

**GUIDE TO THE PAPERS OF  
JOHN F. WHITE**

National Public Broadcasting Archives  
University of Maryland Libraries

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0.50 lin. ft.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

John F. White was born on October 11, 1917 in Waukegan, Illinois to the Reverend Edward Sydney and Lilah McCormick White. He was educated at the Harvard School for Boys and Hyde Park High School. He received his B.A. from Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1941. In 1944, he received his masters degree at the University of Chicago. During the early 1960s, White received several honorary degrees including an L.H.D. from Lawrence College in 1961 and a LL.D. from Cornell College in Iowa in 1964. He married Joan Glasow in May of 1943 with whom he would have three children Susan, Michael, and Christopher.

From 1941 to 1944, White was the Admissions Counsellor at Lawrence. White returned to Illinois in 1944 to become the Director of Admissions at the Illinois Institute of Technology. White stayed at the Illinois Institute of Technology for six years. He served as Assistant Dean of Students from 1945 to 1946, Dean of Students from 1946 to 1948, and Dean and Director of the Development Program from 1948 to 1950. In 1950, White left the Institute of Technology for Western Reserve University where he was offered the position of Vice President. During his five year tenure, White made his initial move into educational broadcasting as he pioneered development of television as an educational tool at Western Reserve.

He left his job as Vice President in 1955 to move to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and to become the General Manager of WQED. During 1956, he lectured at the University of Pittsburgh. WQED won the Peabody Award for its programming in 1957. White left WQED in 1958 to become President of the National Educational Television and Radio Center. During his tenure as President, there were a few unsuccessful attempts to bring educational television to the New York City area. White helped form Educational Television for the Metropolitan Area Inc. in 1961 and served as its secretary and as a board member to further this goal. In 1962, WNDT New York went on the air, becoming one of the country's outstanding ETV operations by 1968. In 1963, the National Educational Television and Radio Center put aside all its functions except for non-instructional television programming. It changed its name to National Educational Television and focused on cultural and public affairs programming.

After eleven years in public broadcasting, White returned to education in 1969 to serve as President of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. During this period, he began collaborating on a history of public broadcasting that was never completed. He retired from active work in 1990 but he continued to work as a consultant for the Aspen Institute from 1980 to 1988.

White was very active in his community through directorships in several companies including Orange and Rockland Utilities Inc. and Viacom International Inc. and participation in local clubs such as the Century, Tuxedo, and University Clubs. He was also an active church member. He served as Trustee of St. John the Divine in New York City from 1978 to 1988 and as a Vestryman of St. Mary's Church in Tuxedo Park from 1979 to 1986.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The Papers of John F. White document his work as General Manager of WQED-Pittsburgh, as President of National Educational Television, as President of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, and his interest in the history of public broadcasting. This collection covers the period from 1955 to 1982. It contains annual reports, clippings, correspondence, drafts of manuscripts, and publications documenting WQED's winning of the 1957 Peabody Award and National Educational Television's interest in acquiring Channel 13, WNET-New York City, as a public television station.

The collection consists of five series:

Series 1: WQED-Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Series 2: National Educational Television (NET)

Series 3: Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science  
and Art

Series 4: Personal Papers

Series 5: Photographs

## **PROVENANCE**

The Papers of John F. White were donated to the University of Maryland Libraries by John F. White in September of 1991.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

Series 1: WQED-Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1955-1958 (0.25 lin. in.)

This series documents John F. White's work at WQED. It includes annual reports, clippings, and correspondence from the end of his years as General Manager when WQED won a Peabody award for its programming. The arrangement is alphabetical by document type.

Series 2: National Educational Television (NET), 1960-1981 (3.0 lin. in.)

This series documents White's work as President of the National Educational Television and Radio Center, which later changed its name to National Educational Television, and his continued interest in that organization. It includes clippings, correspondence about NET and relating to its archives, manuscripts written about NET, policies, publications, and speeches. There is some documentation relating to the proposed addition of a public television station in New York City and the possibility of taking over commercial station WNET for these purposes. The arrangement is alphabetical by subject or document type.

