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Nancy Wechsler papers 10391992

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Summary	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	7
Collection Inventory	7
Series I: Columbia Law School	7
Series II: Government Work	8
Series III: Professional Organizations	8
Series IV: Correspondence	9
Series V: Writings	9
Series VI: Subject Files	10
Series VII: Legal Work	10
Sub-Series A: Open Files	10
Sub-Series B: Closed Files	11
Series VIII: Oversized Documents	11

Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Wechsler, Nancy
Title:	Nancy Wechsler Papers
ID:	10391992
ID:	MS#1676
Date [inclusive]:	1935-2007
Physical Description:	3 linear feet 4 document boxes and 1 flat box
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Nancy Wechsler Papers collects a portion of the work and interests of lawyer Nancy Wechsler. The collection holds her writings, work with professional organizations, correspondence, and work with several government organizations including accusations pertaining to her loyalty while doing this work. Of particular note are the oral histories Wechsler gave and the memoir she wrote detailing her family's history, Communist experience, legal work, and public affairs. The oral histories and memoir also cover her civil rights work and work as a copyright and intellectual property lawyer. The collection also contains Wechsler's FOIA file.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Nancy Wechsler Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Nancy F. Wechsler began her studies at Columbia's Law School in 1937, just 10 years after women were first admitted. She was awarded both a James Kent Scholarship and the John

Ordronaux Prize in recognition of her academic achievement and graduated in 1940. She went on to become one of the first women admitted to the New York State bar.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Wechsler worked for several federal agencies after graduating from Columbia. After spending some time with the Department of Labor's Office of Price Administration, in 1946 Wechsler became the counsel to President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights. Civil Liberties had long been a topic close to Wechsler as her father, Osmond K. Fraenkel, was a prominent member of the American Civil Liberties Union's general counsel for many years. Both would later serve together on the board of the New York Civil Liberties Union. While working for the government Wechsler faced accusations of Communist involvement and divided loyalty. She would later defend some cases of individuals accused of similar loyalty questions.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Wechsler later joined the firm of Greenbaum, Wolf & Ernst in 1948 where she built a career of cases involving libel, obscenity, and right of publicity for authors, publishers, and literary estates. Among her clients were Robert F. Kennedy and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

The firm also represented the Planned Parenthood Federation of America which involved Wechsler in cases involving contraception and abortion. She co-wrote amicus curiae briefs in the cases of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (wherein the Supreme Court recognized a right to privacy in striking down a law that banned the prescription or sale of contraceptives) and *Roe v. Wade*. These opinions are reflected primarily in the histories/memoirs and articles by Wechsler in the collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Nancy Wechsler died in New York City after suffering a stroke in 2009. She was survived by a daughter and three grandchildren.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Summary

The Nancy Wechsler Papers collects a portion of the work and interests of lawyer Nancy Wechsler. The collection holds her writings, work with professional organizations, correspondence, and work with several government organizations including accusations pertaining to her loyalty while doing this work. Of particular note are the oral histories Wechsler gave and the memoir she wrote detailing her family's history, Communist experience, legal work, and public affairs. The oral histories and memoir also cover her civil rights work and work as a copyright and intellectual property lawyer. The collection also contains Wechsler's FOIA file.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Material is arranged into 8 series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2013-10-02 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

Some files are closed due to privacy and confidentiality issues.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Columbia Law School holds the literary rights for the majority of the collection. Copyright of the remainder is held by the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

2013.2014.M031: Source of acquisition--Diamond Law Library Special Collections. Method of acquisition--Transfer; Date of acquisition--07/24/2013.

Ownership and Custodial History

Documents created or obtained by Nancy Fraenkel Wechsler donated by the Wechsler family in September 2010.

Processing Information

Papers processed Craig P. Savino with assistance from Virginia Millington 2010.

Processing Information

Finding aid written Craig P. Savino 2010.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Abortion -- Law and legislation
- Censorship
- Civil rights -- History
- Loyalty oaths
- Obscenity (Law)
- Wages -- Government policy
- Articles
- Correspondence
- Drafts (documents)
- Manuscripts (documents)
- Memorandums
- Research notes
- Poems
- Wechsler, James A (James Arthur), 1915-1983

Collection Inventory

Series I: Columbia Law School, 1937-1965, 1937-1965

Scope and Contents

Series I: Columbia Law School contains some of the notes and collected items from Nancy Wechsler's time studying at Columbia's Law School.

Title/Description	Instances	
Law School Association: Certificate of Life Membership, Undated	box 1	folder 1
Law School Notebook, 1937-1940	box 1	folder 2
25th Anniversary Yearbook, Class of 1940, 1965	box 1	folder 3

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series II: Government Work, 1942-1959**Scope and Contents**

Series II: Government Work contains the notes and research Wechsler used at different government posts, in particular the Office of Price Administration and the President's Committee on Civil Rights. Also within this series are some of the documents pertaining to Wechsler's questioned loyalty while working for the federal government.

Title/Description	Instances	
General: Loyalty Questions, 1943-1953; 1959	box 1	folder 4
Office of Price Administration: Appointment, 1942-1948	box 1	folder 5
Office of Price Administration: Loyalty Questions: FBI interview, 1947	box 1	folder 6
Office of Price Administration: Wage Stabilization, Undated	box 1	folder 7
Office of Price Administration: Wage Stabilization: Notes, handwritten, Undated	box 1	folder 8
Office of Price Administration: Wage Stabilization: "Some Comments on a Proposal to Freeze Wage Rates," Memorandum & notes, 1942	box 1	folder 9
Office of Price Administration: Work Stoppages in the U.S., 1916-1946, Undated	box 1	folder 10
President's Committee on Civil Rights	box 1	folder 11
President's Committee on Civil Rights: Loyalty Questions re: Young Communist League Involvement, 1951	box 1	folder 12

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series III: Professional Organizations, 1972-1997**Scope and Contents**

Series III: Professional Organizations contains accumulated documents from Wechsler's involvement with professional groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Law Institute.

