

# John Ritchie III papersMSS.78.11

John Ritchie III papers  
1925-1988



## Title Statement

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

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**Unit Date**

1925-1988

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Ritchie, John, III, 1904-1988

**Extent**

8.5 Cubic Feet 22 archival boxes

**Repository**

Arthur J. Morris Law Library Special Collections

## Administrative Information

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

This collection was a gift of Professor John Ritchie III in 1978 and 1991. In 1997 a box with his files was found in the library basement and added to this collection.

## Biographical / Historical

After practicing law briefly in 1927 and 1928, Ritchie taught law at Furman University, Washington University in St. Louis, and the University of Maryland before returning to teach at his alma mater in 1937. During World War II, he served as colonel in the Judge Advocate General's Corps and was awarded several decorations. In 1952, he left Virginia to serve as dean at Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Wisconsin. In 1957 he became dean at Northwestern University, where he remained until mandatory retirement in 1972. He became the first John Henry Wigmore Professor of Law at Northwestern in 1966.

Jack Ritchie was a well-loved dean at Northwestern. According to the *Northwestern Reporter*, he possessed "an unusually happy blend of wisdom, patience, and warmth." During his deanship the faculty grew in size and reputation, and new facilities were constructed. "His years at Northwestern will be remembered particularly for his devotion to students and for the strengthening of the School's relationship with alumni . . ."

In addition to his administrative duties, Ritchie taught trusts, and along with co-authors Neill H. Alford Jr. and Richard W. Effland, wrote the casebook, *Cases and Materials on Decedents' Estates and Trusts*, which appeared in seven editions from 1955 until just after his death in 1988. He was president of the Association

of American Law Schools, national president of the Order of the Coif, member of the American Law Institute, and life fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

When he reached the age of sixty-eight and had to retire from the deanship at Northwestern, Ritchie returned to the University of Virginia, taught full-time for two more years, and then became scholar-in-residence. An extraordinarily active man, he was not entirely "in residence," because in the next three years he visited at the University of Tennessee, the University of Oklahoma, and the College of William and Mary. In the mid-1970s, he began work on a history of the University of Virginia Law School, *The First Hundred Years: A Short History of the School of Law of the University of Virginia for the Period 1826-1926*, published in 1978. For the rest of his life, Ritchie remained active in the American Bar Association and the Virginia Bar Association, worked occasionally as a consultant in trusts matters, and served on the board of the Foundation Press. Ritchie died in 1988.

## Scope and Contents

The papers of John Ritchie III include professional papers, mainly correspondence, concerning legal education. There are also files that are related to his deanships at Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Wisconsin, and Northwestern University, as well as files that document his years at Virginia from 1972 until his death in 1988. His files reflect the range and intensity of his work after his official retirement. Predominant are the manuscripts and correspondence for *Cases and Materials on Decedents' Estates and Trusts*, editions five, six, and seven of *The First Hundred Years: A Short History of the School of Law of the University of Virginia for the Period 1826-1926*, as well as correspondence files concerning publications of the Foundation Press and committee activities of the Virginia Bar Association. The largest group of files is comprised of miscellaneous professional correspondence.

## Keywords

Estates (Law)

Drafts (documents)

Wills

University of Virginia -- History

University of Virginia. School of Law -- History

Ritchie, John, III, 1904-1988

Virginia Bar Association