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Robert M. Robison papers

Title: Robert M. Robison papers
Collection No: UA. Deans_Robi
Extent: 1.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1915-1986

Abstract: The collection is composed of correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings and diaries related to the career of long-time Memphis State University Dean Robert M. Robison (1901-1989).

Processed by: Michelle Fagan, 1993; Gerald Chaudron, 2021.
Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: Robert M. Robison papers, University Archives, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.
Publication date: 2021 June

Biographical information

Robert Melville Robison was born in Covington, Tennessee, in 1901 to banker and farmer Robert Melville (1867-1942) and Mineola Alabama "Minnie" Dickson Robison (1870-1955). He had an older sister Rachel Adaline (1898-1927). He married Frances Gunn (1910-2001). Robert attended Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) and West Tennessee State Normal School (now the University of Memphis). He did his graduate work in education at George Peabody and Vanderbilt University. In 1925 he joined the staff of the West Tennessee State Teachers College (WTSTC) Training School (now University of Memphis Campus School), becoming principal in 1930. He took the position of Bursar or business manager at WTSTC in 1937, beginning his long career in the school's administration. He was Registrar at Memphis State College from 1943 to 1946 when he became Dean. Robison was appointed Dean of Students in 1951 and in 1964 he was Memphis State University's Executive Dean of Students, heading the program to keep students in school. From 1966 until his retirement in 1971, he was assistant to President Cecil Humphreys, whom he had known since 1937. R.M. Robison died in 1989.

Scope and contents

The collection is composed of correspondence and memoranda related to Robison's work at the university as well as various publications. Robison was a great supporter of university sports and there are materials that document his interest. He was a founding member of the MSU Emeriti and saved early minutes and notices of meetings.

Subject terms

West Tennessee State Teachers College.
Memphis State College.
Memphis State University.
University of Memphis.

Processing information

The materials in the collection arrived in an initial donation from Mrs. Robison in 1993 and an addition in 2001. Some artifacts and photographs were given for display in the Heritage Room. The latter were combined with the existing collection. The diaries belonging to Robison's mother were separated to form their own collection.

Related materials

Inventory

Box 1

Folder

- 1 Letter to J.W. Brister, WTSTC President, 1937 August.
R.M. Robison to J.W. Brister, offering to resign office of Bursar since he does not have training in accounting.
- 2 *Tiger Rag* clippings (copies): re: Robison, 1937-1938.
- 3 Memoranda from Jennings B. Sanders, MSC president, 1943-1946.
- 3a Memoranda, etc., 1946-1952.
- 4 Memoranda, etc., 1952-1960.
- 5 J. Millard Smith Term Paper, University of Chicago, Summer, 1933.
"Organization, Administration, and Supervision of Student Teaching," for Education 366, W.S. Gray.
- 6 Cecil C. Humphreys, 1943, undated
1943 letters between Humphreys and Robison about Humphreys' F.B.I. training. Robison writes letter of recommendation for Humphrey's commission in Navy. November 2, 1943, Humphreys to Robison, "I have been thinking pretty seriously about applying for a commission in the Navy if I can get out of this outfit... I suppose that you think that I am crazy to even think about this, but when they started taking fathers I haven't been happy in what I am doing."
- 6a Memoranda, etc., 1959-1965.
- 7 Memoranda, etc., 1965-1972.
- 7a Cecil C. Humphreys, 1978-1980.
- 8 Billy Mac Jones, MSU President, 1975-1980. Includes *MSU Now*, Vol.6:2, 1975 October.
- 9 Thomas G. Carpenter, MSU President, 1980-1984, undated. Newspaper clippings.
- 10 John W. Richardson, 1970-1972, n.d. Includes May 10, 1972, issue of *Faculty News* (vol. 8, no. 17).
- 11 R. Eugene Smith, 1971-1974.
- 12 Radio scripts, 1949:
May 25, 1949, WMC "Memphis State Half -Hour," Question for roundtable discussion by Memphis State College students, "Should Memphis State College Be Elevated to the Status of a University?"
June 23, 1949, WMC, roundtable discussion by Memphis State College faculty and others, "Critical Shortage of Elementary Teachers."
- 13 Memphis State University, 1958-1972, undated. Includes brochures and other publications: *Perspective-MSU*, Vol.1:1-2, 1970; *The Columns*, Vol. 5:2, 1971.
- 14 Memphis State University, 1974-1982, undated. Includes correspondence, clippings.

- 15 Greater Memphis State, 1962-1968, undated.
- 16 MSU - Silver Anniversary, May 1982.
- 17 Class of 1957, 1982.
- 18 Bob Patterson, Athletic Director, 1982. Includes *Memphis State Magazine*, Spring 1982, Vol. 2:2, with article on Patterson.
- 19 Greater Memphis State, Inc., 1982-1983, undated.
- 20 Emeriti, 1974-1982, undated.
- 21 MSU University Press, October 24, 1980. J. Ralph Randolph to Robison on memoirs and audio tapes (the tapes were not donated).
- 22 MSU Public Relations Packet, circa 1970.
- 23 MSU Foundation Portfolio, 1984-1985.
- 24 Sports Action Committee, 1968-1969. Form letters, correspondence.
- 25 Basketball National Invitational Tournament, 1957. Clippings from Memphis and New York newspapers.
- 26 Basketball, 1970-1974, undated. Review of MSU's 1970-71 season, press releases, game schedules, newspaper clippings, certificate for 1 millionth basketball fan; May 1973 "Columns"; September 20, 1973, memo to Tiger Rebounders; 1973-74 Mid -Season Recap; Brochures on Larry Finch, Ronnie Robinson, Larry Kenon.
- 27 Basketball, 1975-1977. Includes MSU Tiger Basketball magazine, 1975-1976.
- 28 Basketball, 1982. Metro Tournament magazine, March 5-7, 1982.
- 29 Clippings, 1966-1967 and undated. Also sports-related items.
- 30 Football, 1971-1972. Includes Pasadena Bowl program, December 18, 1971.
- 31 Football, 1979-1981.
- 32 Miscellany, 1937-1983. Includes program of "Anything Goes", MSC, 1948; Annual Report of MSC, 1955-1956.
- OS1 Clippings, 1943-1984 and undated. Re: Memphis State sports and other university-related topics. Includes NIT tournament, 1957.

