



# **Preliminary Guide to the A. Hollis Edens Records, 1949 - 1960**

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David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

A. Hollis Edens records, 1949 - 1960

**Creator:**

Edens, Arthur Hollis, 1901-

**Abstract:**

Arthur Hollis Edens (1901-1968) had a long career as an educator and administrator. He served as president of Duke University from 1949 to 1960. During that time, Edens focused on fund-raising and long range planning, and oversaw the implementation of a new student union and a University Council for faculty members. The A. Hollis Edens records include correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, and other documents related to Edens's career at Duke. Among the major subjects of the collection focused on Duke University are its administration and development, the Board of Trustees, the Duke Endowment, Annual Reports from major divisions of the university, segregation, and Edens's inauguration in 1949. Prominent people in the collection include faculty member Paul M. Gross and presidential assistant Earl W. Potter. The collection also includes documents related to Edens's membership in organizations such as the U.S. State Department's Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange, the National Commission on Accrediting, the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the Southern University Conference, the Methodist Church, and the President's Committee on Education Beyond the High School. English.

**Extent:**

52 Linear Feet

52,000 Items

**Language:**

English.

**Collection ID:**

UA.03.57.0001

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1nq6p>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], A. Hollis Edens Papers, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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## Background

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### Scope and Content

Collection includes correspondence, memoranda, reports, minutes, conference materials, and other documents related to Edens's professional career. The collection is divided into eight series. The first and largest series, Subject Files, is arranged alphabetically by topic, and chronologically within each subject. Correspondence is filed by name of correspondent; miscellaneous correspondence is filed alphabetically at the beginning of each letter group. The next series, U. S. State Department's Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange, contains papers from Edens's service on this commission. The third series, National Commission on Accrediting, contains papers from Edens's service on this commission. Inauguration, the fourth series, includes material on Edens's presidential inauguration in 1949. The next series, Annual Reports to the President, contains the reports submitted to the president by major divisions of the university. The sixth series, Assistant to the President, Earl Porter (1956-1960), contains the papers of Edens's assistant. The seventh series, Segregation Policy Petitions, involves the desegregation process at Duke University. The next series, U.S. State Department, Educational Exchange Service, details Edens's involvement with that organization. The ninth series, Gross-Edens Controversy, consists of papers relating to Edens's resignation. This series is restricted. The final series is Oversized Materials and includes items from Edens's inauguration as president of Duke.

### Biographical/Historical

Arthur Hollis Edens was born on February 14, 1901, in Willow Grove, Tennessee. He was the son of Everett C. Edens, a Methodist minister, and Barbara Ellen (Jolly) Edens. He attended Emory University, from which he received the degrees of B.Ph. (1930) and M.A. (1938). He also received a Master of Public Administration degree (1944) and a Ph.D. (1949) from Harvard University. Prior to coming to Duke, Edens worked as a teacher and administrator at the Cumberland Mountain School and Emory University. In 1946, he was named Dean of Administration at Emory, and in 1947 became Vice Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. In 1948, he was appointed associate director of the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.

In November 1948, the trustees of Duke University selected Edens to serve as president of the institution. Edens began his presidency on March 15, 1949. With inflation rapidly eroding purchasing power, the University launched a

capital gifts program and a national development campaign. Edens noted that upon entering the field of fund raising Duke faced a "peculiar handicap." He stated, "Never before had we sought sizeable sums from either alumni or the general public. Indeed, the magnitude of James B. Duke's Indenture had been such as to encourage the uninformed public to believe that Duke University never would require additional capital." Through the success of this campaign Duke University began to build its own endowment and expand its programs. Academic units such as the Center for Commonwealth Studies and the Center for the Study of Aging date from this time. Formal participation of the faculty in governance began in 1952 with the formation of a University Council and the consolidation of several committees into an Undergraduate Faculty Council. Additional accomplishments included the establishment of the James B. Duke Endowed Professorships, the organization of a student union program (the Duke University Union) to enhance student life, and a vigorous defense of academic freedom during the McCarthy Era. Though not so well known because he chose to work behind the scenes, Edens also assiduously sought to have the segregated admissions policy of the University changed.

Following disagreements with the Board of Trustees and some members of the faculty, Edens resigned on February 19, 1960. After leaving Duke, Edens served for five years as executive director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem, N.C. Edens died in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 7, 1968. He was survived by his wife, Mary Kathleen (Russell) Edens, and his daughter, Mrs. Jefferson D. Wingfield, Jr.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Statement**

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### **Access Restrictions**

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For a period of twenty-five years from the origin of the material, permission in writing from the President and the University Archivist is required for use. After twenty-five years, records that have been processed may be consulted with the permission of the University Archivist.

Records, such as search committee files or others pertaining to employment where individuals are identified, are closed for 70 years.

Records of the University's Board of Trustees which have been in existence for at least fifty years are available for scholarly research with the permission of the University Archivist. Access to records which have been in existence for less than fifty years shall be granted only by special permission, in writing, from the Board of Trustees.

In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, Duke University permits students to inspect their education records and limits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.

### **Use Restrictions**

Copyright for Official University records is held by Duke University; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

### **Acquisition Information**

The A. Hollis Edens Papers were received by the University Archives as a transfer in 1964 (A64-50), 1974 (A74-198), 1989 (A89-95), 1993 (A93-74).

### **Processing Information**

Processed by University Archives staff, 1996

Encoded by Valerie Gillispie, June 24, 2003

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## Related Materials

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### Related Material

[Forms part of:] Duke University President records. University Archives. Duke University. Gross-Edens Affair Subject Files. University Archives. Duke University. Paul M. Gross Papers. University Archives. Duke University.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Universities and colleges -- Inaugural ceremonies
- Segregation in higher education
- Methodist Church -- North Carolina
- Duke University. Presidents
- Edens, Arthur Hollis, 1901-
- Gross, Paul Magnus, 1895-1986
- Duke University -- Administration
- Duke University -- Endowments
- Duke University -- Presidents
- Duke University. Board of Trustees
- Southern University Conference
- United States. Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange
- National Commission on Accrediting
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- United States. Advisory Committee on Education

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