

Robert Richardson Coker, 1905 - 1987

A Register of His Papers, 1888 - 1988

Overview of Collection

Creator:	Coker, Robert Richardson, 1905 - 1987
Collection Number:	Mss 297
Title:	Robert Richardson Coker Papers, 1888 - 1988
Abstract:	Robert Richardson Coker had a distinguished career as a leader in agriculture and business and served as a life trustee of Clemson University. The correspondence, memos, minutes, newspaper clippings and other materials relate to his participation as a member of the Board of Trustees and various matters that came to its attention.
Quantity:	8.2 cubic feet consisting of 17 document boxes, 2 folders of photographs and one oversize folder

Scope and Content Note

The papers include correspondence, a blueprint, memos, minutes, newspaper clippings and reports all related to Clemson University.

The papers date from 1888 – 1988 with the bulk of material from 1972 – 1987.

The papers document Coker's service as a member of the Clemson Board of Trustees, 1960-1987. During this period, Clemson became a University, integrated, and doubled its enrollment. His expertise as a businessman and agriculturalist can be found in papers related to the building of the new agricultural building, Poole Agricultural Building; the Foundation Seed Association; and Clemson University's Extension Services and Experiment Stations. Coker served during the period when Clemson experienced a number of controversies connected with the Athletic Department and this is reflected in the papers. Also documented in the papers is Coker's actively engagement in the Board's work with Institutional Advancement and established the Robert and Lois Coker Chair of Molecular Genetics. As a member of the Board of Trustees, he was in communication with other Board members including Louis Batson, Edgar Brown, Paul McAlister and James Self as well as senior administrators such as Bill Atchley, Hugh Clausen, Robert C. Edwards, and Joseph McDevitt.

Additional Collection Information

Cite as: [description of item such as "Letter from John Smith, Clemson, SC to Michael Jones, Columbia, SC"], box number, folder number, Mss 297, Robert Richardson Coker Papers, Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, SC.

Biographical Note

Robert Richardson Coker was born September 6, 1905 in Hartsville, South Carolina, the son of David Robert Coker and Jessie Ruth Richardson Coker. Educated in Hartsville public schools, he first graduated in 1924 from Webb School in Bell Buckle Tennessee and in 1928 received a B.A. from the University of South Carolina. After graduation, he began working for Coker's Pedigreed Seed Company, the firm his father founded in 1902. During the following decade, he assumed responsibilities for sales and became a member of the board of directors of the Company. In 1951 he was named President of the firm, a position that he held until its sale in 1978 to the German agricultural seed firm KWS. Under his direction, Coker Pedigreed Seed became a leader in the breeding of seed varieties for the South's major crops.

In 1944, Coker helped to found the South Carolina Farm Bureau and served as its first president. He was active in a wide variety of local, state and national farm organizations, paying particular attention to the promotion of cotton and the eradication of the boll weevil. He served as member of the National Agricultural Advisory Commission, 1953; president of National Council of Plant Breeders, 1959-1960; director Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, 1962-1968; and president National Cotton Council, 1963. Coker had an active interest in education serving as an *ex officio* member of the State Commission on Higher Education, 1967 and as a Life Trustee of Clemson University, 1960-1987. He received numerous awards, including honorary degree from Clemson in 1955 and the Clemson Medallion in 1985.

Restrictions

There is one box of material restricted because it has personnel records.

Related Material

Mss 75 Bill Atchley Papers

University Archives Series 11, 12, 13 Office of the President, Robert C. Edwards Records

University Archives Series 19 Office of the President, Bill Atchley Records

University Archives Series 20 Office of the President, Bill Atchley Records

University Archives Series 30 Board of Trustees Records

Subjects

Clemson University—Administration

Clemson University—Athletics

Clemson University—College of Agricultural Sciences

Clemson University—Board of Trustees

Clemson University—History

College sports—South Carolina

Correspondents

Atchley, B. L. (Bill Lee)
Batson, Louis Pinckney
Brown, Edgar A. (Edgar Allan), 1888-1975
Clausen, Hugh, 1926-
Edwards, R. C. (Robert Cook), 1914-
McAlister, Paul W.
McDevitt, Joseph B., 1918-
Self, James C. 1943

Document Types

Blueprint

Administrative Information

Acquired from:

Mrs. Lois Coker accession 88-89; Jane Lee accession 02-64.

Processing Information

Michael Kohl prepared the finding aid in 2007-2008 with processing help from student assistant, Deanna Panetta.

SEPARATION LIST

Oversize Folder

1 36"x54" drawing of Proposed Agricultural Building Program at Clemson Agricultural College for the State of South Carolina, by Hopkins, Baker & Gill and William G. Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, & Wolff, 1952.

