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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.JTWILSON
Title       Wilson, John Todd. Papers
Date        1930-1983 (inclusive)
Size        4.5 linear feet (8 boxes)
Repository  1100 East 57th Street
            Chicago, Illinois 60637
Abstract    The Wilson, John Todd. Papers consist of 4.5 linear feet of speeches and
            remarks, correspondence, certificates, published papers and book reviews, and
            Wilson's masters thesis and dissertation. Ninth president of the University
            of Chicago, Wilson was an expert on relations between universities and
            government. While provost he responded to economic pressures of inflation
            and cutbacks in government aid to education by implementing a five-year
            austerity plan. He was also noted for his fundraising efforts and as a supporter
            of student activities.

Information on Use

Citation

When quoting material from this collection the preferred citation is:

Wilson, John Todd. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University
of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

John Todd Wilson was born on March 17, 1914, in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. He was one of
nine children of Reverend Clark Wilson and Alice Warren. John Wilson received his A.B. degree
with distinction from George Washington University in 1941, an M.A. in 1942 from the State
University of Iowa, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Stanford University in 1948. He married
Ann Camilli Wilson, his second wife, in 1939.

During World War II, Wilson served in the United States Naval Reserve. He was commissioned
as an Ensign in 1942 and left the service as a Lieutenant Commander USNR in 1946.

In 1948, Wilson became Assistant Executive Secretary of the American Psychological Association
while teaching concurrently as an Assistant Professor of Psychology at George Washington
University. He returned to government service in 1950 as the head of the Personnel and
Training Research Branch of the Office of Naval Research. He left the Office of Naval Research
in 1952 for the newly created National Science Foundation, where he served as Program
Director for Psychology in the Biological and Medical Sciences Division. In 1955, he became Assistant Director of NSF for Biological and Medical Sciences.

Wilson first came to the University of Chicago in 1961 as a special assistant to President George W. Beadle. He was also appointed as Professor of Psychology and taught graduate level courses. From 1963 to 1968 Wilson served as Deputy Director of the NSF and received the Foundation’s first Distinguished Service Award.

Wilson returned to the University of Chicago in 1968 as Vice-President and Dean of Faculties. He became Provost in 1969 under President Edward H. Levi. While Provost, Wilson responded to the economic pressures of inflation and cutbacks in government aid to education by implementing a five-year austerity plan. He held the position of Provost until February 1975 when Levi resigned to become U.S. Attorney General. Wilson then became Acting President and expected to hold that position until a replacement was found. Although initially reluctant to accept the post, he was elected President by the Board of Trustees on December 9, 1975. He was noted for his fundraising efforts at a time of financial difficulty for all universities and as a supporter of student activities. He served as the ninth president of the University of Chicago until July 1, 1978, when he was succeeded by Hanna H. Grey.


Wilson continued teaching at the university until 1984. He died on August 4, 1990, at the age of 76.

Scope Note

The Wilson, John Todd. Papers consist of 4.5 linear feet of speeches and remarks, correspondence, certificates, published papers and book reviews, and Wilson’s masters thesis and dissertation. The information in the papers covers the period from 1930 to 1983 and has been arranged into five series: (1) Personal, (2) Writings, (3) National Science Foundation, (4) University of Chicago, and (5) Oversize. Each series has been arranged chronologically.

Series I, Personal, includes bound copies of Wilson’s master’s thesis and Ph.D. dissertation as well as family genealogy notes written in 1982. Certificates and honorary degrees bestowed on Wilson between 1940 and 1979 are also included in the first series. Series V, Oversize, includes additional certificates and degrees.

Series II, Writings, has been subdivided into two subseries: (1) Published Papers and (2) Book Reviews. The Published Papers include articles written by Wilson between 1943 and 1983. One highlight of this subseries is an original roundtable transcript from the University of Chicago

Series III contains speeches and remarks from his term of office at the National Science Foundation. The material covers the period 1959-1968. This series has been subdivided into two subseries: (1) Speeches and Remarks and (2) Congressional Committee Statements. Subseries 2 also includes speeches and remarks made by Wilson as Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation for Biological and Medical Sciences before United States Congressional committees between 1966 and 1979. Among the items in this series are remarks for a presentation before the National Conference on Title VI-Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Series IV contains speeches, remarks, and some correspondence from Wilson's term of office as Provost and then President of the University of Chicago. The material covers the period 1969 to 1983. This series has been subdivided into two subseries: (1) Provost and President Speeches and (2) Correspondence.

