

**University of Toronto Archives
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Harry Lambert Welsh fonds
B2012-0004

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Biographical note

Dr. Harry Lambert Welsh (1910-1984) was a prominent physicist. Born in 1910 near Aurora, Ontario, Dr. Welsh made use of the travelling libraries to Aurora at an early age and gained enthusiasm for the field of astronomy, an interest that eventually spurred his career as a physics professor.

Upon completion of high school, Dr. Welsh and his family moved to Toronto, Ontario where in 1926, he enrolled in Mathematics and Physics at the University of Toronto. Despite a strong interest in music and the piano, Dr. Welsh decided to commit himself to the study of physics, and obtained his Master's degree in 1931. Inspired by a series of lectures delivered by Nobel Laureate James Franck, Dr. Welsh decided to pursue his PhD in Göttingen, Germany under Franck. However, the rise of the Hitler regime in Germany forced Dr. Welsh back to Toronto where he was able to complete his PhD in 1936 on the topic of selective reflection from mercury.

Dr. Welsh joined the Department of Physics at the U of T after his graduation, and with the outbreak of World War II, he helped prepare and deliver lectures on electronics and the use of radar to Canadian Armed Forces personnel. In 1942, Dr. Welsh married Marguerite Ostrander and for the final two years of the war, the couple moved to Ottawa where Dr. Welsh worked in operations research for the Royal Canadian Navy. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

When the war ended, Dr. Welsh and Marguerite returned to Toronto where he was able to continue his previous research in molecular spectroscopy, and with the help of colleagues made several important advances in that field. During his time at the U of T, Dr. Welsh helped supervise 65 graduate students, served as the Chairman of Physics (1962-1968), was awarded the Canadian Association of Physicists Medal for Achievement in Physics (1961), was President of the Canadian Association of Physicists (1974-74), and was awarded numerous honorary degrees. In 1972, Dr. Welsh was awarded the Medal of Service and was made an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Started as a series of lectures to honor Dr. Welsh's 65th birthday in 1975, the University of Toronto and the Department of Physics established a series of annual lectures every May known as the H.L Welsh Lectureship.

Dr. Welsh was well known for his broad knowledge beyond physics – he was a talented musician, a historian, and he was well versed in Russian language and literature, spending much of his free time translating Russian scientific papers for use in English speaking countries.

Harry Lambert Welsh died on July 23, 1984 at the age of 74.

Reference: The majority of the biographical information found on Harry Lambert Welsh is taken from a eulogy written G. David Scott, which is included in this collection [B2012-0004/001(1)].

Scope and Content

Date range: 1930-1985

Extent: 0.10m of textual records, certificates and diplomas
4 photographs; b & w

This collection consists of biographical information, certificates and diplomas, correspondence relating to Dr. Welsh's employment as Chairman of the Department of Physics, with officials of the Order of Canada, his retirement, the H.L. Welsh Lectureship, and other honors. The collection also includes notes and outlines from four interviews done for the U of T Oral History Programme. The collection includes four photographs, several degrees, awards, certificates, and posters.

Arrangement: This collection has been divided into three series based on the form and content of the records; 1) Correspondence and Biographical Material, 2) Degrees, Awards, and Certificates, and 3) Photographs.

Access: Open

Accruals: The Harry L. Welsh fonds consists of the following other accessions: B1985-0009, B1987-0035, and B2005-0020.

Boxes: B2012-0004/001-/002 and /001P

Series 1: Correspondence and biographical material

Date range: 1961-1985

Extent: 0.05m of textual records

Scope and content: This series consists of correspondence between Harry and several colleagues regarding awards, his appointment as the Chairman of the Department of Physics (1961-1969), correspondence and reception material from the Order of Canada ceremony (1971-1972), correspondence and reception material from the inaugural H.L. Welsh Lectureship series (1975), several newspaper clippings (1968-1971), notes taken for Dr. Welsh's oral interview as part of the University of Toronto Archives Oral History Programme (1978), and biographical information in the form of a eulogy (1985).

Access: Open

Boxes: B2012-0004/001

File number	File description	Date range
B2012-0004/001 (01)	Biographical Information (Eulogy written by G. David Scott)	1985
B2012-0004/001 (02)	Correspondence with colleagues	1972-1977
B2012-0004/001 (03)	Correspondence re. Chairman of Department of Physics	1961-1969
B2012-0004/001 (04)	Order of Canada: Correspondence and reception materials	1971-1972
B2012-0004/001 (05)	H.L. Welsh Lectureship/Harry's 65 th birthday banquet: Correspondence and reception material	1975-05-22
B2012-0004/001 (06)	H.L. Welsh Lectureship/Harry's 65 th birthday banquet guest book	1975-05-22
B2012-0004/001 (07)	Programs for the H.L. Welsh Lectureship in Physics	1975
B2012-0004/001 (08)	Honorary doctorate from the University of Windsor newspaper clipping	n.d.
B2012-0004/001 (09)	Correspondence re. potential inductees to the Order of Canada	1979-1980
B2012-0004/001 (10)	U of T Archives Oral History Programme notes	1978
B2012-0004/001 (11)	Honors bestowed upon Gerhard Hertzberg (newspaper clippings)	1968-1971

Series 2: Degrees, awards, and certificates

Date range: 1931-1984

Extent: 0.03m of textual records

Scope and content: This series consists of Dr. Welsh's numerous degrees, awards, and certificates. Also included are several posters promoting the H.L. Welsh Lectureship series.

Arrangement: The files within this series have been arranged in chronological order.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2012-0004/002

File number	File description	Date range
B2012-0004/002(01)	Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, both from the University of Toronto	1930,1931
B2012-0004/002(02)	Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve Lieutenant Commander documentation	1944
B2012-0004/002(03)	Membership of the Royal Society of Canada	1947
B2012-0004/002(04)	Fellowship to the Royal Society of London	1962
B2012-0004/002(05)	Honorary Doctorate from Memorial University	1968
B2012-0004/002(06)	Order of Canada – Medal of Service certificate	1971
B2012-0004/002(07)	H.L. Welsh Lectureship posters	1975-1977
B2012-0004/002(08)	Honorary Doctorate from the University of Toronto	1984

Series 3: Photographs

Date range: 1957-1977

Extent: 4 photographs; b&w

Scope and content: This series consists of photographs belonging to Dr. Welsh representing his professional life.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2012-0004/001P

File number	File description	Date range
B2012-0004/001P(01)	International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) General Assembly in Rome, Italy. The photograph depicts Dr. Welsh seated at a table with 3 unidentified Canadian representatives. [24 x 18 cm]	1957
B2012-0004/001P(02)	Dr. Welsh receiving the Order of Canada, Medal of Service. A letter from the photographer is included. [11.5 x 16.5 cm]	1972
B2012-0004/001P(03)	Photograph of the fire in Sanford Fleming Building. [20 x 25 cm]	1977
B2012-0004/001P(04)	Photograph of American physicist Arthur Leonard Schawlow, 1981 Nobel Prize winner for physics for his work on laser spectroscopy. [28 x 22 cm]	[1959?]