

A Guide to the Wilfred J. Ritz Papers 1955-1985

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1955-1985

A Collection in Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives 006
Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives, Washington and Lee University
2001

History

Processed by: John N. Jacob, 1990
Funding: Web version of the finding aid funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Title Statement

A Guide to the Wilfred J. Ritz Papers 1955-1985

Subtitle: Ritz, Wilfred J., Papers of, 1955-1985

Collection: 006

Author: John N. Jacob

Sponsor: Web version of the finding aid funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publication Statement

File size: ca. 15 kb

Date: © 2001 By Washington and Lee University

Publisher: Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives, Washington and Lee University

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from Word Perfect word processing program 6.1. finding aid created by John N. Jacob, 09/14/20001

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

Feb 17, 2004 PUBLIC "-//Washington and Lee University::School of Law::Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives//TEXT (US::ViLxW-L::vilxwl00002::A Guide to the Wilfred J. Ritz Papers)//EN" "vilxwl00002.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

Feb 25, 2004 converted to conform to eadVIVA.dtd by vivastrict.xsl

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Collection number

006

Language

English

Physical Characteristics

5 cu. ft.

Repository

Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives, School of Law, Washington and Lee University

Administrative Information

Access

Access unrestricted.

Use Restrictions

Use unrestricted.

Acquisition Information

Presented by Wilfred J. Ritz, 12/04/1990.›

Preferred Citation

Wilfred J. Ritz Papers, 1955-1985, Ms 006, Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Archives, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA

Biographical/Historical Information

Wilfred Julius Ritz was born in Conklin, Michigan on March 15, 1915. He graduated from Sparta (Michigan) High School in 1933, and received an A.B. degree from Washington and Lee University in 1938. After working as Assistant Director of Research for the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce in Richmond (1938-1942), Ritz served in the European Theater during World War II (1942-1946) as a member of the U.S. Army Ninth Air Corps, rising to the rank of technical sergeant.

During another stint with the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce--this time (1946-1950) as Industrial Director-- Ritz attended the University of Richmond Law School, earning his L.L.B. degree in 1950. After receiving an L.L.M. from Harvard in 1951, he taught law at Wake Forest College (1952-1953) before moving to Washington and Lee School of Law in 1953. He was made a full professor in 1959.

Professor Ritz received an S.J.D. degree from Harvard University in 1961. He returned to teaching at Washington and Lee and remained there until his retirement in 1985 when he was named professor emeritus.

Ritz's areas of teaching specialization included: legal history and bibliography; conflicts; insurance; sentencing; and taxation. In 1970 he founded the Alderson Legal Assistance Program at Washington and Lee, which enabled students to provide legal advice and aid to inmates at the Federal Reformatory for Women in Alderson, West Virginia. He directed that program until 1985.

Professor Ritz won the Samuel Pool Weaver Constitutional Law Essay Competition in 1963. He published fifteen law review articles and the books: *The Uniform Commercial Code and the Commercial Law of Virginia*, 1956; *Virginia Automobile Insurance*, 1983; and *American Judicial Proceedings First Printed Before 1801*, 1984 (winner of the Joseph L. Andrews Bibliographical Award from the American Association of Law Libraries). When a stroke disabled Ritz in February 1986, two colleagues, Professors Wythe Holt and L. H. LaRue, took on the task of editing and completing his work on the First Judiciary Act. The result was "Rewriting the History of the Judiciary Act of 1789," which appeared in 1990 under Ritz's name.

Scope and Content Information

Two series make up the preponderance of these papers: subject files and writings. Two legal case files are also present.

The subject files include: biographical material, correspondence, memoranda, clippings, and research notes. Though several files contain items from as early as 1955, most of the material in this series is from the period 1980-1985.

The writings series begins with a copy of Virginia Automobile Liability Insurance and a host of reprints of law review articles written by Ritz. The projects represented in the drafts and typescripts are enumerated in the container list.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged chronologically.

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