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William E. Petersen papers 8328524

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

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William E. Petersen, Chairman, Columbia Disturbances. July-	8

Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Petersen, William E., 1906-1985
Title:	William E. Petersen papers
ID:	8328524
ID:	UA#0163
Date:	1968 July-August
Physical Description:	.21 linear feet 1 half-sized document box
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection is comprised of one diary, personal documents, writings, and correspondence all having to do with the Columbia University Disturbances of 1968.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); William E. Petersen Papers; Box and Folder; University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

William E. Petersen was born in Brooklyn, New York on September 20, 1906. He attended high school at Erasmus Hall High School. After graduation Petersen served as an officer in the Naval Reserve during World War II.

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Biographical / Historical

Petersen attended Columbia College and was active for four years on the student newspaper "The Spectator." In his last year he served as the papers business manager, and for "The Columbian" the college year book. He was also a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, Alpha Kappa Psi, and Phi Sigma Kappa. His allegiance to Columbia University would be life long. In 1957 Petersen was awarded the Alumni Medal for conspicuous alumni service.

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Biographical / Historical

After graduation from the Columbia Graduate School of Business (1927), Petersen became associated with the Irving Trust Company (1928), where he advanced through various divisions to become senior vice president in 1957, and president in 1960. He became vice chairman in 1970.

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Biographical / Historical

At Columbia he served as Ambassador in the College Development Program (1947-1948), as Class Chairman of the Fourth College Fund (1954-1955), as a member of the Columbia College Council (1961-1965), and as Chairman of the Committee of Budget of the Council (1962-1963). Petersen also served for 10 years on the Standing Committee of the Graduate School of Business, as President of the Alumni Association of the School (1950-1952), general chairman of the Alumni Fund for Student Aid (1960-1962), member of the Advisory Committee (1961-1967), member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the Columbia University, Chairman of the Advisory Board for the forum (1961-1962), Chairman of Columbia Business Associates, and Chairman of the Alumni Major Gifts Committee as well as member of the Advanced Gifts Committee for the new Columbia-Community Gymnasium. Petersen was elected an Alumni Trustee of the University and was elected a Life Trustee in 1967 which was followed by his election as Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1968. He served as Chairman until 1978 when he retired from the Board and became Trustee Emeritus. In 1982 the Board elected him as Chairman Emeritus retroactive to October 1978.

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Biographical / Historical

It is during the period that Petersen was elected a Life Trustee of Columbia University that the Columbia Disturbances occurred. They began in early March 1967 when a student activist named Bob Feldman of the Columbia University Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) discovered documents in the International Law Library detailing Columbia's institutional affiliation with the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA). The discovery of the IDA documents touched off numerous demonstrations, ranging from anti-war to race relations. Controversial faculty members were forced to resign or left on their own behalf, most notably the President of Columbia University, Grayson Kirk. William Petersen would play an important role in rebuilding Columbia in the aftermath of the riots, especially in selecting a new president for Columbia University. His documentation of these processes forms the basis of this collection.

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Biographical / Historical

Petersen's other achievements include: being elected a member of the board of directors of West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company in September 1967, two terms as President of the Greater New York Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and honorary degrees given by Clarkson University (for which he also served as a trustee).

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Biographical / Historical

Petersen passed away in Bronxville, New York, in 1985. He was survived by his wife Sara Louise Snell Petersen and two children, William Hollis Petersen and Sara P. Buell.

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Summary

This collection is comprised of papers collected by William E. Petersen recording his role in choosing a new president for Columbia University following the Columbia Disturbances of 1968.

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Summary

The collection is comprised of one notebook, personal documents, writings, and correspondence. Most items are from the summer of 1968, following the Columbia Disturbances. There are very few that proceed these months, except for photocopies of a 1966-67 "Who's Who" (presumably for hiring purposes) and Grayson Kirk's CV (1967).

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Arrangement

The records are in one series arranged in three folders.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. XML document instance created by Catherine C. Ricciardi EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-02-10 2011-05-05 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

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.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Office of the Secretary, Marion E. Jemmott. Method of acquisition--Transfer; Date of acquisition--1985.

Processing Information

Papers processed Vanessa Cano, Pratt Institute 2011.

Processing Information

Finding aid written by Vanessa Cano January 2011.

Accrual

No additions are expected

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Related Materials

Selected Related Material-- at Columbia

[Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Records, Columbia University Archives.](#)

Selected Related Material-- at Columbia

[University Protest and Activism Collection, 1958-1999, Columbia University Archives.](#)

Selected Related Material-- at Columbia

[Police on Campus Collection, 1968, Rare Book & Manuscript Library.](#)

Selected Related Material-- at Columbia

[Temple Lilly Special Committee Records, 1968-1971, Columbia University Archives.](#)

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Controlled Access Headings

- Cordier, Andrew W (Andrew Wellington), 1901-1975
- Kirk, Grayson L. (Grayson Louis), 1903-1997
- Alumni Federation of Columbia University
- Columbia University -- Administration
- Columbia University -- Alumni and alumnae -- Societies, etc.
- Columbia University -- History
- Columbia University -- Student strike, 1968
- Columbia University -- Students
- Columbia University -- Students -- Political activity
- Columbia University. Trustees
- Students for a Democratic Society (U.S.)

Collection Inventory

William E. Petersen, Chairman, Columbia Disturbances. July-, August 1968

Title/Description	Instances	
Diary, 1968 Scope and Contents (Log of events following riots)	box 1	folder 1
Writings, 1966-1968 Scope and Contents (Collection of documents regarding the riots.)	box 1	folder 2
Correspondence and Personal Documents, 1968, 1985, 1968, 1985 Scope and Contents (Handwritten notes, letters, etc. regarding restructuring process after riots. Mostly interdepartmental.)	box 1	folder 3

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