

**Chase College of Law Records
RG-012**

ABSTRACT

The Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law originated as a YMCA Law School in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1893, merging with Northern Kentucky State College (Northern Kentucky University's predecessor) in 1972 and subsequently offering law classes in September 1972. Chase College of Law records consist of college administrative, faculty, student and special event records created and maintained by the College both before and after the merger. These records document some of the college administration's planning and decision-making processes, faculty interactions and collegial governance, departments' and centers' activities and publications, and student awards and achievements.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Creators: Salmon P. Chase College of Law; Northern Kentucky State College; Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law

Span Dates: 1933 - 2022

Extent: 14.1 cubic feet (47 boxes), 152.77 megabytes, 2 videocassettes, 2 digital video discs (DVD)

Languages: The materials are in English.

Repository Location: Eva G. Farris Special Collections and Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky

ACCESS POINTS

Subjects:

Northern Kentucky State College – Salmon P. Chase College of Law
Northern Kentucky University -- Salmon P. Chase College of Law
Law schools

Names:

Young Men's Christian Association (Cincinnati, Ohio). Night Law School

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Northern Kentucky University
Salmon P. Chase College of Law

Places:

Highland Heights (Ky.)
Campbell County (Ky.)
Kentucky, Northern
Covington (Ky.)

RELATED MATERIALS

Separated Materials: All loose photographs moved to RG-047 University Photographs, Subgroup XVII.

Related Archival Materials: See books in Special Collections: *The Story of the Young Men's Christian Association of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, 1853 - 1953* by Harry L. Senger; *Our Golden Jubilee: Cincinnati Central Parkway YMCA* by Fredric L. Woodbridge.

See Chase College of Law Library for these publications: YMCA Night Law School and Salmon P. Chase College of Law catalogs; YMCA Night Law School and Chase yearbooks: *Triangle*, 1921 - 1942 (span); *The Chasonian*, 1949 - 1953.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law (CCOL) began as one of the first three Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Law Schools in the United States.¹ In the early years it was commonly known as The Night Law School or the YMCA Law School, but the full official name was The Night Law School of the McDonald Educational Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association of Cincinnati. A pioneer in offering evening law instruction, The Night Law School provided many individuals with a path to a profession through a non-traditional collegiate route.² By offering evening coursework, the school gave those individuals with full-time day jobs the ability to pursue and gain a legal education that otherwise would not have been available to them.

CCOL began in 1893 when Robert M. Ochiltree, an 1892 Cincinnati Law School (now University of Cincinnati College of Law) graduate, offered a night law course through the YMCA in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ochiltree held the first class for seventeen men on October 17, 1893 in the fifth floor of the new YMCA building at

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7th and Walnut Streets.³ At first, both day and evening classes were held, but that quickly changed to evening only. For the next seven years, Ochiltree would teach under a “contractual agreement and graduates were admitted to the bar examination under his certificate as an attorney.”⁴

Prior to 1900, while providing law instruction, the YMCA had taken “no action...to comply with the Ohio statutes regarding educational institutions.”⁵ In 1900, the State of Ohio officially recognized the YMCA as an educational institution with degree granting privileges and the school held its first commencement on June 28, 1900, with 65 individuals receiving degrees. The graduating class was comprised of twenty-two students from the current class and forty-three individuals from earlier classes who also received degrees.⁶

In 1916, a bulletin announced a merger between the YMCA Law School and the Cincinnati Law School; however, the YMCA did not recognize this merger and major administrative changes occurred at the college, ending Ochiltree’s tenure as dean. During his tenure, “five hundred students were admitted to the Bar” with an average of twenty-two members a year.⁷

As a unit of the YMCA, the law school originally only accepted men into their program in the early years. With enrollment decreases, possibly due to the effect of World War I, and the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, the law school began enrolling a more diversified student body. The class of 1923 included both race and gender diversification.

