



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

John L. Wilson Papers

1928-1989

Sc MG 381

Summary

Creator: Wilson, John Louis, 1898-1989

Title: John L. Wilson Papers

Date: 1928-1989

Size: 6.6 linear feet (6 boxes, 1 cylinder)

Source: gift, Rogers, Judith W, 08/--/90

Abstract: Collection of papers and documents relating to John Louis Wilson, Jr's personal life and professional career as an architect in New York City for over fifty years. Included are professional correspondence, architectural plans, drawings and blueprints, certificates, awards, degrees, newspaper clippings, exhibition display panels and books. Also included is material concerning Wilson's efforts on behalf of minorities through the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Equal Opportunities Committee (1955-1976) and the Council for Advancement of the Negro in Architecture (CANAA) 1960-1982.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: John L. Wilson Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Architect, John Louis Wilson, Jr., one of the designers of the Harlem River houses in New York City. Born in Meridian, Mississippi, Wilson graduated from Gilbert Academy Prep School in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1916 and from New Orleans University (now Dillard University) in 1920. Wilson became a registered architect in 1930 after graduating from Columbia University School of Architecture in 1928.

In 1934 Wilson was commissioned to work with a team of architects to design the Harlem River Houses. He was employed as an architect by the New York City Parks Department from the 1930s until 1960, as well as maintaining a private practice. In his private practice he designed multi-story and high rise multiple dwellings as well as early childhood learning centers, and numerous projects for alteration of existing structures. Included in his work is the Mount Morris Park Senior Citizens Housing Project and the Multi-Family High Rise at 193rd Street and Bailey Avenue both in New York City.

Wilson helped found the Council for the Advancement of the Negro in Architecture and served as chairman of the Equal Opportunities Committee of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects from 1967 to 1970. In 1977 he was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Wilson's awards include the Andrew J. Thomas Award, 1972; a tribute sponsored by the New York Coalition of Black Architects in which he was honored for his work and life long contributions to architecture including an exhibit of his work at the Columbia University School of Architecture and Planning in 1980; the American Institute of Architect's Whitney M. Young, Jr. Citation and an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters from Dillard University in 1986. A posthumous exhibit concerning Wilson's professional activities was held at Columbia University in 1990. Mr. Wilson died on October 31, 1989.

Scope and Content Note

Collection of papers and documents relating to John Louis Wilson, Jr's personal life and professional career as an architect in New York City for over fifty years. Included are professional correspondence, architectural plans, drawings and blueprints, certificates, awards, degrees, newspaper clippings, exhibition display panels and books. Also included is material concerning Wilson's efforts on behalf of minorities through the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Equal Opportunities Committee (1955-1976) and the Council for Advancement of the Negro in Architecture (CANA) 1960-1982.

Arrangement: Organized into three series: I Personal Papers; II Professional Papers; III Architectural Drawings

Key Terms

Subjects

African American architects
African Americans -- Housing -- New York (State) -- New York
Architects -- New York (State) -- New York
Architectural firms -- New York (State) -- New York
Architecture -- Awards -- United States
Architecture -- New York (State) -- New York

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Architectural drawings

Geographic Names

New York (N.Y.) -- Buildings, structures, etc

Titles

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

Names

Wilson, John Louis, 1898-1989
American Institute of Architects. New York Chapter

Council for the Advancement of the Negro in Architecture
Harlem River Houses (New York, N.Y.)