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Manuscript Collection

Finding Aid

➤William S. Carlson Papers, 1924-1976◀
UM-14

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Provenance: William S. Carlson and Clair Carlson

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Location: 1/C/3; 2/C/3; 17/C/3; 36/A/4; Annex Oversize Cabinet 6, Drawer C

Completed by: Barbara Floyd, 1984, 1994; updated by Hannah Carter, 1994; updated by Janice Colwell, 1997; updated by Sara Mouch, November 2015

Biographical Sketch

“Experiment and explore – these should be the watchwords if we are to keep pace with a changing world,” said William S. Carlson in his inaugural address as president of the University of Toledo on June 13, 1959. With these words he began fourteen years of great change at UT.

During his fourteen-year tenure as president of the University of Toledo, William S. Carlson played a pivotal role in shaping UT into the institution it is today. More than any other president in the institution’s history, Dr. Carlson presided over monumental change. According to those who knew him and from his own words revealed in his many speeches, he did so with intelligence, insight, and idealism. And despite the pressure of leading a university that tripled in size, he remained a scholar, researching and writing about subjects ranging from the role of a municipal university to Arctic geology.

Dr. Carlson was born in Ironwood, Michigan in 1905. He attended public schools and went to the University of Michigan, where he received his bachelor (1930), master (1932), and doctor of philosophy (1937) degrees. He studied geology, and in 1928, while still an undergraduate, he participated in a more than year-long survey of Greenland organized by the University of Michigan. He led the university’s further trip there in 1930-31, a trip that inspired his first book, *Greenland Lies North*. He maintained his scholarly interest in the geology of Greenland throughout his career, returning several times to write articles on the topic for scientific journals.

His study of Greenland also led to an assignment during World War II. Carlson, a major in the Air Force, served as a specialist on the Arctic and helped to open the northern air route to Europe and to the Soviet Union through Alaska. He also established the Arctic, Desert, and Tropical Information Center, which brought together experts to advise the military on survival in such areas. He also directed air rescue operations over Greenland and saved some 40 pilots in the Arctic regions.

Carlson entered the field of academic administration as a principal at Wakefield (Michigan) High School. From there he joined the faculty of the University of Minnesota, becoming director of admissions and records. Following his service in the war, he was elected president of the University of Delaware in 1946 and president of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College in 1949. While at Vermont, he battled the state’s taxpayers over funding for the college, threatening to close down the medical school if they not approve taxes to support the institution. It was during this tenure that Carlson published one of his most widely noted articles in which he described the job of a university president as “the roughest profession”.

In January 1952, he was named second president of the State University of New York, where he presided over 22 colleges and 11 technical schools that had been organized as a state system just two years before. Melding the system together was challenging, and he often fought the trustees over whether the system was to be an “educational holding company” or the top-flight system of higher education that it is today.

Dr. Carlson was appointed president of the University of Toledo in 1958. His honeymoon with the university did not last long because of the financial problems the university faced. UT had run a large deficit and on May 14, 1959, it lost a bid for partial state support. Carlson quickly helped convince Toledo voters to pass a two-mill operating levy on October 6, 1959, which kept UT solvent.

**William S. Carlson
Papers, 1924-1976**

After the election President Carlson was partially free from the major problems which faced his predecessors. He began to focus on raising the academic standards of UT. He introduced a university-wide honors program in February 1962 and then brought the College of Law to full-time status in June 1963, which led to its accreditation in 1968. Carlson also arranged joint graduate programs with Bowling Green State University and helped many UT departments begin master and doctoral programs. These changes helped to demonstrate to the Ohio General Assembly that UT was ready to become a state university.

The battle for state aid was long. For years Toledo's city council had been trying to get the state to help fund UT, or to take over funding completely in order to free city tax money for other uses. Council was refusing to grant another tax increase for the university when the 1962 gubernatorial election brought James Rhodes and a promise of \$3.4 million to the three Ohio municipal universities: Akron, Cincinnati, and Toledo. This was the first state aid the university had ever received.

