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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).

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 with 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory</th>
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<td><strong>Box 1</strong></td>
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</table>

| 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. |
| 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. |
| 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." |
| 14 | Memphis State University, 1974-1982, undated. Includes correspondence, clippings. |
16 MSU - Silver Anniversary, May 1982.
17 Class of 1957, 1982.
21 MSU University Press, October 24, 1980. J. Ralph Randolph to Robison on memoirs and audio tapes (the tapes were not donated).
29 Clippings, 1966-1967 and undated. Also sports-related items.

OS1


Artifacts   Briefcase; Garment bag; Sign: “Assistant to the President”.


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.

OS1 Robison and two female students, undated.


Addition, 2021.

MSC recruitment brochure, 1942.

MSC recruitment brochure, 1943.

Photograph: MSC Freshmen assembly, 1948.

Letter: C.M. Street, Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Kingsville, Tex., to Robison, 1944.

MSC Tigers football schedule napkin, 1971.

Letters (2): Mrs. Mynders, Chattanooga, Tenn., to Robison, 1944.


Program: Dinner honoring Dr. Nellie Angel Smith, MSC cafeteria, 1952 May 24. Also Robison’s notes for speech.


MSC faculty and staff directory, 1948.


Program: Dedication of John Willard Brister Library, 1939 June 3.


Congratulations to Robison and Flora Rawls on having MSU dormitories named after them, 1965.

Congratulations to Robison on having MSU dormitory named after him, 1965.

Brass door sign: “Office of the Dean”; Sign: “R.M. Robison, Executive Dean of Students”.


Joke book.

Diaries:

1952. Pages from January, March, October-December.

1970 July.


Photographs: Dedication of Robison and Rawls Halls, 1965 May 8; Flora Rawls and R.M. Robison, undated.


Photographs: MSC football team, 1949. Signed photograph presented to Robison; WTSTC Training School basketball team, 1926. Robison was coach.

Box 2
Buttons and badges, undated. Related to golf and other sports.


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**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.
MSU megaphone.
MSU Tiger tam.
Cardboard Tiger fan.
MSU Tiger figurine.
Transferred to University Archives.