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Robert G. Seaks Collection 2013.A

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Goodson Law Library

210 Science Dr.

Durham, NC 27708

REF@law.duke.edu

URL: <https://law.duke.edu/lib/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Goodson Law Library
Title:	Robert G. Seaks Collection
ID:	2013.A
Date:	1951
Date [bulk]:	1931-1934
Physical Description:	2 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Robert Seaks graduated from Duke Law in 1934. While a student he frequently wrote letters to his parents back home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. In 2013 Seaks' son Terry donated the letters to the Goodson Law Library, and established the Robert G. Seaks 1934 Professorship.

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Content Description

Robert G. Seaks was just 18 years old and newly graduated from Gettysburg College when he started his legal studies at Duke in the late summer of 1931. He was much younger than his classmates, but he excelled at Duke, finishing at the top of his class all three years; he remains the youngest Duke Law graduate, at age 21, to win the Willis Smith Prize for graduating first in his class. He served as editor of the law journal and as a research assistant to some of the top faculty scholars. However busy he was with his studies — and, in his upper years, his social life — Seaks found the time to write home regularly to his parents, George, a physician, and Myrna Miller Seaks of Harrisburg, Pa. His letters are lively and descriptive, detailing the demands and sheer grind of law school, the characters in his class and in Durham, and the financial trials facing most students and their families during the Great Depression. Seaks' son, Terry, made two remarkable gifts to Duke Law in 2013, both reflective of the lasting affection his father maintained for the school that launched his illustrious career in law: He established the Robert G. Seaks LL.B. 1934 Professorship; and he shared copies of his father's letters home with the Goodson Law Library. The correspondence — more than 55 letters and postcards in total — offers an intimate portrait of a young man's experience of law school during a time of transformation for the nation and for Duke, which was slowly evolving from a small Southern school into an institution of permanence and national consequence.

After law school, Robert Seaks negotiated power contracts for the Tennessee Valley Authority and served as assistant to the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and as special assistant to Attorney General Tom Clark in the U.S. Justice Department. For the last 30 years of his career he specialized in regulatory work at Wheeler & Wheeler in Washington, D.C. Seaks died in 1992, at the age of 79. It was his dear friend and fellow World War II code-breaker, Justice John Paul Stevens, who reconnected Terry Seaks, now Professor of Economics, Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with Duke Law when the justice spoke at Hooding 2012. Terry Seaks received his PhD in Economics at Duke University in 1972.

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Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Law -- Study and teaching -- North Carolina -- Durham
- Education -- North Carolina -- Durham

Collection Inventory

Box 1	box 1
<u>Language of the Material:</u> English.	
Title/Description	Instances
1 photograph, Robert Seaks during his first year of law school, 1931-1932	

Language of the Material: English.

Letters, (Items 1-30), May 1931 – May 1932

Language of the Material: English.

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Box 2	box 2
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	

Title/Description	Instances
Letters, (Items 31–50), September 1932 – June 1933	
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	

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Box 3	box 3
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	

Title/Description	Instances
Letters, (Items 51-71), September 1933 – May 1934	
<u>Language of the Material</u> : English.	

Charles Evans Hughes material, about a 1951 biography by Merlo J. Pusey, 5 book reviews, 1 advertisement, 1 hand-drawn map to Pusey's Maryland farm (1 folder), 1951

Language of the Material: English.

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