



ROBERT N. BUTLER (1927-2010) PAPERS ARCHIVES FINDING AID

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Robert Neil Butler was born in New York City on January 21, 1927. He received his B.A. and M.D. from Columbia University. From there he joined the United States Public Health Service and was stationed at the National Institutes of Health from 1955 to 1962. During this time, he became interested in the elderly and aging and he also developed his theory of "life review." In addition, he introduced the widely adopted term "ageism" in his delineation of pervasive individual and institutionalized prejudices and discrimination against the elderly.

Dr. Butler is a member of the editorial boards of several gerontological publications and is also on the boards of trustees of institutions such as: Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, National Council on the Aging, National Caucus on the Black Aged, and the Washington School of Psychiatry. He was named "Washingtonian of the Year" by Washingtonian Magazine in 1975. In addition to this, Dr. Butler has written several articles and books on the problems facing the elderly, and the nation regarding the elderly. During the late 1960's and early 1970's, Dr. Butler led the opposition to the proposed transfer of Saint Elizabeths Hospital to the District of Columbia by the Nixon Administration. In addition to this, he led the drive to improve conditions at D.C. General Hospital and improve mental health care in the District overall.

From 1977 to 1982, Dr. Butler was Director of the newly formed National Institute on Aging (NIA). During this time, he worked on several issues facing the elderly as well as the problems the country faces with an aging population. In 1982, Dr. Butler joined the faculty of Mount Sinai School of Medicine as the first chairman of the first department of geriatrics and adult development in the United States.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

Dr. Butler donated his papers to the Archives of the American Psychiatric Association in 1974. They reflect his various activities while living and working in the District of Columbia.

He was involved in many bitterly contested issues of the day, and these papers give a clear picture of the issues from his point of view. The papers cover the period from 1964 to 1975 with the bulk falling between 1969 and 1971. Papers in this record group include correspondence, reports, statements, minutes, and memoranda.

The collection totals 3.25 linear feet and is divided into 5 series: Miscellaneous papers (folders 1-19, 42-43, 62-65); Mental Health (DC) (folders 20-24); Mental Health Technical Advisory Subcommittee of the HPAC (folders 25-34); Public Health (DC) (folders 35-41); and Saint Elizabeths Hospital (folders 44-61).

SERIES: Miscellaneous papers

Archives Box 100668

Folders

- 1-2. Alabama case, 1971-1972
- 42-43. Right to treatment: briefs, affidavits, etc., 1973-1974

Archives Box 100666

Folders

3. APA and Committee of Concerned Psychiatrists, 1971-1974
4. Benefits of less restrictive alternates, 1973
5. Charlotte Buhler: correspondence, etc., 1966
- 6-9. Center for Law and Social Policy, 1971-1975
10. Comments and statements, 1971-1975
11. Federal City College-Institute of Gerontology, 1970-1972
12. Forensic psychiatry, 1969-1972
13. Gerontological Society: History Commission, 1964
14. Interstate Compact, 1969
15. Judge David Bazelon: correspondence, etc., 1969-1973
16. Medicaid Programs (DC), 1968-1972
17. Medical Society of DC: Legislative and Community Health Committees, 1969-1972
18. Medical Society of DC: Public Welfare Committee, 1969-1972



19. Mental Health and the Elderly, 1975; Long-term care..., 1975; Report to Congress, Community Mental Health Centers Program, 1971
62. Speeches, papers, reports, articles: thru 1965
63. Speeches, papers, reports, articles: 1966-1969
64. Speeches, papers, reports, articles: 1970-1974
65. Voluntary Hospitals (DC), 1969-1972

SERIES: Mental Health (DC)

Archives Box 100666

Folders

20. Mental Health Administration (DC): Psychiatric Advisory Committee, 1972-1974
21. Mental Health Association (DC): Misc. papers, 1969-1971
22. Mental Health Association (DC): Minutes of legislative & public policy commissions, 1969-1971
23. Mental Health Commission (DC): Reports & correspondence
24. Mental Health Issues (DC): Newsletters, brochures, booklets, ephemera, 1972-1973

SERIES: Mental Health Technical Advisory Subcommittee of HPAC

Archives Box 100666

Folders

25. Correspondence of Dr. Butler, 1970-1971
26. History and Membership lists, 6/20/1970
27. Law Committee/Judicial Conference Report (incl. "area c") April 1969
28. Memoranda, 1970
29. Memoranda and minutes of alcoholism subcommittee, 1971
30. Minutes, 1970-1971
31. Organizational memoranda, 1970-1971
32. Press releases, scripts, clippings related to community mental health centers, 1967-1971
33. Reports with enclosures, 1970-1971
34. Reports (drafts), 1970-1971

SERIES: Public Health (DC)

Archives Box 100666

Folders

35. Correspondence, 1969-1970
36. Mayor's Task Force Report on Public Health Goals, 1970
37. Neglect of the aged: miscellaneous papers, 1971

Archives Box 100667

Folders

- 38-39. Preliminary reports and proposals, 1970
40. Resignation of Murray Grant, 1969
41. Statements on the elderly, Saint Elizabeths, and public health, 1969-1971

SERIES: Saint Elizabeths Hospital

Archives Box 100667

Folders

44. Admission criteria/by-laws/regulations, 1970-1971
45. Correspondence on transfer proposal 1969-1970
46. Discussion/reports on survey, 1965
47. FY 1968 and FY 1969 reports
- 48-49. Foster care of the elderly, 1967-1972
50. Foster care of the elderly: correspondence, 1967-1972
51. Foster care of the elderly: statements, 1969-1971
52. Foster care of the elderly: reports and memoranda, 1967-1970
53. Geriatric service and Vestermark 1964-1971: memoranda, 1971
54. Geriatric service and Vestermark 1964-1971: notes, memoranda, correspondence, 1964-1967
55. Geriatric service and Vestermark 1964-1971: correspondence, reports, Rome Committee (1960-1970) and some transfer of St. Elizabeths
56. Inventory of psychiatric patients, 1970
57. Miscellaneous reports, 1960-1970
58. Role of Saint Elizabeths in the District of Columbia, 1965
59. "Secret data regarding patient inventories", September 1975
60. Statements, 1969
61. Survey, 1965
62. Speeches, papers, reports, articles (to 1965)
63. Speeches, papers, reports, articles (1966-1969)
64. Speeches, papers, reports, articles (1970-1974)
65. Voluntary Hospitals, DC (1969-1972)