte, 1917-2002." Folder 1, MSF 497, Samuel D. Conte papers, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries.

## Collection Description

### Scope

The Samuel D. Conte papers (1962-2002, 0.4 cubic feet) document Samuel D. Conte's tenure as founding director of the Purdue University Department of Computer Sciences. Materials focus mostly on the years 1962-1979, with particular emphasis on Conte's role in the development of the department at Purdue and its curriculum. The collection also documents Conte's active membership in the America Federation of Information Processing Societies (AFIPS), and his efforts to establish federal recognition of the need for computer science in education. Types of materials include: correspondence, grade books, memorandums, obituaries, reports, and rosters. The papers are organized by material type and topic.

**Descriptive Rules** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

### Processing Information

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. All materials have been housed in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. Padded mailing envelopes have been photocopied for research purposes and the originals have been discarded. In most cases staples and metal paperclips have been removed and replaced with plastic paperclips for preservation purposes, except when removal would damage materials.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

### **1 Box**

#### Folder

1. Memorial and obituary information, 2002.
2. American Federation of Information Processing Societies (AFIPS) correspondence, reports, newsletters regarding legislation, 1978-1979.
3. AFIPS materials regarding legislation, cont., 1979.
4. AFIPS index of members, 1979.
5. Congressional report titled "Computers and the Learning Society," 1978.
6. AFIPS legislation panel report, August 1979.
7. Grade books, 1962-1968.
8. Computer Science Department accreditation and curriculum documents, 1975-1977.
9. Computer Sciences faculty, graduate student, and staff rosters, 1964.
10. Memos and letters, 1962.
11. Memos and letters, 1963.
12. Memos and letters, 1964.
13. Memos and letters, 1965, 1966, 1976.