The second subseries contains letters of appreciation received between 1975 and 1981, including congratulations on being elected President of the University.

Series V contains oversized materials. The items in this series include diplomas from Wilson’s high school, his B.A. degree from George Washington University, and a membership certificate for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Related Resources
The following related resources are available in the Special Collections Research Center:

Presidents' Papers
University of Chicago.Dept. of Psychology
University of Chicago.Office of the Provost

Subject Headings
- Wilson, John Todd, 1914-
- National Science Foundation
- University of Chicago-President
- University of Chicago-Administration
- University of Chicago-Provost
- Psychology
- Higher education and state-United States-History

INVENTORY

Series I: Personal
"Subseries 1: Thesis & Dissertation"
Box 1
Folder 1
Master's Degree Thesis - The University of Iowa - "Remote Associations as a Function of the Length of Interval Between Learning and Recall," (Bound copy), July 1942

Box 1
Folder 2
Doctoral Dissertation - Stanford University - "The Formation and Retention of Remote Associations in Rote Learning," (Bound copy), June 1948; a congratulatory letter from Ben Underwood concerning the dissertation, August 28, 1948

Subseries 2: Certificates

Box 1
Folder 3
University of Chicago - to Ann Wilson (wife) - undated; State University of Iowa, M.A. degree, 1942; Honorary degree, Washington and Jefferson University, 1964 (?), Election to Society of Sigma XI (Science Research National Fraternity), 1948; Election to Sigma XI, 1942

Box 1
Folder 4
Fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, May 9, 1973; George Washington University, Junior Certificate, 1940; Ph.D. degree, Stanford University, 1948; University Record degree, August 7, 1973 (just a gag); George Washington University Alumni Achievement Award, 1965

Box 1
Folder 5
Honorary degree-Doctor of Humane letters - University of Chicago, June 15, 1979

Subseries 3: Miscellaneous

Box 1
Folder 6
Family genealogy notes, June 1982

Series II: Writings

Subseries 1: Published Papers

Box 1
Folder 7
"Remote Associations as a Function of the Length of Interval Between Learning and Recall," Journal of Experimental Psychology, July 1943

Box 1
Folder 8
A Review of General Semantics, Volume V, No. 1, Autumn 1947

Box 1
Folder 9
"The Effect of an Increasingly Well-Defined Criterion on the Prediction of Success at Naval Training School (Tactical Radar)" (With Dewey B. Stuit), Journal of Applied Psychology, December 1946

Box 1
Folder 10

Box 1
Folder 11

Box 1
Folder 12
"Psychology and the National Science Foundation," The American Psychologist, September 1952

Box 1
Folder 13

Box 2
Folder 1
"Government Support of Psychological Research," (with Marguerite L. Young), The American Psychologist, 1953

Box 2
Folder 2
"Remote Associations," 1953

Box 2
Folder 3
Fiscal Year, 1954, " (with Marguerite Young), The American Psychologist, 1954

Box 2
Folder 4

Box 2
Folder 5
Fiscal Year, 1955, " (with Marguerite Young) The American Psychologist, 1955

Box 2
Folder 6
Fiscal Year, 1956, " (with Marguerite Young) The American Psychologist, 1956

Box 2
Folder 7
"Institutional Versus Individual Grantees," from New York University Conference on Charitable Foundations 1957

Box 2
Folder 8
Fiscal Year, 1957, " (with Marguerite Young), 1958
Box 2
Folder 9

Box 2
Folder 10
"Regional learning Research Centers, " in Operational Plans for Developing Regional
Educational Media Research Centers, February 1962

Box 2
Folder 11
1963, " Educational Record, April 1963

Box 2
Folder 12
"Human Values and Science, " Proceedings of the Third Annual Southeastern Michigan
Junior Science and Humanities Symposium 1967, Wayne State University, Detroit
Michigan, March 1967