Starting in 1924, a national push for setting legal education standards started to occur. In Ohio, this resulted in increasing the pre-legal education requirement to two years in 1927 and the requirement that all bar examination candidates to be a graduate of a recognized school. In 1934, “the YMCA Board of Directors authorized the Law School to become a charter member of the League [of Ohio Law Schools]...subject[ing] the School to an inspection based on the League’s standards.” Meeting these standards required changes in many poor practices and significant upgrades to school libraries for League members. Starting in 1939, to be recognized in Ohio, the schools needed to be a member of the League of Ohio Law Schools, the Ohio Supreme Court’s accreditation arm. By 1941, all twelve-member schools met the state accreditation standards.⁸

In 1943, the school name changed to the Salmon P. Chase College of Law (SPCCOL) in honor of Salmon P. Chase, a Cincinnati who served as an Ohio governor, an Ohio U.S. Senator, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and as the U.S. Chief Justice.

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Having achieved state accreditation, the YMCA and SPCCOL realized that national accreditation by the American Bar Association (ABA) was needed to stay competitive with other law schools. National accreditation required the law school to have greater autonomy. On July 25, 1951, an amendment was approved to the YMCA Articles of Incorporation which created a separate Board of Regents for the law school. While not completely independent from the YMCA, this partial autonomy was acceptable to the ABA.⁹

On March 9, 1954, the ABA provisionally accredited the law school. In 1959, the ABA awarded SPCCOL full accreditation. With full national accreditation, the pressure for SPCCOL to acquire “larger and more suitable physical facilities and to affiliate with recognized institute of higher learning” continued to increase.¹⁰

In 1962, following the ABA recommendation to change the Bachelor of Law (LL.B) to a Juris Doctor (J.D.), SPCCOL awarded its first Juris Doctor (J.D.). Any former graduate could apply to receive to a J.D. in lieu of their LL.B. On the school’s 75th anniversary, “more than 350 graduates returned to receive the Juris Doctor degree.”¹¹

Chase finally achieved independence in August 1962 when it became a completely separate entity from the YMCA, incorporating as a non-profit educational institution in Ohio with the authority to issue degrees under the name of Salmon P. Chase College of Law. Even as an independent law school, SPCCOL continued to experience pressure from the ABA to improve their physical facilities, specifically their library shelving and reading room space which was viewed as unsatisfactory. The Bar Committee on Accreditation suggested that a college or university would find a merger with Chase beneficial.¹²

SPCCOL initially held merger discussions with the University of Cincinnati, Miami University, Xavier University (Ohio) and Wright State University prior to merger talks with Northern Kentucky State College (NKSC) (Northern Kentucky University). Merger discussions and initial approvals with NKSC began in 1971, with legal proceedings in the Campbell County Circuit Court in January 1972, and concluding with the Bill of Sale signing on June 19, 1972, finalizing the merger and establishing the Salmon P. Chase College of Law of Northern Kentucky State College.¹³

The college moved into the NKSC campus in Covington, KY in the summer of 1972 and offered the first law classes in September 1972. In Fall 1975, the college once again began offering day classes. In June 1976, when NKSC gained university status, the college became the Salmon P. Chase College of Law of Northern Kentucky University.

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In 1982 the college moved into Nunn Hall on the main Highland Heights campus of Northern Kentucky University. The Association of American Law Schools selected the college for membership in 1984.¹⁵

SPCCOL currently maintains separate admissions and advancement functions from Northern Kentucky University. Chase College of Law frequently is referred to “as ‘The Lawyer’s School,’ because of the skills graduates display when they enter practice and the numbers of them who rise to prominence in the bar and on the bench’.”¹⁶

SPCCOL physical locations:

- YMCA Building, 7th & Walnut Streets, fifth floor, 1893 - 1916
- Central YMCA, Central Parkway and Elm Streets, 1917 - 1972
- Northern Kentucky State College/Northern Kentucky University, Covington Campus, 1972 - 1982. The Covington campus contained Hankins Hall and trailers, including a library trailer.
- Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights Campus, 1982 - present. Courtrooms include separate Tort and Moot Courtrooms.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Chase College of Law RG-012 consists of college administrative, faculty, student and special event records created and maintained by the College both when it operated as a YMCA college and after the NKSC/NKU merger.

These records document some of the college administration’s planning and decision-making processes, faculty interactions and collegial governance, departments’ and centers’ activities and publications, and student awards and achievements.

This is an open record group (RG) meaning new additions to the record group are expected to be added.

