

Thompson, Kenneth W. Papers

Kenneth W. Thompson Papers
1972-1999

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 12788-a

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1884

Unit Date

1972-1999

Language

English

Extent

53 Cubic Feet 53 record cartons

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

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Biographical Information

Kenneth Thompson (August 29, 1921 - February 2, 2013) was an American political scientist, author, and scholar of international relations known for his contributions to normative theory and the tradition of political realism. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago in 1950, where he studied under Hans J. Morgenthau, and subsequently held teaching positions at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

From 1955 to 1975, Thompson worked in international education and philanthropy, serving as vice president for international programs at the Rockefeller Foundation. He joined the faculty of the University of Virginia in 1975 as Commonwealth Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs and became director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs, a position he held until 1998.

During his tenure at the Miller Center, Thompson played a central role in shaping the institution's mission and programs, including the development of the Presidential Oral History Program, the Forum Program, and a series of bipartisan national commissions addressing issues such as presidential disability and the federal judicial selection process. His leadership contributed significantly to the study of the American presidency, public policy, and political history at the University of Virginia.

Thompson authored and edited numerous works on international relations, foreign policy, and political thought, and was a key figure in sustaining and advancing classical realist tradition in the twentieth century. His scholarship emphasized the importance of historical context, moral complexity, and the balance of power in international affairs.

Scope and Contents

The Kenneth W. Thompson Papers document the professional activities of Kenneth W. Thompson, particularly his tenure as director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs from 1978 to 1998. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, along with writings and materials related to conferences, lectures, and institutional planning.

The Correspondence series, which comprises the majority of the collection, includes exchanges with prominent political figures and scholars such as Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, Condoleezza Rice, and David Rockefeller. These materials reflect Thompson's role in fostering dialogue on political thought, ethics, and public policy.

Additional materials include newspaper and magazine clippings, annual meeting files, lecture and conference materials, addresses, invitations, and institutional documents such as the Miller Center's Ten Year Plan and Executive Summary.

The collection is organized into two series: Correspondence and Writings and Professional Activities, and dates from 1972 to 1999.

Related Materials

Related Materials

This is the second half of this collection. You can find a guide to the first half of the collection at this web address: <https://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=uva-sc/viu03323.xml>

Keywords

University of Virginia -- Faculty

University of Virginia -- Miller Center of Public Affairs

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/293521

Unit Date 1972-1999

Miller Center, Academic/UVA, International Council for Educational Development (ICED), correspondence related to publications

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/294106

Unit Date 1972-1985

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Rockefeller Foundation, personal, Miller Center, Foundation fund raising, Academic/UVA

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Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/294107

Unit Date 1972-1985

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Rockefeller Foundation, personal, Miller Center, Foundation fundraising, Academic/UVA, Miller Center Governing Council, miscellaneous

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Unit Date 1979-1982

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Miller Center, Academic/UVA, Miller Center Governing Council, correspondence related to publications

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Unit Date 1979-1983

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Miller Center, Academic/UVA, Foundation fundraising, correspondence related to publications and articles

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Unit Date 1982-1984

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Miller Center, Academic/UVA, correspondence related to publications and articles

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

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Unit Date 1983-1985

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Foundation fundraising, Miller Center, Academic/UVA, correspondence related to publications and articles, Miller Center Governing Council

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Unit Date 1984-1990

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Miller Center, Academic/UVA, personal, correspondence related to publications and articles

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Academic/UVA, St. Louis, miscellaneous

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Unit Date 1985-1986

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Correspondence B, C, D, S

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Unit Date 1975-1993

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Correspondence D, L

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Unit Date 1979-1998

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Correspondence L-N

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Unit Date 1974-1998

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Correspondence G, K, N, O

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Unit Date 1973-1999

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Correspondence K-M

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Unit Date 1973-1997

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Correspondence B, C, E, F, G, K, L, M, N, P, R, S, W

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Correspondence A-Y

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Correspondence B-R and Governance Correspondence (Rockefeller, David)

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Correspondence R-S

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Unit Date 1975-1995

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Correspondence A, B, S

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Correspondence B-D

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Correspondence D-F

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Unit Date 1973-1989

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Correspondence F-H

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Unit Date 1973-1990

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Correspondence H-K

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Unit Date 1973-1989

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Correspondence K-M

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Unit Date 1974-1994

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Correspondence M-R

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Unit Date 1973-1990

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Correspondence R-W

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Unit Date 1973-1992

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Correspondence S, W, Y, Z

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Correspondence G, S, T

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Unit Date 1974-1998

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Correspondence G-H

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Unit Date 1979-1998

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Correspondence F-G

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Unit Date 1979-1998

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Correspondence G, H, J, K, P

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Correspondence P-S

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Unit Date 1978-1998

Mixed Materials [X032700034] 33 (box)

Correspondence S-W

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Unit Date 1975-1999

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Correspondence B, M, Q, Y, Z

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Unit Date 1973-1998

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Correspondence M, O, P

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Unit Date 1978-1997

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Correspondence N-P

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Unit Date 1979-1997

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Correspondence P-S

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Unit Date 1973-1997

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Correspondence S-T

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Unit Date 1974-1997

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Correspondence T-W

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Unit Date 1979-1997

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Correspondence W, Y, Z, A, B

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Unit Date 1976-1997

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Correspondence A-B

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Unit Date 1978-1997

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Correspondence C

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Correspondence C-D

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Unit Date 1974-1997

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Correspondence D-F

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Unit Date 1978-1997

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Correspondence F, H

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Unit Date 1978-1997

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Correspondence H-K

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Unit Date 1974-1997

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Writings and Professional Activities:

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Unit Date 1974-1998

Writings

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Unit Date 1979-1990

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Annual Meetings Materials

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Lecture files

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Unit Date 1985-1988

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Conference materials

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Unit Date 1985-1988

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Writings

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Unit Date 1979-1986

Mixed Materials [X032700050] 49 (box)

Addresses

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Unit Date 1974-1982

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Lecture files

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Unit Date 1985-1988

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Conferences

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Unit Date 1976-1989

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Unit Date 1979-1998

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Invitations to the Miller Center

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Unit Date 1979-1998

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Unit Date 1989-1997

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Newspaper Clippings

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Newspaper Clippings

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Conference Proposal

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Unit Date 1987-1997

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Unit Date 1987-1997

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