Box 2
Folder 13
"The Effect of Government Policy on Research, " Julian Goldsmith, Robert Gomer, John
T. Wilson, and Kenneth J. Northcott, WTTG Television, Channel 11, Chicago, The
University of Chicago Roundtable, (original roundtable transcript)December 10, 1967

Box 2
Folder 14
The Support of Individuals and Fields versus the Support of Individuals, " MINERVA,
April 1971

Box 2
Folder 15
"The Threat to Private Colleges, " Christian Science Monitor, June 20, 1978

Box 2
Folder 16
1982, "

Box 2
Folder 17
1950 - 1983" (bound) 1983

Subseries 2: Book Reviews

Box 2
Folder 18
"Granville Stanley Hall, " (rough and final drafts), January 23, 1947

Box 2
Folder 19
"William James on Education, "February 11, 1947

Box 2
Folder 20
"L.L. Thurstone’s "The Nature of Intelligence" (1924), March 3, 1947

Box 2
Folder 21
"Experimental Psychology," by B.A. Farrell, in Personnel Administration, November 1955

Box 2
Folder 22
"Present-Day Psychology," A.A. Roback, Personnel Administration, March - April 1956

Box 3
Folder 1

Box 3
Folder 2
"The Effects of Federal Programs on Higher Education," by Harold Orlans, March 7, 1963

Box 3
Folder 3

Box 3
Folder 4

Box 3
Folder 5

Box 3
Folder 6

Box 3
Folder 7
"Scholars, Dollars, and Bureaucrats," by Chester E. Finn, Minerva, April 1979

Box 3
Folder 8

Series III: National Science Foundation

Subseries 1: Speeches and Remarks

Box 3
Folder 9
"The Principles and Applications of the Research Grant System," Meetings of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, Atlantic City, NJ, April 13, 1959

Box 3
Folder 10
"The National Science Foundation and the Academic Community, " 77th Annual Conference of the Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, Chicago, Illinois, November, 13, 1963

Box 3
Folder 11
"The Executive Office Complex and its Influence in the Governance of Research and Development Programs, " AAAS Meeting, Cleveland, Ohio, December 28, 1963

Box 3
Folder 12

Box 3
Folder 13
Remarks for Presentation before the National Conference on Title VI - Civil Rights Act of 1964, January 28, 1965

Box 3
Folder 14
Remarks...on the occasion of the dedication of the research vessel Eastward, Duke University Marine Laboratory, Beaufort, N.C., May 1, 1965

Box 3
Folder 15
1966, " Dedication of the new Psychology Department quarters, University of Chicago, January 19, 1966

Box 3
Folder 16
"Some consideration of Federal support for higher education, its purposes and its effects, " Meeting of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, Princeton University, June 23, 1966

Box 3
Folder 17
Remarks...on the occasion of the dedication of the Physiology building, Naples Zoological Station, August 30, 1966 (Xerox),

Box 3
Folder 18
Remarks...on the occasion of the dedication of the New Science Building at Furman University, Greenville, S.C., October 22, 1966

Box 3
Folder 19
Remarks...to the National Council of University Research Administrators, Washington, D.C., December 1, 1966

Box 3
Folder 20
Remarks to the Eastern Association of College and University Business Officers, December 5, 1968

Box 3
Folder 21
Remarks...At the science conference on "The future of Science in the Liberal Arts Colleges, " Wheaton College, April 15, 1967

**Box 3**
**Folder 22**

**Box 3**
**Folder 23**
Background Paper for discussion of Departmental-level research and training support, at the joint meeting of NSB Committees I and III and NSB Meeting, September 6 and 8, 1967

**Box 3**
**Folder 24**
Remarks...on the Occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Academic Council of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges - Columbus, Ohio, November 13, 1967

**Box 4**
**Folder 1**
Alan T. Waterman, All Souls' Church, Washington, D.C., December 4, 1967

**Box 4**
**Folder 2**
"Quo Vadis, " Meeting of the National Association of Biology Teachers, Anaheim, California, March 1, 1968