Series 3: Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, 1970-1978 (0.25 lin. in.)

This series documents White's continued interest in public broadcasting while he was President of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. It includes comments submitted to Congress and a speech, both on his experiences in public broadcasting. The arrangement is alphabetical by subject or document type.

Series 4: Personal Papers, 1964-1982 (1.5 lin. in.)

This series documents John F. White's private activities before and after his retirement from his work in education and public broadcasting. It includes biographical materials, correspondence relating to a book project on the history of public broadcasting, and a masters thesis on White. The arrangement is alphabetical by subject and/or document type.

Series 5: Photograph Collection, 1958-1968 (0.25 lin. ft.)

This series documents the various activities in which White participated as part of his roles as President of National Educational Television and General Manager of WQED. It includes photographs from award ceremonies, conferences, receptions, and speeches. Among the pictures is one taken of White at the White House with President Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt. The arrangement is chronological.

**BOX INVENTORY**

**SERIES 1: WQED-PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

Box	Folder	
1	1	Annual Reports, 1957-1958
	2	Clippings, 1955-1958
	3	Correspondence, 1958

**SERIES 2: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION (NET)**

	4	Archives-State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971-1973
	5	Clippings, 1961-1969
	6	Correspondence, 1963-1964, 1968
	7	Efforts to Make Channel 13 in New York City a Public Television Station, 1960-1961, 1969
	8	Guidelines and Policies, 1963-1964
	9	Jauch, Fritz, <u>A Brief History of Educational Television in the United States with Emphasis on the Development of National Educational Television...</u> , 1968
	10	Publications, 1961-1968
Box	Folder	

- 1 11 Speeches by John F. White, 1961-1968  
12 Two Drafts of Chapters Dealing with National Educational Television from a  
Book on Public Television by James Day, 1981

**SERIES 3: COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT  
OF SCIENCE AND ART**

- 13 Comments to Congress on H.R. 11100, 1978  
14 Speech Before the Headmasters Association, 1970

**SERIES 4: PERSONAL PAPERS**

- 15 Biographical Materials, 1964, 1967  
Correspondence  
16 Gould, Jack, 1972-1976  
17 1982  
18 Frederickson, Sara Garland, John F. White: One Man's Contribution to  
Educational Television in the United States, 1972

**SERIES 5: PHOTOGRAPHS**

- 19 1) John F. White with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harold Burton at D.C.  
"Decision" Preview, December 1958  
2) NET Board, 1958  
3) NET Board, Early 1960's  
4) John F. White with President Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt at the White  
House, [Early 1960's]  
5) The Jack Delanos and Pablo and Maria Casals at the Casal's home in San Juan,  
January 1961  
20 6) The Ambassador to Sweden and the Former Head of Swedish Radio in Rome,  
December 1961  
7) John F. White, Jean D'Arcy, and Olof Rydbeck at the European Broadcasting  
Union Meeting, October 1962  
8) Leland Hazard, Martha Graham, and John F. White at a party in Martha  
Graham's Honor, 1964  
9) Josephine Case, William Schuman, Joan and John F. White at the Martha  
Graham Party, 1964  
10) Intertel Council Meeting, 1964

Box	Folder	
1	21	11) Finnish Ambassador Olavi Munkki and Wife with John F. White and Wife at Reception for <u>Sibelius: Symphony for Finland</u> , a Joint U.S.-Finnish Production, 1965
		12) John F. White helping WYES-New Orleans with their Auction
		13) Dr. Everett Case [Member of the Board of Directors of NETRC]
		14) Dr. George Stoddard
		15) John F. White Receiving an Emmy
22		16) John F. White and Mr. Hall of Hallmark Receiving an Emmy
		17) John F. White Receiving a Peabody Award
		18) John F. White Receiving a Sylvania Award
		19) John F. White