

# A Guide to the R. William Arthur Papers, 1936-2001

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A Collection in Special Collections, Kegley Library 2003.1  
Special Collections, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College  
2011

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## History

**Processed by:** Cathy Carlson Reynolds

## Title Statement

A Guide to the R. William Arthur Papers, 1936-2001

**Subtitle:** Arthur, R. William, Papers, 1936-2001

**Collection:** 2003.1

**Author:** Cathy Carlson Reynolds

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2011 By Wytheville Community College. All rights reserved.

**Publisher:** Special Collections, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Cathy Carlson Reynolds, 6 August 2012

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Revision Description

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

## Descriptive Summary

**Collection Number**

2003.1

**Language**

English

**Physical Characteristics**

223 folders.

**Repository**

Special Collections, Kegley Library

## Administrative Information

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open to research.

### **Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

### **Acquisition Information**

Donated by the estate of R. William Arthur in 2003.

### **Preferred Citation**

R. William Arthur Papers, Manuscript Collection 2003.1, Kegley Library, Wytheville Community College, Wytheville, VA

## **Biographical Information**

Born in Louisa County, Virginia, on 16 May 1917, Roy William Arthur was the son of Roy Watson Arthur and Verna Peltier Arthur. He and his sisters Audrey Arthur (Price) and Lucille Arthur (Jones) grew up in Hopewell, Virginia, and later moved to Wytheville, Virginia in 1930 where Arthur graduated from Wytheville High School. He matriculated at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, intent upon seeking a degree in engineering but after one year he transferred to the College of William and Mary where he earned his undergraduate degree in 1938 and his law degree in 1940. He returned to Wytheville to practice law in the firm of Parsons and Arthur.

Arthur married Dorothy Belle Ellett of Roanoke, Virginia on 28 September 1946. He served as mayor of Wytheville from September 1946 to August 1952 and steered the town through the polio epidemic of 1950. A term as the town attorney spanned September 1952 to October 1969. A president of the Virginia Municipal League, Arthur also participated in several charitable and civic organizations including Wytheville Lions Club, Wythe County Community Concert Association, Wythe United Way Fund. A member of St. Paul's Methodist Church in Wytheville, Arthur served as board chairman, Sunday School teacher, and choir member.

Education remained a prime interest of R. William Arthur throughout his life. He served on the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary from 1954 to 1962 and 1966 to 1969. He served on the steering committee that oversaw planning for the establishment of Wytheville Community College and later worked as a member of the Local Advisory Board. Arthur also was a trustee of Marion College, a small junior college affiliated with the Lutheran Church.

Arthur resigned from both college boards in September 1969 upon his appointment to the judgeship of the twenty-first circuit. In August 1984 he assumed duties as chief judge of the twenty-seventh circuit, an area that encompasses Wythe, Pulaski, Grayson, Carroll, Montgomery, and Floyd counties and the cities of Galax and Radford. In 1985, he retired after fifteen years on the bench. Arthur died on 4 April 2003 at the age of eighty-five.

## **Scope and Content**

The R. William Arthur Papers consist of four series: Series I, Polio Epidemic (1950-2001), undated); Series II, College of William and Mary (1936-1972, undated); Series III, Wytheville Community College (1961-1971); and Series IV, Miscellaneous (1942-1981, undated).