**Box 4**
**Folder 3**
Remarks...Michigan State Sigma Xi Lecture, East Lansing, Michigan, April 11, 1968

**Subseries 2: Congressional Committee Statements**

**Box 4**
**Folder 4**
Subcommittee on Research and Technical Programs, House Committee on Government Operations - on International Science Activities (Reuss), February, 10, 1966

**Box 4**
**Folder 5**
Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations - on S.Res. 68, A Resolution to Establish a Senate Select Committee on Technology and Human Environment (Muskie), March 20, 1967

**Box 4**
**Folder 6**
Subcommittee on Economic Progress, Joint Economic Committee (Proxmire), April 21, 1967

**Box 4**
**Folder 7**

**Box 4**
Folder 8
Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology, Committee on Science and Technology - House - (Brown), August 15, 1979

**Series IV: University of Chicago**

**Subseries 1: Provost and President Speeches**

- **Box 4**
  - Folder 9
  - Folder 10
    - Talk to Medical School Alumni - The University of Chicago, March 5, 1970
  - Folder 11
    - Comments on the University to the leadership conference, May 8, 1970
  - Folder 12
    - University’s1970 - 1971 budget, July 31, 1970
  - Folder 13
    - Board Presentation -1971 - 1972 academic budget, March 6, 1971
  - Folder 14
  - Folder 15
    - University's1971 - 1972 budget, September 7, 1971
  - Folder 16
    - University's1972 - 1973 budget, October 2, 1972
  - Folder 17
    - Introductory Statement to Trustees, April 27, 1973
  - Folder 18
    - Trustees Meeting, April 28, 1973
  - Folder 19
    - University’s1973 - 1974 budget, October 1, 1973
  - Folder 20
    - University’s1974 - 1975 budget, October 15, 1974
  - Folder 21
    - Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, April 22, 1975
Box 4
Folder 22
University's 1975 - 1976 budget, September 1, 1975
Box 4
Folder 23
Remarks on the Occasion of the visit of the Empress of Japan, October 7, 1975
Box 4
Folder 24
Remarks at dinner honoring Baron Ramsey of Canterbury, October 13, 1975
Box 5
Folder 1
Remarks at the luncheon for the King of Norway, October 16, 1975
Box 5
Folder 2
ABA Dinner Scenario, October 17, 1975
Box 5
Folder 3
State of the University (from The University Record), November 11, 1975
Box 5
Folder 4
"A Thousand Years Hence, "January 7, 1976
Box 5
Folder 5
Commercial Club of Chicago - "The Situation at the University of Chicago", February 11, 1976
Box 5
Folder 6
Remarks at the Lasker Dinner, February 11, 1976
Box 5
Folder 7
Installation of JTW as ninth President of the University; plus The University Record (April 3, 1976); March 4, 1976
Box 5
Folder 8
Remarks at the dedication of the Al Weisman Corner, April 7, 1976
Box 5
Folder 9
King of Sweden Toast, April 19, 1976
Box 5
Folder 10
Remarks following dinner of Library Visiting Committee, April 20, 1976
Box 5
Folder 11
Philip B. Kurland, April 27, 1976
Box 5
Folder 12
Remarks at the luncheon at the Ritz - Carlton - "The University and the City," April 29, 1976
Box 5
Folder 13
Remarks on the occasion of the Jefferson Lecture (John Hope Franklin), May 5, 1976
Box 5
Folder 14
Remarks on the occasion of the inaugural lecture by the first Helen Ross Professor - Margaret Rosenheim, May 6, 1976
Box 5
Folder 15
Remarks on the occasion of the Lying-In dinner, May 26, 1976
Box 5
Folder 16
Remarks at the President's Fund dinner, June 2, 1976
Box 5
Folder 17
Remarks on the occasion of the groundbreaking for the renovation of the Henry Crown Fieldhouse, June 3, 1976
Box 5
Folder 18
Remarks at the Order of the "C" Banquet
Box 5
Folder 19
"Historic Impression" - WEFM two-minute talk, plus correspondence, June 25, 1976
Box 5
Folder 20
Remarks on the occasion of the visit of the Osaka Chamber of Commerce, July 5, 1976
Box 5
Folder 21
Introduction - 100th Woodward Court Lecture (John Hope Franklin), October 26, 1976
Box 5
Folder 22
State of the University (from The University Record), November 9, 1976
Box 5
Folder 23
NEH Dinner - Ronald Berman, November 17, 1976
Box 5
Folder 24
Nobel Laureate Dinner, December 3, 1976
Box 5
Folder 25
Trustee-Faculty dinner - "Telegraph Stagg for Plans", January 12, 1977
Box 5
Folder 26
President’s Report - Council Meeting (Browder Affair), 1976 - 1977
Box 6
Folder 1
  President’s Report - Council Meeting (Browder Affair), 1976 - 1977
Box 6
Folder 2
  President’s Report - Council Meeting (Browder Affair), 1976 - 1977
Box 6
Folder 3
  Remarks on the Occasion of the Jefferson Lecture (Saul Bellow), April 1, 1977
Box 6
Folder 4
  Introduction of Robert Streeter - Fourth Ryerson Lecture, April 5, 1977
Box 6
Folder 5
  Remarks on the Occasion of the Tut Dinner, April 12, 1977
Box 6
Folder 6
  Remarks at the dinner opening the Conference on the Jewish Religious Tradition, April 17, 1977
Box 6
Folder 7
  Message to Alumni, n.d.
Box 6
Folder 8
  Remarks on the occasion of the Mother’s Aid luncheon, October 5, 1977
Box 6
Folder 9
  Remarks to leadership conference, October 13, 1977
Box 6
Folder 10
  Remarks at the luncheon for HRH Prince Charles, October 19, 1977
Box 6
Folder 11
  Remarks - President’s Fund Dinner, October 26, 1977
Box 6
Folder 12
  Remarks on the occasion of the Joint Negro Appeal Banquet (John Hope Franklin), October 30, 1977
Box 6
Folder 13
  State of the University (from The University Record), November 8, 1977
Box 6
Folder 14
  Dedication to the Fieldhouse (Henry Crown), November 1, 1977
Box 6
Folder 15
Introductory Remarks at the Biological Sciences Civic Dinner (Dr. John H. Knowles), November 14, 1977

