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Manuscript Collection

Finding Aid

➤ John Turin Papers, 1930s to 1970s ◀
UM 95

Size: .5 linear feet

Provenance: Marlene Russell, Physics and Astronomy Department, November 19th, 1997

Access: Open

Related Collections:

Processing Note:

Condition: Good

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Location: R 2/ S D

Completed by: Janice Colwell, February 20th, 1998

John Turin
Papers, 1930s-1970s

Biographical/Historical Sketch

John J. Turin, who had a distinctive career as a scientist, teacher, and administrator at the University of Toledo (1946-1973), was born in New York City, December 8th, 1913. He completed his high school and undergraduate education in Michigan, receiving a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Detroit's Wayne State University. A master's in mathematics and physics, and a Ph.D. in nuclear physics followed from the University of Michigan.

After graduating in 1937, Turin became supervisor of research at Surface Combustion Company, later a division of Midland-Ross Corporation. As a physicist and developmental engineer, he was responsible for a number of industrial innovations there. As a lieutenant during World War II, Turin was officer in charge of the U.S.'s submarine electronics laboratory at Pearl Harbor.

Dr. Turin was first appointed to the University of Toledo by President Phillip Nash in 1946. As chairman of physics, he led in the establishment of the engineering-physics department in 1956, one of the few programs like it in the country. As a separate astronomy and physics department was realized, Turin became the long-time chair of both departments. In 1951, he was named, along with Jesse Long and John Brandenberry, one of the three-man Interim Operating Committee that administered the university after the resignation of Wilbur White and prior to the appointment of Asa Knowles as president.

During the late 1950's, John was appointed by President William Carlson as part of a planning committee that would develop a philosophical framework for education to guide the university's growth in coming years. The committee emphasized the necessity of a common educational vision among the university's various disciplines and departments. Turin particularly stresses restraint in the beginning of new graduate departments until a firm foundation in faculty, library, and physical resources was laid. Administratively, Turin played a significant part in a confluence of events during the 1960's which saw the rapid expansion of graduate programs, the physical growth of the campus, and UT's transition to a state university.

A university master's program in physics begun in 1960, expanded to offer the Ph.D. in 1965. Turin utilized his considerable reputation as a scientist and skills as a promoter to attract faculty, prestige and resources to the departments and the programs he administered. He supervised construction of the Ritter Planetarium and Observatory, completed in 1967, one of the most distinctive architectural features of the campus. Turin played an equally formative role in obtaining a rare forty-inch telescope for the observatory, with Cer-Vit technology developed by Owens-Illinois. As director of the Astrophysical Research Center (1967-1972), Turin guided the astronomy department's concentration on spectrographic research as best suited to the university campus' urban-lighted environment. Turin, who held a broad commitment to graduate education, was appointed dean of the graduate school in 1969. In 1972, he was one of about a hundred educators to participate in field study seminars in Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, and France. Until his death in December 1973, Turin worked with other university research and quality graduate programs.

Enjoying physical as well as mental challenges, Dr. Turin was active in the University Sailing Club. In addition to teaching, he was a consultant to a number of companies, and served as an adjunct faculty member to the Medical College of Ohio. He began publishing articles in scholarly journals as a graduate student and belonged to numerous scientific, engineering, and technical societies and organizations.

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Following Dr. Turin's death, the UT Alumni Foundation established a memorial scholarship and the Graduate Student Organization a John J Turin Award to recognize outstanding graduate student service. His contributions to the university have also been memorialized through a colloquium series on Physics and Astronomy and designated colloquium room in McMaster Hall.

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Scope and Content Note

Collection contains the personal papers of John Turin, the first chairman of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Included are course notes from Turin's graduate student days at the University of Michigan, photographs, and blueprints of the Ritter Planetarium and Observatory.

The collection is alphabetically arranged.

John Turin
Papers, 1930s-1970s

Series List

- S1 Activities**
Consists of both personal and professional activities Turin was involved in from the Sailing Club to numerous Physics and Astronomy organizations.
- S2 Biographical Information**
Contains materials ca. 1930, ca. 1960-1970, and photographs.
- S3 Course Materials**
Includes lectures and notes, ca. 1930s, that Turin used during class.
- S4 Correspondence**
Contains both professional and personal correspondence, 1960's to 1980's.

Folder List

Box	Folder	Item Description
		S1. Activities
1	1	Personal Organization- International Dragon Association
1	2	Personal Organization-Gross Isle Yacht Club
1	3	Personal Organization- North Cape Yacht Club
1	4	Personal Organization- University of Toledo Sailing Club
1	5	Personal Organization- Toledo Yacht Club
1	6	Personal- Sailing (General)
1	7	Professional- Departmental (Phys.&Astron.)- grad studies
1	8	Professional- Departmental (Phys.&Astron.)- general
1	9	Professional- Departmental (Phys.&Astron.)- Ritter Blueprints
1	10	Professional Organizations- American Society for Metals
1	11	Professional Organizations- Owens-Illinois Consulting
1	12	Professional- Speech by JJT on graduate education at UT
		S2. Biographical Materials
1	13	Biographical Materials 1930's
1	14	Biographical Materials 1960's
1	15	Biographical Materials 1970's
1	16	Memorial edition of GSA's "The Mark" 1974
1	17	Biographical Materials- Photographs
		S3. Course Materials
1	18	Course Materials- Dissertation, University of Michigan 1937
1	19	Course Materials- Lectures on Atomic Physics (1930s)
1	20	Course Materials- Lectures on Quantum Theory, 1934-1935
1	21	Course Materials- Lectures on Thermodynamics (1930s)
2	1	Course Materials- Notebooks- Advanced Theoretical Mechanics (1)
2	2	Course Materials- Notebooks- Advanced Theoretical Mechanics (2)
2	3	Course Materials- Notebooks- Vector Analysis 1932
2	4	Course Materials- Notebooks- (University of Michigan, Summer 1935)
2	5	Course Materials- Notebooks- (University of Michigan, Summer 1936)
2	6	Course Materials- Notebooks- ca. 1930s
		S4. Correspondence
2	7	Correspondence, Personal
2	8	Correspondence, Professional, University of Toledo 1960s-1980s