

An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, River Oaks Baptist School Collection

Repository: University of Northern Colorado, James A. Michener Library, Archival Services

Collection number: SC 1-20

Title: An Inventory of the James A. Michener Papers, River Oaks Baptist School 1997-2000 (formerly Small 15. River Oaks Baptist School 1997-2000)

Author: Inventory prepared by Shirley Soenksen on May 10, 2006; revised 2006 June 20; revised 2006 September 28.

Dates: 1997-2001

Creator or Collector: Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997; Pitkin, Gary (Collector); Yeager, Chuck (Collector); and Allison, Les (Collector).; Perkins, Edward J. (Edward Joseph), 1928- (Collector).

Size: 0.25 linear feet (6 pieces of correspondence, 6 6"x4"photographs, and one note).

Abstract:

A small collection of letters and photographs dating from 1997-2000.

Scope and Content Note:

Correspondence and photographs relating to the Michener Collection at the River Oaks Baptist School in Houston, Texas.

Biography of James A. Michener:

James Albert Michener was born in 1907 to unknown parents and raised as an orphan in the care of widow Mabel Michener of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. By the time he graduated from high school in 1925, he had visited 45 out of the 48 states. He was given a scholarship to Swarthmore, and after graduating summa cum laude in 1929, he traveled and continued his education at nine universities inside and outside the United States. During this time, he also taught in Pennsylvania, Colorado, and at the Harvard School of Education.

When he was not teaching, Michener worked as a textbook editor in New York, and he joined the British Merchant Marines. During WWII, he joined the Navy, making use of his experience in the British Merchant Marines to climb through the ranks to lieutenant and his knowledge of history to carry out sensitive assignments in the South Pacific. It was this experience that brought about *Tales of the South Pacific* in 1947, which won a Pulitzer Prize. Michener used this novel as the cornerstone of his writing career, publishing almost 50 books in the next 50 years, including *Sayonara*, *Hawaii*, *The Source*, *Iberia*, *Caravans*, *The Covenant*, *Sports in America*, and *Poland*.

In 1977, a four-part public television series called *The World of Michener* covered Israel, Hawaii, Spain, and Poland, just a few of the countries upon which his books have been based. Several other books have been turned into movies or miniseries, and two of his novels have been turned into musicals (most notably *South Pacific*, which won its own Pulitzer Prize).

During the time that he was publishing, however, Michener did not ignore the world around him. He ran for Congress in 1962 and held positions on several committees, including the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention, the U.S. Postal Service stamp committee, and an advisory position on a council for NASA. He also spoke often at congressional hearings and at functions of those organizations in which he held particular interest.

James A. Michener died at the age of 90 on October 16, 1997 in Texas, three years after his third wife, Mari Yoriko Sabusawa. He had no children.

Biography of Gary Pitkin; Les Allison, Chuck Yeager, and Edward J. Perkins:

Dr. Gary Pitkin is Dean of University Libraries at the University of Northern Colorado. He received his Master of Arts in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1971, an Education Specialist degree from Appalachian State University in 1984, and a Doctor of Education degree from UNC in 1993. He has published seven books on topics ranging from systems migration, to technology for reference services and bibliographic instruction, to information management and organizational change. He has been the editor of the Haworth Press journal *Technical Services Quarterly* since 1985, and has over 35 presentations to professional organizations. In addition, he teaches library science courses at three universities and is an international consultant, most recently in the Middle East and Africa. As a result of his close relationship with James A. Michener, Gary was instrumental in bringing the James A. Michener Special Collection to UNC.

Les Allison planned and funded the Michener Collection in the library of the School. He has also donated money to the School.