Even though this money was helpful, it could not last long and full state support was needed to keep the university a first-rate school. After much campaigning Carlson was finally successful: UT became a state school on July 1, 1967.

State support brought much physical development to the campus. In all, fifteen buildings were completed and three more started during Carlson's tenure. First there was the Student Union, in 1959, then the Engineering Science Building in 1960, Carter Hall and Snyder Memorial in 1964, the Ritter Observatory in 1967, the Biology/Chemistry building in 1968, the Health Education Center in 1969, Parks Tower in 1970, and six buildings on the Scott Park campus. Groundbreakings for the Student Union addition and Carlson Library were in 1970; the Law Center was begun in 1971.

Even though President Carlson was involved in many off-campus activities, he never forgot his most-important role at the university and was attentive to the needs of students. For example, when a handicapped student wrote Carlson complaining about access problems on campus, some of the student's suggestions were implemented immediately. And, when dormitory residents protested the quality of the food served, throwing food and blocking roads into campus, Carlson met with the leaders the next day. The service was changed with student approval for the following year.

Carlson's tenure was also important for its protection of First Amendment rights on campus. His style was to avoid heavy-handedness and talk directly with students. Protests against the war in Vietnam generally turned into protests against the ROTC and the U.S. Reserve unit stationed on campus. To quell controversy, Carlson arranged with the U.S. Department of Defense to move the reserve unit off campus. He was criticized by some Toledoans, but the action calmed campus and enabled the ROTC to continue its work.

After four students were killed on the Kent State University campus, Carlson called a three-day mourning period with optional classes and ordered all flags flown at half-mast. The deaths of two Jackson State students, however, was a different matter. He did not order any special activities and the Black Student Union blocked the doors to University Hall in protest. To appease them, Carlson promised to fund a black studies program and attempt to increase the minority enrollment.

In 1971, President Carlson announced his retirement. He was the first UT president to retire from office. In the year of the University's 100th anniversary, he stepped aside to let a younger man begin UT's new century.

William S. Carlson
Papers, 1924-1976

Dr. Carlson died on May 8, 1994 in Bellaire Bluffs, Florida, at the age of 88.

**William S. Carlson
Papers, 1924-1976**

Scope and Content Note

The personal papers of William S. Carlson supplement the official records of the President's Office during his tenure. The collection dates from 1924 to 1976, and is arranged into the following series: Pre-1958 Activities; Correspondence; Speeches; General Subjects; North Central Accreditation Activities; Manuscripts/Publication Materials; and Photographs/Videotapes.

The Pre-1958 materials include articles, letters, reports, and programs regarding Carlson's terms of service at the State University of New York, the universities of Vermont, Delaware, and Minnesota, as well as some information relating to his activities prior to his career in higher education.

In the Correspondence section are letters to and from Carlson's military and business associates, and his friends and acquaintances. Notable files are those on Rockwell Kent, Lowell Thomas, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s secretary, and Supreme Court Justices Warren Burger, Potter Stewart, and William Brennan. These files are listed alphabetically; the rest of the correspondence is arranged chronologically.

The Speeches series center on the topic of higher education and research, academic freedom, and the problems of universities in general.

General Subjects include Arctic information, awards, athletic materials, student groups' information, and personal documents such as insurance.

Reports written for the North Central Accreditation Association are arranged chronologically, from 1962 to 1970.

The Manuscripts/Publication series reflects Carlson's experience in northern exploration, his military background, and his monographs on higher education. Included are drafts of monographs, most unpublished, on Greenland, the Arctic, and higher education.

Most of the photographs document Carlson's stay in Alaska during World War II. They include aerial views of geological formations and military camps, views of day-to-day operations, and shots of plane wreckage.

