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**Archives of the History of American Psychology  
University Libraries, The University of Akron**

**Ronald Taft, Papers (1946-2005)**

COLLECTION DATES: 1946-2005

VOLUME: .33 linear foot

ACCESS: This collection is open for research

PREPARED BY: Lizette Royer, May 2007

**Biographical Note**

Ronald Taft was born June 3, 1920 in Melbourne, Australia. He received his BA from Melbourne University in 1939 and his MA in psychology from Columbia University in 1941. He worked as an industrial psychologist for the Australian Department of Aircraft Production from 1942-1944 and later as a consultant for the Australian Institute of Management from 1945-1948 before earning his doctoral degree in psychology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1950. Taft accepted his first full-time academic position at the University of Western Australia as a senior lecturer in psychology in 1951 and remained in this role until 1956. Taft accepted a position as a reader of psychology at Western Australia in 1957 and held that position until 1965. Taft later worked as a reader of psychology at the University of Melbourne (1966-1968) and as a professor of social psychology at Monash University from 1968 until his retirement in 1981.

Taft conducted research in personality and assessment as well as social and cultural psychology. He is best known for his work regarding psychology and ethnicity and immigration which he began to research in the 1950s and continued for over 30 years. Taft worked to promote psychology as both a discipline and a profession and served in numerous organizations around the globe. He was a founding member of the Australian Branch of the British Psychological Society in 1944 and served as the organization's chairman from 1962-1963. He was also a founding member of the independent Australian Psychological Society in 1966 and served various roles within the organization including Chairman of the Membership and Publications Committees, Chair of the Course Accreditation Committee, and a member of the Archives Committee. During the 1980s Taft represented Australia in several international psychological organizations serving as president of the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology. He was active in the International Association of Applied Psychology

where he served on several executive committees. He also served as the foundation chair of the National Committee for Psychology in the Australian Academy of Science, and he was a member of the International Union of Psychological Science. Taft became a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 1964 and later a fellow of the American Psychological Society. He was awarded the Silver Medal by the Royal Society of Victoria in 1976 for his contributions to scientific research.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Ronald Taft Papers are organized in the following series:

1. Biographical
2. Correspondence
3. Research Material
4. Still Images.

The bulk of the collection contains correspondence from varying times throughout Taft's career from his time as a student to his time as a lecturer and professional psychologist. Of interest is a string of correspondence between Ronald Taft, Kurt Lewin, and Gordon Allport in 1948 concerning Taft's impending graduate education. Also of interest is an unofficial letter to Taft from Abraham Maslow (1950) in which Maslow offers Taft a position at Brooklyn College.

Biographical information is limited and information regarding his research and publications including original notes and research data is lacking. Research material is limited to several papers, presentations, and publications by other authors.

### **Series Description**

#### **1. Biographical**

Series contains a short biographical piece written for publication in the Australian Psychological Society Bulletin in 1985.

#### **2. Correspondence**

Series consists of correspondence throughout Ronald Taft's life and career and includes both personal and professional correspondence. Included are several letters from colleagues requesting Taft's opinion on attached manuscripts, correspondence from colleagues concerning career options, and correspondence regarding Taft's work in cross-cultural psychology.

**3. Research Materials**

Series includes several papers and presentations by colleagues and other psychologists, several of which are annotated.

**4. Still Images**

Series contains a small number of photographs and negatives which have been moved to box number V78 in the Archives' Still Images Collection. Of interest is a 1963 photograph of Ronald Taft and three colleagues at the International Congress of Psychology.

**Inventory**

**Box 1: [M3532]**

Folder 1: Biographical Information, [1985]

Folder 2: Correspondence, [1946-1969]

Folder 3: Correspondence, [1970-2005]

Folder 4 Research Materials – papers and presentations by others, [1984-2002]

**V 78**

Folder 7

Photographs and negatives [located in box V78 of the Still Images Collection]