The record group has eight series: Administrative Records, Departments and Centers Records, Faculty Records, Student Records, Special Event Records, Publications, Songs and Music, Memorabilia.

Series I, Administrative Records (1951 - 2003), contains pre-merger Board of Regents meeting minutes and materials, merger records, accreditation and administrative files.

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Series II, Departments and Centers Records (1971 - 2015), contains records of the college's departments and centers, including publications, meeting, seminars and symposium documentation.

Series III, Faculty Records (1967 - 2014), contains records documenting faculty activities, including Chase publications for faculty, meeting and committee records.

Series IV, Student Records (1986 - 2009), contains records of student services and student groups, including the Student Bar Association.

Series V, Special Event Records (1933 - 2022), contains records documenting annual student awards program and commencement ceremonies, including commencement speech scripts.

Series VI, Publications (1973 - 2012), contains newsletters and publications of Chase College, including the Northern Kentucky Law Review, for external audiences.

Series VII, Songs and Music (circa 1943 - 1949), contains audio recordings of a WLW radio broadcast of Woody Herman and his Orchestra playing at a Salmon P. Chase College prom.

Series VIII, Memorabilia (1993, 2010), contains objects of historical interest due to their association with the Chase College of Law events and people.

SYSTEM OF ARRANGEMENT

Chase College of Law contains eight series: **I Administrative Records, II Departments and Centers Records, III Faculty Records, IV Student Records, V Special Event Records, VI Publications, VII Songs and Music, VIII Memorabilia**. Series I and III are arranged hierarchically. Series II is arranged hierarchically by departments, then centers, and lastly alphabetically within these categories. Series IV is arranged by category then alphabetically within these categories. Series V-VII are arranged alphabetically. VIII arranged by category.

CONTAINER LISTING

Description	Date	Box
Series I: Administrative Records		
YMCA Amendment of Articles of Incorporation, Chase Board of Regents - agendas, minutes, materials	1951-1968	1662-1663

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Description	Date	Box
Chase-Northern Kentucky State College merger records	1971-1972	1664
ABA questionnaire (1974); ABA consultant's report (1975); ABA/AALS Accreditation	1974-1975, 1989-1990, 1996	1433
Dean's Office: appointment announcement, strategic plan, events, correspondence	1982-2003	1665

Description	Date	Box
Series II: Departments and Centers Records		
Academics, Advancement, Alumni, Enrollment Management-Admissions	1977-2012	249
Enrollment Management-bulletins/catalogs, Law Library, Centers/Clinics (excluding Local Government Law or Municipal Law)	1971-2015	717
Admissions posters, brochures; symposium poster	1995, 1997, 2001-2002	O/S 396
Local Government Law brochures, stationary, Local Government Law News	1987-2009	724
Municipal Law Center Board of Overseers: Meeting Documents	3/1987-12/1989	570
Municipal Law Center Board of Overseers: Meeting Documents 5/1990-11/1992; Grant Reporting 1/1987-4/1990	1/1987-4/1990, 5/1990-11/1992	571
Municipal Law Center: Briefing Reports	5/1987-6/1997	572-575
Municipal Law Center: Seminars; Municipal Law News	10/1987-6/1997	576
Law Student Directory, Chase Student Handbook, Law Library Handbook	1989-2012	718

Description	Date	Box
Series III: Faculty Records		
Faculty: Distinguished Practitioner programs, brochures, newsletters, scholarship award application, scholarship workshop leaflets	1996, 2006-2013	1670
Faculty meeting minutes	1967-2014	1434-1437, 1666

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Description	Date	Box
Faculty committees	1994-2001	1667-1669
Faculty biographies	2010-2011	Digital-see archives staff

Description	Date	Box
Series IV: Student Records		
Student Services: Career Development, Pro Bono Services; Student Groups: Student Bar Association; Black Law Student Association; Student Award forms	1986-2009	719

Description	Date	Box
Series V: Special Event Records		
Annual student awards program	1933-2004	1671-1678
Commencement programs, scripts, including honorary degree recipient introduction	1954-1972	1679
Commencement programs, scripts, materials	1981-2021	720-723, 32, 331
Commencement program, script	2022	Digital-see archives staff
Commencement ceremony video recordings	1997, 2002	321, VHS Tapes #3000, #3001
Commencement ceremony video recordings	2011, 2018	DVD Box 657