Folder List

Box	Folder	Item Description
		S1. PRE-1958 ACTIVITIES
1	1	University of Minnesota, 1941-1946
1	2	University of Delaware, Athletics, 1948
1	3	University of Delaware, General, 1946-1950
1	4	University of Delaware, Retirement Speech, 1950
1	5	University of Vermont, Athletics, 1949-1951
1	6	University of Vermont, Guidance and Personnel, 1952
1	7	University of Vermont, Inaugural Address, 1950-1951
1	8	University of Vermont, News Clippings, 1945-1952
1	9	University of Vermont, Speeches, 1950
1	10	Air Force Base: Maxwell Commencement, 1953-1956
1	11	SUNY, American Council on Education, 1955-1956
1	12	SUNY, Authors Club, 1954-1957
1	13	SUNY, Farm and Home Week, Cornell, 1953
1	14	SUNY, Fraternities, 1955-1956
1	15	SUNY, General, 1958-1970
2	1	SUNY, Correspondence, March 1954
2	2	SUNY, Correspondence, April 1954
2	3	SUNY, Correspondence, May 1954
2	4	SUNY, Correspondence, June 1954
2	5	SUNY, Correspondence, July/August 1954
2	6	SUNY, Correspondence, September 1954
2	7	SUNY, Correspondence, October 1954
2	8	SUNY, Correspondence, November 1954
2	9	SUNY, Correspondence, December 1954
2	10	SUNY, Correspondence, January/February 1955
2	11	SUNY, Correspondence, March 1955
2	12	SUNY, Correspondence, April 1955
2	13	SUNY, Correspondence, May 1955
2	14	SUNY, Correspondence, June 1955
2	15	SUNY, Correspondence, July/August 1955
2	16	SUNY, Correspondence, September/October 1955
2	17	SUNY, Correspondence, November/December, 1955
2	18	SUNY, Correspondence, January 1956
2	19	SUNY, Correspondence, February 1956
2	20	SUNY, Correspondence, March 1956
2	21	SUNY, Correspondence, April 1956
2	22	SUNY, Correspondence, May/June 1956
2	23	SUNY, Correspondence, July/August 1956
2	24	SUNY, Correspondence, September 1956
2	25	SUNY, Correspondence, October 1956
2	26	SUNY, Correspondence, November 1956

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2	27	SUNY, Correspondence, December 1956
3	1	SUNY, Correspondence, January 1957
3	2	SUNY, Correspondence, February 1957
3	3	SUNY, Correspondence, March 1957
3	4	SUNY, Correspondence, April 1957
3	5	SUNY, Correspondence, May 1957
3	6	SUNY, Correspondence, June 1957
3	7	SUNY, Correspondence, July/August 1957
3	8	SUNY, Correspondence, September 1957
3	9	SUNY, Correspondence, October 1957
3	10	SUNY, Correspondence, November 1957
3	11	SUNY, Correspondence, December 1957
3	12	SUNY, Correspondence, January-August 1958
3	13	SUNY, Correspondence, Miscellaneous 1954-1957
3	14	SUNY, "Higher Education in NY", 1956
3	15	SUNY, Medical Education Speeches, 1952-1956
3	17	SUNY, News Clippings, 1952-1962
3	18	SUNY, Public Administration Programs, 1955
3	19	SUNY, "Relationship of the U. and Research", 1954
3	20	SUNY, Secondary Education, 1956-1958
3	21	SUNY, Speeches (1), 1952-1957
3	22	SUNY, Speeches (2), 1952-1957
3	23	SUNY, Teachers and Teaching, 1950-1955
3	24	SUNY, Supreme Court, 1954
3	25	Greenland Trip, 1956-1974
3	26	Air University, Board of Visitors, 1951-1952

S2. CORRESPONDENCE

3	27	Academic Freedom Study, 1951-1955
3	28	Air University, 1951-1956
3	29	Air Force, 1941-1958
3	30	American Institute for the Tropics, 1953-1954
3	31	Button, Daniel E., 1972
3	32	Fever, Lewis, 1982
3	33	Kent, Rockwell, 1960-1970
3	34	King, Dr. Martin Luther, Jr., 1967
3	35	Loeb, William, 1958
3	36	Stanton, Frank, 1952
3	37	Supreme Court Justice, 1971
3	38	Thomas, Lowell, 1961
3	39	General, pre-1958
3	40	General, 1958-1959
3	41	General, 1960-1961
3	42	General, 1962
3	43	General, 1963-1967

