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Robert T. Wagner Papers

Finding Aid

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections
Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241 Box 2114
1300 North Campus Drive
Brookings, SD 57007
Phone: 605-688-5094
Email: arcrefs@sdstate.edu

Collection Summary

Identifier

UA 53.31

Title

Robert T. Wagner Papers

Creator

Robert T. Wagner

Dates

1971-1998

Extent

3.0 linear feet -- 3 records center boxes, photographs

Language

English

Repository

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton
M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Access note

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Preferred Citation

Name of item. Robert T. Wagner Papers. UA 53.31. South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M .Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

Robert T. Wagner, president of South Dakota State University, 1985-1997. Papers related to his career at SDSU as a teacher and administrator.

Biographical Note

Robert Todd Wagner was born October 30, 1932. He earned a degree in philosophy from Augustana College in 1954. He and Mary Mumford, a native of Howard, married that same year before moving to Evanston, Ill., where he was a student at the Seabury Western Theological Seminary. The couple eventually moved back to South Dakota, where Robert earned his Ph.D. at South Dakota State University, and Mary a master's degree in social sciences in 1974 and a Ph.D. in sociology in 1978.

Wagner first joined the university in 1971 as an assistant professor of rural sociology, and he earned "legendary" status through his Marriage 250 class. The class enrolled almost 1,200 students a year in three sections, filling every seat in Rotunda D, the largest classroom on campus.

Wagner served two years as an assistant to the vice president for academic affairs and spent a year as vice president and chief administrator at Dakota State University in Madison before he was called back to SDSU to assume the university presidency. A position he held from 1985-1997.

Wagner led SDSU from a controversial era into a decidedly more tranquil time. His quiet attention to the internal workings of the college, rather than external politics, worked well and resulted in a great deal of growth. Despite constant budget problems under his administration, the campus expanded by more than 380,000 square feet. Twenty-two faculty were added, and technology became a major factor in the university. The College of Education and Counseling was formed, and many buildings were built, including Berg and Bailey Apartments, the Animal Disease Research, and the Northern Plains Biostress Laboratory.

His wife, Mary, was also an SDSU staffer as well as a member of the Brookings school board and a Republican legislator for 12 years. She died in 2004.

In 2010, SDSU renamed its Nursing, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Arts and Sciences building in honor of the Wagner's. The South Dakota Board of Regents approved the name change.

A scholar as well as a popular teacher, Wagner was the author of 64 publications and chaired numerous academic committees.

Contents Note

The Robert T. Wagner papers span his career from 1971 until his retirement in 1997. The records are composed of materials related to all aspects of his career at South Dakota State University. Also included is a small amount of material related to his service as Vice President at Dakota State College.

Files related to his academic teaching as a professor of Rural Sociology at SDSU are composed of correspondence, calendars, programs related to speaking engagements, and greeting cards of thanks and birthday wishes. A minimal amount of material is related to the courses he taught.

The Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at SDSU records are composed of calendars, correspondence, clippings, newsletters, greeting cards, photographs, and certificates awarded to Wagner. A small amount of materials related to teaching can be found in these files as he still taught some classes during this time.

Records related to his presidency at SDSU make up the largest portion of this collection. These files are composed of correspondence, clippings, calendars, certificates, reports, newsletters, evaluations, and greeting cards. At the end of this material researchers will find material related to his retirement.

Related Resources

Papers of university presidents. UA 1.1. South Dakota State University Archives and Hilton M. Briggs Library Special Collections.

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Riley, Marvin P. and Robert T. Wagner, Reference tables: population change of counties and incorporated placed, Brookings, Rural Sociology Dept., Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State University, 1971. [Periodicals/lower level: 630.7 So87.12 no 586]

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Wagner, Robert T., Characteristics and needs of the aged in South Dakota, 1980-1990, Brookings, S.D., South Dakota State University, Dept. of Rural Sociology, 1978. [SD Collection: HQ1064.U6 S7]

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Key Words

College presidents

South Dakota State University – Presidents

Wagner, Robert T. (Todd), 1932-2011

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Arranged and Described by

Crystal J. Gamradt, Archivist, 2016 March 23.

Container List

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Biographical information	1985-1997
1	2	Black Hills State College : candidate for presidency	1985
1	3	Dakota State College : Vice president	1984-1985
1	4	Dakota State College : Vice president - appreciation for service	1985
1	5	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1971-1972
1	6	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1972-1973
1	7	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1973-1974
1	8	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1974-1975
1	9	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1975-1976
1	10	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1976-1977
1	11	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1977-1978
1	12	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1978
1	13	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1979
1	14	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1979-1980
1	15	South Dakota State University : Rural Sociology professor	1980-1981
1	16	South Dakota State University : Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs	1981
1	17	South Dakota State University : Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs	1982
1	18	South Dakota State University : Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs	1983
1	19	South Dakota State University : Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs	1984
1	20	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Calendar and activities	1985

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	21	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Congratulations	1985
1	22	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Correspondence	1985
2	1	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Newspaper clippings	1985
2	2	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1985
2	3	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Speeches	1985
2	4	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Calendar and activities	1986
2	5	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Correspondence	1986
2	6	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Newspaper clippings	1986
2	7	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1986
2	8	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Speeches	1986
2	9	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Activities	1987
2	10	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Correspondence	1987
2	11	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Newspaper clippings	1987
2	12	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1987
2	13	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Speeches	1987
2	14	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Activities	1988
2	15	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Correspondence	1988
2	16	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1988
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2	18	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Activities	1989
2	19	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Correspondence	1989

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
2	20	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Newspaper clippings	1989
2	21	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1989
2	22	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Speeches	1989
2	23	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Calendar and activities	1990
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3	1	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Calendar and activities	1994
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Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
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3	5	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Photographs	1994
3	6	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Speeches	1994
3	7	South Dakota State University : Presidency - Calendar and activities	1995
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