Series I (1950-2001, undated) contains nine folders of correspondence, newspaper clippings, notes, and religious circulars relating to the polio epidemic in Wytheville during the summer of 1950. As mayor, Arthur received correspondence from health authorities, government officials, anxious parents, and interested observers across the country. Topics discussed include quarantining of town, erection of warning signs, causes of polio (DDT use, God's wrath on sale of alcohol, insects), cures (Substance X, breast milk, DDT spraying, chiropractic, Epsom Salts, veneration of the Virgin Mary, cessation of devil worship), donations, and Arthur's radio address in January 1951 for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Series II (1936-1972, undated), consisting of 123 folders, chronicles the development of the College of William and Mary from a liberal arts college into a small university. Correspondence from College presidents including Alvin D. Chandler and Davis Y. Paschall, fellow Board of Visitors members, Governors Albertis Harrison and Mills E. Godwin, and other state and college officials dominate this series. Topics discussed in these letters include financial planning, building construction, curriculum development, faculty issues, expansion of outreach and graduate programs, and student conduct and rights. Also included in this series are requests from friends and acquaintances to Arthur for recommendations for prospective students as well as discussions of potential athletes and improvements of the football program. Of special interest are letters received and sent by Arthur from 1967 to 1969 involving student demonstrations and unrest about the Vietnam War, curfew restrictions, and censorship of the student newspaper, *The Flat Hat*. Many letters also focus on the development and subsequent revision of the student rights and responsibilities code.

This series also contains notebooks from jurisprudence, music and bankruptcy law courses used by Arthur as an undergraduate and law student at the College of William and Mary. Also included are Arthur's diplomas as well as certificates from Sigma Nu fraternity and Omicron Delta Kappa, a national honor society.

Series III (1961-1971, 1990), containing sixty-four folders, covers the early development and growth of Wytheville Community College. Arthur not only served on the steering committee that created the Wytheville Area Branch College of Virginia Polytechnic Institute but also was a member of the Local Advisory Board of the college when it joined the Virginia community college system. Correspondents include Director of the Department of Community Colleges Dana B. Hamel, Chairman of the steering committee Robert E. Johnson, President T. Marshall Hahn of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and President J. Wade Gilley of Wytheville Community College among others. Topics discussed include campus construction, finances, formation of WCC as a community college, faculty issues, and curriculum development.

Series IV (1942-1981, undated), contains miscellaneous records including certificates received by Arthur for his tenure as circuit court judge and member of the Virginia Bar. Five photographs of Arthur with fellow Board of Visitors members from the College of William and Mary and as circuit court judge are also in this series as are documents relating to the Wytheville Golf Club.

Series V (2008 Addendum) consists of material donated by Beverly Repass Hoch in December 2008; these materials include correspondence on the estate of Verna Peltier Arthur, real estate including Plumer College, and Arthur's appointment as judge.

## Contents List

### **Series I. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 1950-2001, Undated.**

#### **Extent**

10 folders.

#### **Folder 1. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 12 July - 27 July 1950.**

**Series-Folder** 1:1

#### **Extent**

7 letters.

#### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Dr. Charles Brock Hughes, Morton W. Turner, A. J. Smith, and A. L. Karr and three anonymous writers. Topics include rumors of quarantine, improper sanitation because of outdoor toilets, pest control, and treatment of polio via the Koch method and chiropractic.

#### **Folder 2. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 28 July - 30 July 1950.**

**Series-Folder** 1:2

#### **Extent**

7 letters.

#### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Lewis Jones, John Kevlock, P. W. Treloar, Mrs. J. M. Mills, Morton W. Turner, and Page Stelle. Topics include Kiwanis Club resolution against quarantine warning signs, use of Substance X in breast milk for polio prevention, Koch treatment, and promotion of fogging machine to kill flies to combat polio."

#### **Folder 3. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 1 August - 4 August 1950.**

**Series-folder** 1:3

#### **Extent**

9 letters.

#### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include William R. Tapp, Carr F. Williams, Olla Ray Boyd, Barbara Robinson, Peter W. Kaiser, Thomas Andrew Lyons, and anonymous writers "Better Health" and "An Interested Person.". Topics include use of DDT spraying, prayers, remedy of Dr. Fred R. Klenner, polio caused by insects, use of deduction to isolate cause of polio, and belief that polio is caused by water tainted with lead or arsenic.

## **Folder 4. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 5 August - 14 August 1950.**

**Series-folder** 1:4

### **Extent**

13 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include C. Al. Johnson, Morton W. Turner, Thomas Andrew Lyons, Frank C. Waldrop, W. L. Lazenby, J. E. Chaney, Bob Warden, Wallace Hicks, Dr. Alfred Ross, E. Wilkinson, and anonymous "A Friend." Topics include belief that polio caused by tobacco worm and cure with flaxseed poultice, donations, press coverage of epidemic, belief that polio was caused by chemical poisoning, use of DDT to eradicate polio, and Wytheville Fire Department.