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3	45	General, 1969
3	46	General, 1970
3	47	General, January-May 1971
3	48	General, June-September 1971
3	49	General, October-December 1971
4	1	General, January-April 1972
4	2	General, May-July 1972
4	3	General, August-December 1972
4	4	General, 1973-1990
4	5	General, undated

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4	6	Academic Freedom, 1964
4	7	Alumni Meetings and Relations, 1964-1966
4	8	“Are Students Interested in a Business Career?”, 1971
4	9	Capital Improvements at UT, 1972
4	10	Centennial of UT, 1972
4	11	Changes in Today’s World, 1969
4	12	The Christmas I Remember Best, undated
4	13	Civil Rights, 1967
4	14	Civil War Centennial Commission, 1962
4	15	College Admissions Counseling, 1958
4	16	Commencement Speeches, 1966-1968
4	17	Community and Technical College, 1967
4	18	The Draft and Vietnam, 1967-1968
4	19	Education: Community Contribution to UT, 1971
4	20	Education: General (1), 1960-1966
4	21	Education: General (2), 1958-1968
5	1	Education: Opportunities, 1959-1966
5	2	Education: Personal Income, 1960-1963
5	3	Education: Priorities, 1958-1961
5	4	Education: Purposes (1), 1963-1968
5	5	Education: Purposes (2), 1961-1964
5	6	Education: Relationship Between Secondary..., 1957-1960
5	7	Education: Science, 1958-1967
5	8	Education: State Aid, 1957-1960
5	9	Education: Teachers and Teaching, 1958-1970
5	10	Education: What Higher Education Should Do, 1961
5	11	“Education: For What?”, 1964-1966
5	12	Environment, 1963-19970
5	13	Faculty Dinners and Meetings, 1959-1970
5	14	Fraternities, 1967
6	1	Freshman Reception, 1958-1972
6	2	“The Gospel of Work”, 1958
6	3	Greenland and the Arctic, 1958-1968

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6	4	The Handicapped, 1959-1967
6	5	“Higher Education in Ohio”, 1971
6	6	Importance of Higher Education, 1971
6	7	Introductions, Welcomes, and Dedications (1), 1964-1975
6	8	Introductions, Welcomes, and Dedications (2), 1958-1963
6	9	University of Delaware Inauguration, 1946
6	10	“Leadership – To Where?”, 1959
6	11	Levies and Taxes for UT, 1959-1966
6	12	Liberal Arts and Tradition, 1966
6	13	“A Meaning of Education”, 1960
6	14	Medical Problems in Arctic Exploration, 1959
6	15	Medical School, 1963-1965
6	16	The Municipal University and Commuter Students, 1962
6	17	North Central Accreditation Association, 1962
6	18	Notes and Speech Parts (1), undated
6	19	Notes and Speech Parts (2), 1961-1966
7	1	“Our First Line of Defense”, 1964
7	2	“Patience”, undated
7	3	Police Academy Graduation, 1958-1959
7	4	Pre-1958 Speeches
7	5	President’s Message, undated
7	6	Press and Higher Education, 1959
7	7	Religion in Public Universities, 1951-1966
7	8	Research in the University, 1959
7	9	“60 Now” Retirement, 1964
7	10	“Society’s Stake in Higher Education”, 1972
7	11	“State Financial Assistance...”, 1960
7	12	Statement of UT Policy: 1964 Campaign
7	13	Student Unrest, 1965-1969
7	14	Toledo, Spain, 1961-1965
7	15	UT’s Contribution to Toledo, 1961-1970
7	16	UT in the Future, 1961-1967
7	17	UT to State Institution, 1965-1966
7	18	“What’s in a Name?”, 1967
7	19	“What’s the Matter with Kids Today?”, 1966-1967
7	20	“Who Should Be Admitted to UT?”, 1958

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7	21	Admissions, 1960-1971
7	22	Affiliations, 1969-1972
7	23	Alumni Affairs, 1959-1972
7	24	Arctic Information (1), 1926-1972
7	25	Arctic Information (2), 1926-1972
7	26	Arctic: Rockwell Kent signed catalog, 1964
7	27	Arctic: Surveying Notes, 1931