Title/Description	Instances	
ACLU: National Board Election, 1984-1986	box 1	folder 13
Special Committee on Board Diversity, 1983-1984	box 1	folder 14
American Law Institute: Membership, 1972	box 1	folder 15
American Law Institute: Membership Certificate, 1997	box 1	folder 16
Century Association, 1988-1990	box 1	folder 17
Professional Corporation, 1981-1984	box 1	folder 18

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series IV: Correspondence, 1969-1997

Scope and Contents

Series IV: Correspondence contains primarily personal correspondence of Wechsler's.

Title/Description	Instances	
Johnson, David B., 1994-1997	box 2	folder 1
Osmond Frankel death condolences, 1983	box 2	folder 2
Personal, 1969-1981	box 2	folder 3
Personal, 1984-1999	box 2	folder 4
Personal: re: death of son Michael, 1969	box 2	folder 5
Personal: re: New Yorker article (Sept. 13, 1993), 1993-1994	box 2	folder 6

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series V: Writings, 1940-2007

Scope and Contents

Series V: Writings contains Wechsler's memoir accounting her family, life, and work. The series contains Wechsler's articles on the law, teenage sexuality, abortions, and censorship and obscenity. This series also contains drafts of *In A Darkness*, an account of the life and suicide of Nancy's son Michael, co-written by Nancy and her husband James.

Title/Description	Instances	
Articles, Undated; 1971-1980	box 2	folder 7
American Jewish Yearbook article on "Civil Liberties": Correspondence & Draft, 1951	box 2	folder 8
Censorship/Obscenity, 1973-74	box 2	folder 9
In a Darkness: A Story of Young Suicide: correspondence, Undated	box 2	folder 10
In a Darkness: A Story of Young Suicide (draft manuscript), Undated	box 2	folder 11
Letters to the Editor: "Di and Li," (New Yorker, Sept. 1993) re: Diana Trilling & the Scottsboro case, 1993	box 2	folder 12
Letter to the Editor: "The Rosenbergs: New Evidence, Old Passions (NY Times, Sept. 23, 1983): re: Osmond Fraenkel, 1983	box 2	folder 13

Memoir, draft, 2007	box 2	folder 14
"New York Magazine" Profile, 1976	box 3	folder 1
Poems, 1965	box 3	folder 2
Reviews: General, 1973	box 3	folder 3
Reviews: "Abortion II: Making the Revolution", 1973	box 3	folder 4
Unidentified manuscript, handwritten, Undated, 1940	box 3	folder 5

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VI: Subject Files, 1935-2001

Scope and Contents

Series IV: Subject Files contains the FOIA files on Wechsler obtained from the FBI. This series also contains Oral Histories Wechsler has given to Columbia University's Oral History department and some items of Ephemera.

Title/Description	Instances	
Ephemera: White House invitation & Inauguration tickets, 1947, 1949	box 3	folder 6
Ephemera: Columbia University Student Anti-War Movement: Pamphlet, "University Against War," Vol. II, No. 2, 1935	box 3	folder 7
FOIA File No. 77-28216, 1943	box 3	folder 8
FOIA File: No. 121-4005, 1948	box 3	folder 9
FOIA File: Request Correspondence, 1981-1995	box 3	folder 10
Oral History: Columbia University History Research Office: Law School Alumnae Oral History Project, 2001	box 3	folder 11
Oral History: Columbia University Oral History Research Office, 2000	box 3	folder 12

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VII: Legal Work

Scope and Contents

Series VII: Legal Work contains documents related to Wechsler's work in law including briefs, correspondence, and memorandum. Some of this series is closed due to privacy and confidentiality.

Sub-Series A: Open Files, 1940-1967

Title/Description	Instances	
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Briefs, 1957	box 4	folder 1
Greenbaum, Wolff and Ernst: History for 40th and 45th Anniversaries, 1960	box 4	folder 2
New York State Court of Appeals: Certificate of Admission, 1964-1967	box 4	folder 3
Supreme Court of the State of New York: Admission to the Bar, 1940	box 4	folder 4
United States Court of Appeals: Certificate of Admission, 1963	box 4	folder 5

Sub-Series B: Closed Files

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, 1974-1981	box 5	folder 1
General, 1975-1997	box 5	folder 2
Government Loyalty Cases: Lillian Kovars, 1949-1953	box 5	folder 3
Harper and Row: Kennedy Book, 1964-1967	box 5	folder 4
Kern vs. Greenbaum, 1982-1987	box 5	folder 5
Matu, Koda: <i>Cuddles</i> , 1995	box 5	folder 6
Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr.: Claim against Putnam, 1963	box 5	folder 7
Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr.: Dispute with <i>National Review</i> and Buckley, 1963	box 5	folder 8
Schom, Alan Morris: <i>Napolean Bonaparte</i> , 1997	box 5	folder 9

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series VIII: Oversized Documents

Scope and Contents

Series VIII: Oversized Documents is one oversized box holding the degrees and awards accumulated by Wechsler, particularly from Columbia's Law School.

Title/Description	Instances	
James Kent Scholarship for Distinction as a Student. Columbia University, 1938	box 6	
Ordroneaux Prize in Law for General Proficiency in Legal Study. Columbia University, 1940	box 6	
Bachelor of Law Degree. Columbia University, 1940	box 6	

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)