Box 6
Folder 16
Remarks at the Dedication of the Surgery-Brain Research Pavilion, November 15, 1977

Box 6
Folder 17
Trustee-Faculty Dinner - Remarks on the College, January 11, 1978

Box 6
Folder 18
Memo to Faculty - Office of Civil Rights, January 30, 1978

Box 6
Folder 19
Memo to Faculty - Office of Civil Rights (May 8, 1978), March 10, 1978

Box 6
Folder 20
Introduction of Albert Dorfman - Ryerson Lecture (Fifth), March 29, 1978

Box 6
Folder 21
Medical Feasibility Study, April 26, 1978

Box 6
Folder 22
Remarks by "Jock" Weintraub and Philip Kurland, May 24, 1978

Box 6
Folder 23
Editorial - The Christian Science Monitor, June 20, 1978

Box 6
Folder 24
Heinrich Klüver Memorial Remarks, March 27, 1979

Box 6
Folder 25
Statement of NSF to House Subcommittee on Science, Research and Technology, September 10, 1979

Box 6
Folder 26
1980, November 27, 1979

Box 7
Folder 1
Remarks to Society of Research Administrators on History of NSF, October 6, 1980

Box 7
Folder 2
Letter to L. Branscomb, Chairman of National Science Board, April 27, 1981

Box 7
Folder 3
Remarks at Gaylord Donnelly Dinner, November 12, 1981
Folder 4
Remarks on Science Education - Academy on education, October 14, 1983
Box 7
Folder 5
Remarks in tribute to Allison Davis, October 21, 1983

Subseries 2: Correspondence
Box 7
Folder 6-7
Letters of Appreciation, 1975 - 1981

Series V: Oversize
Box 8
Folder 1
The George Washington University, Degree of Bachelor of Arts (with Distinction), June 11, 1941
Box 8
Folder 2
Membership degree to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, May 9, 1973
Box 8
Folder 3
Punxsutawney High School Diploma, Punxsutawney, Pa., June 6, 1930