



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

1915-1989

Sc MG 381

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

Summary

Creator: Wilson, John Louis, 1898-1989

Title: John L. Wilson papers

Date: 1915-1989

Size: 14.54 linear feet (5 boxes, 25 tubes)

Source: Gift of Judith W. Rogers, August 1990.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Architect John Louis Wilson, Jr., was one of the designers of the Harlem River Houses in New York City, and he helped found the Council for the Advancement of the Negro in Architecture. This collection includes personal and professional materials, mostly related to his architectural career in New York.

Preferred citation: [Item], John L. Wilson papers, Sc MG 381, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Berlena H. Robinson, September 1990.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Creator History

Architect John Louis Wilson, Jr. was 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 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, and he maintained a private practice. In his private practice, he designed multistory and high rise dwellings and early childhood learning centers, and modified existing structures. His work includes 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, which honored his work and contributions to architecture, 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. Wilson died on October 31, 1989.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of personal and professional materials, mostly related to his 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 organizations including the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Equal Opportunities Committee (1955-1976) and the Council for Advancement of the Negro in Architecture (CANAA) 1960-1982.

Arrangement: Organized into three series: I. Personal; II. Professional; and III. Architectural drawings.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American architects
African Americans -- Housing
Architects
Architectural firms
Architecture -- New York (State) -- New York
Minority-owned architectural firms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Architectural drawings

Geographic Names

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

Names

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

Container List

- Personal 1915-1989
 - b. 1 f. 1 Address books
 - b. 1 f. 2 Curriculum vitae
 - b. 1 f. 3 Professional history, American Institute of Architects
- Family
 - b. 1 f. 4-5 1928-1986
 - b. 1 f. 6 Reunion 1987
 - b. 4 f. 4 Wilson, Judith Ann
 - b. 1 f. 7 90th birthday celebration 1988
 - b. 1 f. 8 Family history 1982-1989
- Education
 - b. 1 f. 9 Rust College 1956-1989
 - New Orleans University/Dillard University
 - b. 1 f. 10-13 1915-1989
 - b. 1 f. 14 Alumni Association 1973-1987
 - b. 1 f. 15 Alumni Club (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut) 1981-1986
 - b. 1 f. 16 Programs
 - b. 1 f. 17 Columbia University 1928-1989
 - b. 1 f. 18 European tour of AIA
 - b. 1 f. 20-21 Awards, certificates, and diplomas 1972-1987
 - b. 4 f. 1-2
 - b. 5
 - b. 1 f. 21 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity 1973-1974
 - b. 4 f. 5 Miscellaneous
- Professional 1928-1989
 - Correspondence
 - b. 1 f. 22 St. Marks United Methodist Church
 - b. 1 f. 23 Amistad Research Center 1981-1987
 - b. 1 f. 24 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture 1981-1989
 - b. 1 f. 25 95th St. Development Corporation 1972-1979
 - b. 1 f. 26 Wilson and Snibbe
 - b. 2 f. 1 Congratulatory 1936-1984
 - b. 2 f. 2-4 1969-1979
 - b. 2 f. 5 1980-1989
 - b. 2 f. 6-7 Harlem River Houses 1935-1987
 - Harbrook Houses, Brooklyn
 - b. 2 f. 8 1969-1970
 - b. 2 f. 9 1971-1972
 - American Institute of Architects (AIA)
 - b. 2 f. 10 1972-1976

Professional (cont.)

American Institute of Architects (AIA) (cont.)

New York Chapter

- b. 2 f. 11-15 Equal Opportunities Committee 1955-1970
- b. 2 f. 16 Equal Opportunities Committee scrapbook 1967-1968
- b. 2 f. 17 Education-Scholarship Committee 1967
- b. 2 f. 18 Scholarship Fund and Equal Opportunities Committee 1965-1966
- b. 2 f. 19 Equal Opportunities Committee 1966
- b. 2 f. 20 Moses, Rudolph (Dillard University) 1954-1982
- b. 2 f. 22 Programs and broadside 1984-1988
 - b. 4 f. 3 Broadside located in box 4, folder 3.
- b. 3 f. 1 Minutes 1967-1968
- b. 3 f. 2 Professional agreement 1972-1987
- b. 3 f. 3 Council for the Advancement of the Negro in Architecture (CANA) 1960-1982
- b. 3 f. 4-5 Fellows of the American Institute of Architects 1972-1982
- b. 3 f. 6 Building Department reports 1972-1973
- b. 3 f. 7 Blueprints 1928
- b. 3 f. 8-13 Drawings and exhibition material, Columbia University
- Printed matter
 - b. 3 f. 14 General architecture 1971-1979
 - b. 3 f. 16 Cultural Arts Committee, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, clippings 1969-1975
 - b. 3 f. 17 1953-1989
 - b. 3 Bound reports
- t. 1-25 Architectural drawings

Includes 2 Bond Ryder Wilson and Bass House, 39 Hamilton Terrace.