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8	1	Arctic, undated
8	2	Arctic: William Hobbs, 1908-1959
8	3	Arthritis Foundation, 1972
8	4	Athletics, 1961-1973
8	5	Awards, Honorary Member, etc., 1945-1971
8	6	Brickbats and Bouquets, 1958-1970
8	7	Congratulations on UT Presidency, 1958
8	8	Hall of Fame, 1965, 1970-1972
8	9	Insurance, 1958-1970
8	10	Kris, 1958-1967
8	11	Medicare, 1971-1972
8	12	Ohio Civil War Centennial Commission, 1959-1965
8	13	Proposal for Recruiting Business and Professionals, undated
8	14	Receipts, 1963-1972
8	15	Research Interests, 1970-1973
8	16	Retirement, 1958-1972
8	17	ROTC, 1969-1972
8	18	Student Groups, 1959-1969
8	19	"This I Believe" Schedule, 1954-1955
8	20	Undated Miscellany
8	21	University of Michigan, 1966-1972

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9	1	Bluefield State College, 1966-1969
9	2	Central Michigan University, 1962-1963
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9	5	Metropolitan State College of Colorado, 1968
9	6	Michigan Technical University, 1969
9	7	Northern Illinois University, 1962
9	8	Roosevelt University, 1966-1968
9	9	Shepard College, 1966-1968
9	10	Southern State College, 1967
9	11	Southwest Minnesota State College, 1965-1970
9	12	State College of Iowa, 1963
9	13	Valparaiso University, 1962
9	14	West Virginia University, 1964

S7. MANUSCRIPTS/PUBLICATIONS MATERIAL

9	15	The Arctic, Draft 1, Introduction to Chapter 2
9	16	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapters 3 to 4
9	17	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapters 5 to 6
9	18	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapters 7 to 8
9	19	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapters 9 to 10

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9	20	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapter 11
10	1	The Arctic, Draft 1, Chapter 13 (chapter 12 missing)
10	2	The Arctic, Draft 2, Introduction to Chapter 2
10	3	The Arctic, Draft 2, Chapters 3 to 4
10	4	The Arctic, Draft 2, Chapters 5 to 6
10	5	The Arctic, Draft 2, Chapters 7 to 8
10	6	The Arctic, Draft 2, Chapters 9 to 10
10	7	The Arctic, Draft 2, Chapters 11 to 13
10	8	Greenland Diary, 6/1/1928-9/13/1928
10	9	Greenland Diary, 9/14/1928-4/12/1929
10	10	Greenland Diary, 11/28/1928-1/27/1929
10	11	Greenland Diary, 1/28/1929-4/12/1929
11	1	Greenland Diary, 7/29/1930-8/31/1930
11	2	Greenland Diary, 9/1/1930-11/15/1930
11	3	Greenland Diary, 11/16/1930-2/11/1930
11	4	Greenland Diary, 2/12/1931-4/6/1931
11	5	No Mean Victory, Section 1, pp. 2-59
11	6	No Mean Victory, Section 1, pp. 60-113
11	7	No Mean Victory, Section 1, pp. 114-168
11	8	No Mean Victory, Section 1, pp. 169-199
11	9	No Mean Victory, Section 2, pp. 200-241
11	10	No Mean Victory, Section 2, pp. 242-306
11	11	No Mean Victory, Section 2, pp. 307-360
11	12	No Mean Victory, Section 2, pp. 361-412
11	13	Northern Lights
12	1	The Quill Pigs, Draft 1, Chapters 1-8
12	2	The Quill Pigs, Draft 1, Chapters 9-17
12	3	The Quill Pigs, Draft 2, Chapters 1-9
12	4	The Quill Pigs, Draft 2, Chapters 10-17
12	5	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 1-2
12	6	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 3-4
12	7	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 5-7
12	8	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 8-11
12	9	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 12-14
12	10	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 15-20
12	11	The Roughest Profession, Draft 2, Chapters 1-10
12	12	The Roughest Profession, Draft 2, Chapters 11-20
12	13	The Roughest Profession, Chapters 5, 15, 18
12	14	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 1-2
12	15	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 3-4
12	16	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 5-7
12	17	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 8
12	18	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 12-14
13	1	The Roughest Profession, Working Papers, Chapters 15-20
13	2	The Roughest Profession, Miscellaneous Working Papers
13	3	The Roughest Profession, Miscellaneous Working Papers