## **Folder 5. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 16 August - 28 August 1950.**

**Series-folder** 1:5

### **Extent**

15 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Alfred R. Ross, Gene Thomas, COra Ruth Webb, Sid Tear, Robert R. Gunn, Tony R. Besozzi, Will Moore, Stuart B. Campbell, James A. Williams, and an anonymous writer. Topics include silver treatment for polio, use of chiropractic and Epsom Salt baths for cure, recommendation to hold procession in honor of the Virgin Mary, germs passing through postal system, donation, exhortation for state officials to stop devil worship, and press coverage of epidemic.

## **Folder 6. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. September - December 1950.**

**Series-folder** 1:6

### **Extent**

5 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Lalla H. Cornish, Ralph L. Lincoln, Carter W. Beamer, and Dr. R. W. Jessee. Topics include removal of warning road signs, and recommendations for control of polio epidemic in community.

## **Folder 7. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. January 1951.**

**Series-folder** 1:7

### **Extent**

18 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Howard J. London, Eugene H. Halsey, Gus Westermann, Louise Sexton Martin, John Harkrader, George Wall, Minnie O. K. Funk, Mable Potts, Edgar D. Davis and Basil O'Connor of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. Topics include appearance by Arthur on radio show (Longines-Wittnauer Watch Company program on 14 January 1951) and congratulations and comments.

## **Folder 8. Polio Epidemic Correspondence. 1984-2001.**

**Series-folder** 1:8

### **Extent**

5 letters.

### **Scope and Content**

Correspondents include Jeanne Haas, Howard N. Ainsley, Carol Hall, and Trenton G. Crewe Jr. Topics include talk by Arthur to Virginia Association of Hospital Auxiliaries, talk by Arthur at Wythe County Community Hospital, use of his polio correspondence and research file by Town of Wytheville Museums for exhibit, and 1950 newspaper article on epidemic in Wytheville in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

## **Series II. College of William and Mary. 1936-1972, Undated.**

### **Extent**

123 folders.

### **Scope and Content**

Series II contains correspondence and documents relating to the term of service Arthur performed as a member of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Correspondents include College presidents Alvin D. Chandler and Davis Y. Paschall, fellow Board of Visitor members, Governor Albertis Harrison and Mills E. Godwin, Delegate D. Woodrow Bird, Senator Harry F. Byrd, State Senator William Wampler, and others. See the Scope and Content note for more information on this series.

## **Series III. Wytheville Community College. 1961-1971, 1990.**

### **Extent**

64 folders.

### **Scope and Content**

This series contains correspondence and other documents relating to the term of service Arthur performed as a member of the steering committee and the Local Advisory Board for Wytheville Community College. Correspondents include Director of the Department of Community Colleges Dana B. Hamel, Chairman of the Steering Committee Robert E. Johnson, President T. Marshall Hahn of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and President J. Wade Gilley of Wytheville Community College. Topics include campus construction, finances, formation of WCC as a community college, faculty issues, and curriculum development.

## **Series IV. Miscellaneous Records. 1942-1981, Undated.**

### **Extent**

3 folders.

### **Scope and Content**

This series contains miscellaneous records including certificates received by Arthur for his tenure as circuit court judge and member of the Virginia Bar. Five photographs of Arthur with fellow Board of Visitors members from the College of William and Mary and as circuit court judge are also in this series as are documents relating to the Wytheville Golf Club.

## **Series V. 2008 Addendum. 1938-1972.**

### **Extent**

23 folders.

### **Scope and Content**

This series consists of material donated by Beverly Repass Hoch in December 2008; these materials include correspondence on the estate of Verna Peltier Arthur, real estate including Plumer College, and Arthur's appointment as judge.