- Artifacts
- 1. MSU megaphone.
 - 2. MSU Tiger tam.
 - 3. Cardboard Tiger fan.
 - 4. MSU Tiger figurine.
 - 5. Briefcase belonging to Robison.
 - 6. Garment bag belonging to Robison.
 - 7. Sign: "Assistant to the President".

Addition, 2001.

- 33 Dedication of Rawls and Robison Halls, 1965 May 8. Includes clippings, program.
- 34 Letters of congratulation on Robison's appointment as executive dean of students (July 1967). Newspaper clippings related to the appointment.
- 35 Program for the third annual induction of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame held in Nashville, Tenn., February 13, 1969. Robison was vice-chairman of the board. Cecil Humphreys was an inductee.
- 36 Miscellaneous correspondence to and from Robison, May 16, 1932- May 13, 1971.
- 37 Letters of congratulation on Dean Robison's retirement in 1971. Newspaper clippings related to his retirement.
- 38 Material related to Memphis State University M-Club Alumni Association Hall of

- Fame banquet held October 14, 1977, and other M-Club Alumni events.
- 39 Program: Distinguished Alumni Awards Banquet held by the Memphis State University National Alumni Association, 1980 November 6. Robison was one of the awardees along with Flora Rawls and Cecil Humphreys. Also clipping.
- 40 Robison's handwritten notes for speeches, events and dates unknown.
- 41 Photographs, 1915-1966 and undated. R.M. Robison as a small child; West Tennessee State Normal School, 1915; MSC football team, 1950; Liberty Bowl luncheon, 1966; R.M. and Frances Robison, undated; R.M. Robison portrait, undated; MSU Athletic Committee 1963. Photographer: Gilbert F. Michael; J. M. Smith; R.M. Robison in office, undated.
- OS1 Robison and two female students, undated.
- 42 Clippings re: Robison, 1964-1966 and undated.
- 43 Pamphlet: "I Remember Normal" written by Dr. James A. Wallace, 1973.
- 44 Miscellaneous materials. Includes MSU football schedule token, 1969
- 45 Letter: Minnie Dickson Robison to Robert, 1941 December 28.
- Addition, 2021.**
- 46 MSC recruitment brochure, 1942.
- 47 MSC recruitment brochure, 1943.
- 48 Photograph: MSC Freshmen assembly, 1948.
- 49 Letter: C.M. Street, Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Kingsville, Tex., to Robison, 1944.
- 50 MSU Tigers football schedule napkin, 1971.
- 51 Letters (2): Mrs. Mynders, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Robison, 1944.
- 52 Clippings: re: R.M. Robison, 1942-1959 and undated.
- 53 Program: Dinner honoring Dr. Nellie Angel Smith, MSC cafeteria, 1952 May 24. Also Robison's notes for speech.
- 54 Press release: Public Relations Office, Army Air Forces Advanced Flying School, Napier Field, Dothan, Ala. To Editor, MSC Tiger Rag, re: Aviation Cadet Andrew Melvin Calhoun, 1943 July 28. Includes photograph.
- 55 MSC faculty and staff directory, 1948.
- 56 MSC: Handbook of Information for freshmen, 1942-1943, 1945-1946; Students' Handbook, circa 1948.
- 57 Program: Dedication of John Willard Brister Library, 1939 June 3.
- 58 Guest book: Dedication of Robison Hall, 1965 May 8.
- 59 Congratulations card from Bill Hendricks to Robison and Flora Rawls on having MSU dormitories named after them, 1965.
- 60 Brass door sign: "Office of the Dean"; Sign: "R.M. Robison, Executive Dean of Students".
- 61 Commencement script, 1971 August 14. First commencement Robison attended after retirement.
- 62 Joke book.
- Diaries:
- 63 1952. Pages from January, March, October-December.
- 64 1970 July.
- 65 Photographs: R.M. Robison, 1966-1982.
- 66 Photographs: Dedication of Robison and Rawls Halls, 1965 May 8; Flora Rawls and R.M. Robison, undated.

- 67 Photographs: R.M. Robison and Flora Rawls, 1965, 1970 and undated.
68 Photographs: MSC football team, 1949. Signed photograph presented to Robison;
WTSTC Training School basketball team, 1926. Robison was coach.

Box 2

unfoldered Daybooks: 1951 (miscellany notebook), 1974, 1975, 1977, 1979-1981, 1984-1986.

Separated materials

The following material has been separated from the collection and disposed of as follows:

Tiger Rag, 1937 March 18; 1938 March 31, September 20.

Transferred to University Archives Publications.

MSU pennant.

MSC commencement program, 1943.

Transferred to University Archives.