King's College London Archives : Catalogue (Summary)

WILKINS, Maurice Hugh Frederick (1916-2004)

Online Catalogue (URL)
WILKINS, Maurice Hugh Frederick (1916-2004)

Catalogue Reference:
GB 0100 K/PP178

URL:
http://www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/kclca/collection/w/wilkins-maurice/

Title:
Wilkins, Maurice Hugh Frederick (1916-2004)

Date(s):
1854-2004

Level of description:
Collection (fonds)

Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size):
170 boxes

Context

Name of creator(s):
Wilkins, Maurice Hugh Frederick, 1916-2004, molecular biologist

Administrative / Biographical history:
Born Pongaroa, New Zealand, 1916; family moved to Birmingham, UK, 1923; educated, King Edward School, Birmingham, 1929-1935, and St John’s College, Cambridge, 1935-1938; joined Cambridge Scientists Anti-War Group and Communist Party; conducted research on luminescence in solids under John Randall, Physics Dept, Birmingham University, 1938-1940; PhD on thermoluminescence in solids, 1940; worked on improvements to radar screens, Ministry of Home Security and Aircraft Production, 1940-1941; worked on the separation of uranium isotopes for British atomic bomb research, codenamed the Tube Alloys Project, 1941-1944; worked at University of California at Berkeley, USA, on the Manhattan Project for the production of the atomic bomb, 1944-1945; Lecturer in Physics, St Andrews University, 1945; Researcher, Medical Research Council Biophysics Unit, Physics Department, King’s College London, 1946-1958; Lecturer in Biophysics, King’s College London, 1958-1963; awarded Nobel Prize for Medicine, 1962, jointly with James Watson and Francis Crick; Professor of Molecular Biology, King’s College London, 1963-1970; President and co-founder, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), 1969-1991; Professor of Biophysics, King’s College London, 1970-1981; devised inter-disciplinary undergraduate course, ‘The social impact of the biosciences’, 1972; Director, Medical Research Council Cell Biophysics Unit, 1974-1981; Emeritus Professor of Biophysics, KCL, 1981-2004; President, Food and Disarmament International, 1984-2004; died, 2004.

Content & structure

Scope and content:
**double helix** (Oxford University Press, 2003). Papers relating to Wilkins’ education and early career, 1928-1942, including: teenage essays and fiction on the role of science, 1928-1934; notes, articles and photographs, 1937-1938, relating to his student activities, including physics experiments, and photographs relating to his incendiary bomb testing for Cambridge Scientists Anti-War Group, 1938. Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports and notes, 1962-1982, relating to the administration of the Medical Research Council (MRC) Biophysics Unit, King’s College London (from 1964, the Department of Biophysics), on topics including funding, staffing, equipment provision and teaching. Correspondence, course handouts, student essays (CLOSED) and background material, 1971-1996, relating to the undergraduate course, ‘The social impact of the biosciences’, created and run by Wilkins, 1972-1982. Correspondence, newsletters and conference papers relating to Wilkins’ involvement in political pressure groups, 1968-2003, notably the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (of which Wilkins was founding President, 1969-1991), Food and Disarmament International (Wilkins’ was founding President, 1984-2004), the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), and the Pugwash Conferences on World Affairs. Audio recordings, 1972-1996, including lectures by Wilkins on: social responsibility in science; his Eddington Memorial Lectures, Cambridge, 1977-1978, on the history and philosophy of science; nuclear disarmament, 1981; his retirement speech, 1982; the history of DNA.

**System of arrangement:**
Files are grouped chronologically under thematic headings. There is some overlap between the content of the thematic groups, reflecting Professor Wilkins’ working methods

**Conditions of access & use**

**Conditions governing access:**
Open, subject to signature of Reader’s undertaking form, and appropriate provision of two forms of identification, to include one photographic ID.

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**Language/scripts of material:**
English

**Allied materials**

**Existence and location of originals:**
King’s College London College Archives. A significant portion of the collection items are available online in the Maurice Wilkins and Medical Research Council Biophysics Unit archive hosted by the Wellcome Library.

**Description control**

**Rules or conventions:**