Charles Elwood Yeager, a famous test pilot who broke the sound barrier in 1947, was born in 1923 in Myra, West Virginia. For more information on Chuck Yeager, see:

- "General Chuck Yeager" (Academy of Achievement): <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/yea0bio-1>
- Official website for Chuck Yeager: <http://www.chuckyeager.com/>

Edward J. Perkins was born in 1928 in Sterlington, Louisiana, and grew up in Portland, Oregon. He earned a Bachelor's Degree at the University of Maryland as well as a Master's and Doctor's degree in Public Administration at the University of Southern California. He served in both the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps. He speaks French, Japanese and Thai.

He has had a long and distinguished diplomatic career, serving as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, the Commonwealth of Australia, and Republic of South Africa, the United Nations, and as the U.S. Representative in the UN Security Council. He is currently William J. Crowe Chair in Geopolitics and Executive Director of the International Programs Center at The University of Oklahoma. For more information on Edward J. Perkins, see: Political Science Department: Edward Perkins: <http://faculty-staff.ou.edu/P/Edward.J.Perkins-1/>

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research.

Restrictions on Use: User is responsible for copyright compliance.

Preferred Citation: [Description of Item], James A. Michener papers (SC 1-number), Collection Name, Archival Services, James A. Michener Library, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

Acquisition Information (if applicable):

Donated by Les L. Allison in 2000.

Documentation relating to the acquisition is on file in Archives, RG 13 S1 F11-2.

Subjects:

Michener, James A. (James Albert), 1907-1997
Pitkin, Gary M., 1947-
Yeager, Chuck, 1923-

Allison, Les
Perkins, Edward J. (Edward Joseph), 1928-

Inventory:

Letter dated 2000 September 20 from Gary M. Pitkin, Library Dean, University of Northern Colorado Libraries, to Les L. Allison, The Allison Company, Houston, Texas.

Letter dated 2000 September 14 from Dr. Gary M. Pitkin, Library Dean, University of Northern Colorado Libraries, "To The Students of River Oaks Baptist School," Houston, Texas.

Letter dated 1997 July from James A. Michener to "Dear Young Citizens." Michener's official logo appears on page 2.

List dated 1997 March 24 "Recommended Books for Young Readers" by James A. Michener.

Letter dated 2000 September 8 from L. L. Allison, The Allison Company, Houston, Texas.

Letter dated 1999 from Charles E. Yeager, Brig. Gen., USAF, Ret., "To: Children and Students of Houston, Texas." Handwritten note attached reads, "Letter follow up from Gen. Yeager...inspired by Jim's letter to students."

Two color photographs showing the exterior of the River Oaks Baptist School in Houston, Texas.

One color photograph of the interior of the library showing a bust of James A. Michener. This is possibly a sculpture by Beth Perry Schoen.

One color photograph of the interior of the library showing what may be a bronze sculpture showing one of Michener's hands on the top of a book being held by Mari's hands. The sculpture was done by Dennis Cole.

One close-up color photograph of the interior of the library showing a display with a James A. Michener Society tee-shirt and a framed copy of the letter Michener sent to the school.

One color photograph of the interior of the library showing a display with a James A. Michener Society tee-shirt, a framed copy of the letter Michener sent to the school, Michener's bust, and a book case.

One undated note from Les Allison to Gary Pitkin regarding the photographs.

Email dated 2006 June 15 from Gary Pitkin to Shirley regarding sculpture by Dennis Cole and information on Les Allison's connection to the school.

Fax dated 2001 March 26 from Les Allison to Gary M. Pitkin regarding "Michener Letters to River Oaks Baptist School." Attached to the fax are a letter dated 2001 March 30 from Gary M. Pitkin to Les Allison thanking him for faxed copy of a Edward J. Perkins letter to "The Students of River Oaks Baptist School" as well as correspondence between Perkins and James A. Michener.

Letter dated 2001 March 29 from L. L. Allison to Gary M. Pitkin regarding "River Oaks Baptist School Michener Letters."

Letters dated 1999 July 15 from Charles E. Yeager to "Children and Students of Houston, Texas."

Letter dated 2001 January 25 from Edward J. Perkins to "The Students of River Oaks Baptist School." The letter included correspondence between Perkins and James A. Michener.