Description	Date	Box
Series VI: Publications		
Publications: The Chase Newsletter, 1983-2002; Chase 2003-2007; Lawyer 2009; stationary-all areas	1983-2012	248
Publications: Northern Kentucky Law Review	1973-1977, 1979, 1982, 1986-1987, 1989	250

Description	Date	Box
Series VII: Songs and music		

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Description	Date	Box
Alma Mater song audio recording	circa 1943-1949	Digital-see archives staff
Fight song audio recording	circa 1943-1949	Digital-see archives staff

Description	Date	Box
Series VIII: Memorabilia		
Memorabilia: Chase 100th banners, nylon, gold, purple, teal, 29" x 66"	1993	1660
Memorabilia: 100th anniversary banner, gold, nylon, 29" x 66"	1993	174
Memorabilia: T-shirt, lanyards, yo-yo, bag, mug, water bottle, hat, bookmarks	1993, 2010	383

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Conditions Governing Access: This collection is open for research use. Due to minimal processing, some confidential or personal information may be present and not removed or redacted from records. Researchers need to alert staff if confidential/personal information is found and to respect the confidentiality/privacy of those records.

Physical Access: Digital audio recordings accessible only on site due to copyright restrictions.

Technical Access: Digital audio recordings in Series V and VII require a computer to listen to them. A laptop will be provided. Researchers may bring their own earbuds or borrow headphones on site.

A video cassette player is required to view the VHS tapes in Series V. One will be provided.

A DVD player is required to view the DVD recordings in Series V. One will be provided.

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ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Transfers from Chase College of Law. Prior to 2007, transfers not accessioned. Accessions: NKU2013-029, NKU2013-030, NKU2015-035, NKU2017-022, NKU2017-023, NKU2018-025.

Custodial History: Materials pre-dating the merger with NKSC were either original records of the YMCA Night Law School that accompanied the merger with NKSC or were donated by donors to NKU Chase College of Law post-merger.

NOTES

Processing Information: Processed by Vicki Cooper, 2022-2023. Initial finding aid creation, C. Jankowski, student employee, 2017. DACS compliant finding aid completed March 2023 by Vicki Cooper.

Endnotes

1. Dorothy E. Finnegan, "Raising and Leveling the Bar: Standards, Access, and the YMCA Evening Law Schools, 1890-1940," *Journal of Legal Education* 55, no. 1/2 (March/June 2005): 215, <https://www.jstore.org/stable/42893900>.
2. Maxwell C. Dieffenbach, "The Origin and Development of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law," *Northern Kentucky State Law Forum* 1, no. 1 (1973): 1.
3. Robert M. Ochiltree, *The Y.M.C.A. Night Law School* (n.p., 1943): 8,10.
4. Finnegan, "Raising and Leveling the Bar," 215-216.
5. Ochiltree, *The Y.M.C.A. Night Law School*, 11.
6. Dieffenbach, "The Origin and Development of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law," 4.
7. Ibid, 5-6.
8. Ibid, 8-9.
9. Ibid, 10.

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10. Ibid, 13, 15.

11. Ibid, 13-14.

12. "A Study of the Merger of the Salmon P. Chase School of Law with Northern Kentucky State College", 1, 3, Box #1664, RG-012 Chase College of Law, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

13. Ibid, 23; Dieffenbach, "The Origin and Development of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law," 15; "Suit Challenges merger at NKSC", Kentucky Post, September 10, 1971, Box #1366, RG-043 University Marketing and Communications, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University; "Court ruling appears to pave the way for merger of NKSC, Chase law school", Courier-Journal, January 12, 1972, Box #1366, RG-043 University Marketing and Communications, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University; "Bill of Sale", June 19, 1972, Box #1664, RG-012, Chase College of Law, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

14. Salmon P. Chase College of Law Catalog, (September 2004): 1, Box 717, RG-012 Chase College of Law Records, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University.

15. "Our Story," (n.d.), accessed December 12, 2022, <https://chaselaw.nku.edu/about/our-story.html>.