

Guide to the Jasper Alston Atkins Papers

MS 1811



compiled by Mike Strom

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1811

CREATOR: Atkins, Jasper Alston, 1898-1982

TITLE: Jasper Alston Atkins papers

DATES: 1922-1997

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of legal documents, writings, clippings, correspondence, and photographs that document the career of Jasper Alston Atkins. The papers emphasize Atkins' civil rights court cases.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1811>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1811>.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Simona Atkins Allen and Anna Atkins Simkins, 2002-2003.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Jasper Alston Atkins Papers (MS 1811). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Jasper Alston Atkins was born August 8, 1898, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and graduated magna cum laude in 1919. He then entered Yale Law School and received an LL.B. degree in 1922. While at Yale, he served as editor of the Yale Law Journal and, upon graduation, was elected to the national honor society, the Order of the Coif.

Atkins started practicing law in 1922 in Muskogee, Oklahoma, with the firm Wesley & Atkins. From 1927 to 1936, he lived in Houston, Texas, and was a partner in the firms Wesley & Atkins and Nabrit, Atkins & Wesley. While in Houston, he also worked as the editor of the *Houston Informer and Texas Freeman*. Atkins returned to Winston-Salem in 1936 to work for Winston-Salem Teachers College, a school founded by his father. He held the position of executive secretary at the college from 1936 to 1960. He returned to newspaper editing upon retirement from the college, serving as an executive editor for the Freedmen's Publishing Company.

Throughout his career, Jasper Alston Atkins fought for civil rights. In 1935, he appeared before the Supreme Court in the case of *Grovey v. Townsend*, arguing against a Texas state law that prohibited African-Americans from voting in primary elections. He returned to the Supreme Court in 1959 to argue against the segregation of public golf courses in *Wolfe v. State of North Carolina*. A suit he filed in 1968, *Atkins, Pro Se v. State Board of Education of North Carolina*, continuing as *Allen v. State Board of Education of North Carolina* in 1970, is credited with instigating the discontinuation of the separate but equal policy concerning educational facilities in Winston-Salem and the state of North Carolina.

Jasper Alston Atkins died on June 28, 1982, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Scope and Contents

The papers document the career of Jasper Alston Atkins, particularly his more notable court cases. The papers consist largely of legal documents and clippings relating to those cases.

The Jasper Alston Atkins Papers were processed as part of a collaborative effort between Manuscripts and Archives and the Yale Law School to document the careers and accomplishments of law school faculty and alumni.

Arrangement

Arranged in two series and one addition: I. Legal Papers, 1925-1973. II. Personal Papers and Photographs, 1922-1997.

Collection Contents

Series I: Legal Papers, 1925-1973

The series includes legal documents, correspondence, and clippings and is arranged alphabetically by case name. The series consists almost entirely of copies of legal documents from cases Atkins was involved in dealing with civil rights.

b. 1, f. 1 - 6	Allen v. State Board of Education of North Carolina	1966-1973
b. 1, f. 7 - 9	Atkins, Pro Se v. State Board of Education of North Carolina	1966-1970
b. 1, f. 10 - 11	Grovey v. Townsend	1926-1943
b. 2, f. 12 - 13	Ingram v. Wesley	1925-1926
b. 2, f. 14	Nixon v. Condon A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1931
b. 2, f. 15 - 19	Wolfe v. State of North Carolina	1958-1960
b. 3	Wolfe v. State of North Carolina <i>1 Audiocassette 0:58:04 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Side A of this recording contains Jasper Alston Atkins' oral argument before the justices, attempting to address Justice Brennan's questions regarding additional facts concerning racial discrimination, and being peppered with questions from the justices. Side B contains a discussion with an unidentified lawyer (who doesn't sound like Atkins) and the justices about uncertainties regarding exhibits introduced in an earlier, lower-court hearing of the case, specifically as they relate to North Carolina rules of evidence. As a preservation measure, original materials, as well as preservation and duplicating masters, may not be used. Digital access copies must be provided for use. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives.	1959

Series II: Personal Papers and Photographs, 1922-1997

Arranged alphabetically, the series includes clippings, correspondence, photographs, and writings. Biographical materials include an application for the American Bar Association's Lawyer Placement Information Service, completed by Atkins in the 1960s, which provides details about his career. The photographs are of Atkins during his time at Yale Law School.

b. 4, f. 1	Biographical materials A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	Circa 1962, 1983, 1996
b. 4, f. 2	Clippings A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1982-1983
b. 4, f. 3 - 4	Correspondence	1922-1927, 1956-1960, 1977-1983
b. 4, f. 5 - 6	J. Alston Atkins Memorial Lectures A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1986-1997
b. 4, f. 7	Omega Psi Phi fraternity A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1922, 1936, 1953, 1958
b. 4, f. 8	Photographs	Circa 1922
b. 4, f. 9	Tributes to J. Alston Atkins A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1960, 1981-1985
b. 4, f. 10	Urban renewal in Winston-Salem, NC	1966
b. 4, f. 11 - 13	Writings	1932, undated
b. 4, f. 14	Yale University commencement program A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1922

Accession 2003-M-069: Additional Material, 1957-1985

The addition consists largely of legal materials from Jasper Alston Atkins' cases. A small amount of correspondence and clippings is also included.

Atkins, Pro Se v. Scott, Governor of North Carolina etc., et al.		
b. 1, f. 1	Clippings	1970- 1985
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1970-1979
b. 1, f. 3 - 10	Legal documents	1970-1977
b. 2, f. 11	City of Greensboro, et al. v. Simkins, et al.	1957
b. 2, f. 12	Cooke v. State of North Carolina	1958
b. 2, f. 13	Council for Public Interest Law	1975
b. 2, f. 14 - 15	State of North Carolina v. Cooke, et al.	1958
b. 2, f. 16	Wolfe, et al. v. State of North Carolina	1958-1959
b. 2, f. 17	Writings	1957, 1966, undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

African American lawyers
Civil rights -- United States
Lawyers

Names

Atkins, Jasper Alston, 1898-1982

Corporate Body

Yale Law School