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	
1	1	Agricultural Building Program, 1952, no date	
	2	Anderson, Luther P. Retirement Letter, 1986	
	3-4	Atchley, Bill	
		1983-1985, no date	
	5	Atchley/McLellan Controversy	
	6	1985	
	7	Newspaper Clippings, 1985-1986, no date	
	8	Reorganizational Change, 1985	
	SCN Directorship, 1979-1980		
	Athletics		
	9	1979- January 1983	
2	1	February 1983- 1987, no date	
	2-3	Controversies, 1982- 1986, no date	
	4	Correspondence, 1985, no date	
	5	Drug Problem, 1985	
	6	Football, 1984	
	7	NCAA Probation, 1982-1983, no date	
	8	Publicity, 1982-1983	
	3	1	Barker, James F, 1986
2		Barnette, Melvin E, 1986	
	Board of Trustees		
	3-10	1972- August 1979	
4	1-4	September 1979- 1987, no date	
	5	Chairmen, 1979-1980, no date	
	6	Chairman Nominations, 1981-1982	
	7	Desegregation Plan, 1981-1985	
	8	Development Committee, 1984, no date	
	9	Executive Committee, 1983	
		Life Trustees	
		10	1888-1976
		11	Batson, Louis P. Jr, 1979-1988
	5	1	Britton, Dr. J.J, 1982- 1986
2		Byrnes, James F, 1967-1980	
		Coker, Robert R.	
3		1960, 1985-1987, no date	
4		Clemson Degree, 1955	
5		Gamma Sigma Delta 1956-1987	
6		Retirement, 1987	
7		Derrick, Fletcher C. Jr, 1981-1987	
8		Deschamps, W. G. Jr, 1977-1985	
9		Geiger, William N. Jr, 1979-1986	
10		McAlister, Paul W, 1974-1987	
11	McTeer, Thomas B. Jr, 1981-1985		

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>
	12	Mickel, Buck, 1982-1987 Self, Jim
	13	1969- 1984
6	1	1985- 1987, no date
	2	Waddell, James M. Jr, 1980-1985
		Meetings
	3-7	July 20, 1979- April 8, 1983
7	1-8	July 22, 1983- January 25, 1985
8	1-11	March 24, 1985- July19, 1986
9	1-6	September 12, 1986- September 18, 1987
	7	Personnel, Names and Addresses 1974-1986, no date
	8	Trustee Candidates and Nominees 1975-1986, no date
	9	Board of Visitors, 1979-1987, no date
10		Brown, Edgar A.
	1	1962-1975
	2	Edgar Brown Day, 1970
		Budget and Finance Committee
	3	1986
	4-5	Meetings, 1986-1987
	6	Building Science Master's Program, 1985
	7	Campbell, Robert S, 1986
	7A	Certificates, Diploma, 1955, 1964, 1987 Clausen, Major General Hugh J.
	8-10	1985- April 1987
11	1	May- December 1987 Clemson University
	2-6	1932- 1973
12	1-4	1974- 1987, no date
	5	Centennial, 1984-1987, no date
	6	Civil Rights, 1981
	7	Commencement and Honorary Degrees 1984-1986, no date
	8	Medallion, 1987
13	1	Cox, Walter T, 1978, 1985-1986
	2	Development Committee, 1983, no date
	3	Director of Extension Services Search Committee 1984, no date
4		Educational Policy Committee, 1979, 1983-1987
	5	Edwards, Robert C, 1972-1980
	6	Elam, J. Donald, 1984-1986
	7	Extension Services and Company Agents 1972-1977, no date
	8	Farmer's Market Proposal, 1982- 1983
	9	Fleming, Dr. Horace W, 1981-1987, no date Foundation Seed
	10	1971- August 1979
14	1-2	September 1979- 1980, no date
	3-4	Foundation Seed Association, 1975-1982

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	
14	5	Founder's Society, 1984-1988, no date	
	6	Gamma Sigma Delta Awards Banquet, 1986-1987	
	7	Graham, James A, 1980-1982	
		Institutional Advancement Committee	
	8-9	1984-1988, no date	
	10	Joint Meeting with Student Affairs Committee, December 1985	
	11	Jennett, J. Charles, 1985-1986	
	15	1	Larson, Dr. David R, 1986-1987, no date
		2	Lewis, Walter K. Jr, 1982, 1985-1987, no date
		3	Lomax, Manning N, 1986-1987
		4	Loyalty Fund, 1986
5		Maxwell, W. David, 1981-1987, no date	
		McDevitt, Joseph B.	
6-8		1980-1986	
9		Replacement Search Committee, 1985	
10		McGee, James G. Jr, 1981-1985	
11		Multi-purpose Livestock Arena, 1985-1986	
12		PeeDee Station, 1979, no date	
13		Pitner, Dr. John B. Retirement Dinner, 1986	
14		Planning Committee, 1985-1987	
		President Election	
15		1979	
16	1	1985-1986, no date	
	2	President's Statewide Advisory Group, 1980-1981	
	3	Pridgen, Margaret, 1983-1986	
	4	Provost, 1980	
	5	Robert and Lois Coker Chair in Molecular Genetics 1987-1988	
	6	Seed Certification, 1980, 1985	
	7	Senn, Dr. Louis H, 1985- 1986	
	8	Smith, Broadus Marion, 1973, 1985-1987	
	9	SRC Research, 1984, no date	
	10	State Auditor's Report, 1983, 1987	
		Strom Thurmond Institute	
	11-12	Fundraising Dinner, 1985, no date	
	13	Groundbreaking Ceremony, 1985	
	14	Student Affairs Committee, 1981-1987, no date	
	15	Wise, Milton B, 1987	

RESTRICTED

1	1	Clemson University Employee Grievance Brown, Carolyn 1982-1983
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