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13	4	Articles by Carlson, 1949-1970
13	5	Greenland Lies North, reviews, 1940-1941, 1955
13	6	“The Rumors Persist”, 1988
13	7	Lifelines Through the Arctic, correspondence, 1958-1967
13	8	Lifelines Through the Arctic, correspondence, 1958-1967
13	9	Lifelines Through the Arctic, proofs, introduction
13	10	Lifelines Through the Arctic, proofs, chapters 3-20
13	11	Lifelines Through the Arctic, proofs, chapters 22-25
14	1	The Municipal University, correspondence, 1960-1964
14	2	The Municipal University, correspondence, 1960-1964
14	3	Publications Correspondence, general, 1958-1961
14	4	Copyright permissions, 1961-1962
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S8. PHOTOGRAPHS

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14	11	World War II Eskimo village
14	12	World War II harbor scenes
14	13	World War II Kiska camp
14	14	World War II plane wreckage
14	15	World War II military subjects, miscellaneous
15	1	Arctic slide show, 1930-1971
15	2	Arctic slide show, 1930-1971
15	3	Arctic slide show, 1930-19971
15	4	William S. Carlson, presidential duties and retirement
15	5	Related to receiving citations and degrees

S9. VIDEOTAPES

15	6	Revisiting Greenland expeditions with WSC interview
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S10. MEMORABILIA – DEGREES, CITATIONS AND AWARDS

16	1	Sigma Gamma Epsilon (University of Kansas), 1927
16	2	Explorers Club certificate, 1929
16	3	Diploma, University of Michigan, 1938
16	4	Sigma Xi certificate, 1941
16	5	Phi Delta Phi Certificate (University of Michigan), 1948
16	6	Omicron Delta Kappa certificate, 1949
16	7	Honorary Doctor of Laws (University of Delaware), 1950
16	8	Diploma, Middlebury College, 1951

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16	9	Air Force certificate, 1952
17	1	Air University plaque, 1952
17	2	Honorary Doctor of Science degree, 1953
17	3	Honorary Doctor of Laws degree (University of Michigan), 1953
17	4	Tau Phi Sigma certificate (SUNY), 1953
17	5	American University in Israel citation, 1955
17	6	Explorers Club certificate, 1959
17	7	Phi Delta Phi certificate, 1959
17	8	Tau Beta Phi (Engineering & Science), 1959
17	9	Beta Gamma Sigma fraternity certificate, 1961
17	10	Pershing Rifles certificate, 1961
17	11	Beta Epsilon certificate, 1961
17	12	Phi Eta Fraternity certificate, 1961
17	13	Honorary Degree (Bowling Green State University), 1964
17	14	Reception Book, University of Toledo Alumni, 1967
17	15	B'nai B'rith citation, 1967
17	16	Explorers Club citation, 1969
17	17	Honorary Degree citation, University of Cincinnati, 1970
17	18	Honorary Degree scrapbook, re: University of Cincinnati, 1970
17	19	President Emeritus resolution, 1972
17	20	Honorary Doctor of Arts & Letters (UT), 1972
17	21	Outstanding Teacher Award (UT), 1972
17	22	Diploma Books (2)
17	23	Sigma Xi plaque, 1972
17	24	Gold & Blue T award plaque (UT)
17	25	UT Department of Intercollegiate Athletics plaque
17	26	UT Student Appreciation plaque, 1972
17	27	Department of the Army – Civilian Service Medal, 1972
17	28	Phi Kappa Phi plaque
17	29	Honorary degree (University of Cincinnati), 1970
18	n/a	Ironwood High School diploma, June 12, 1924