

# Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

65 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Garden City, NY 11530

## Finding Aid for Bishop Witcher Subject File

Date range: 1972-1996

### **CREATOR**

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

### **EXTENT**

Linear Feet: 2 linear feet

Number of Containers: 2 banker boxes

### **ABSTRACT**

A collection of subject files pertaining to Bishop Robert C. Witcher (held office 1977-1991). Contains correspondences, lesson plans, reports, economic information, recreational activities, commentary on news events, and ephemera. Part of a larger collection of subject files relative to bishops who served episcopacy for the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

### **LANGUAGES**

English

### **REFERENCE CODE**

SF-6

### **PROCESSING ARCHIVIST**

Caroline Zhu, Head Archivist

Ella Utano, Intern Archivist

Processed in 2025

# Collection Details

## Historical Note

Born on October 5, 1926, in New Orleans, Louisiana, Robert Campbell Witcher attended Tulane University and secured his Doctor of Divinity from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1974. In 1942, Witcher enlisted in the United States Navy's V-5 program, which trained civilians to become naval aviation cadets; he stayed in the Navy until the end of World War II. In 1952, Witcher was ordained deacon in Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, before he became canon pastor in 1961. He was elected Coadjutor Bishop of Long Island in 1975 and was enthroned as Bishop in 1977. During his term, Bishop Witcher was well known for his more conservative views surrounding the ordination of women within the Episcopal Church; he did not believe in the ordination of women. Witcher also was interim bishop of the Armed Forces between 1989-1990 and was a professor of church history at the George Mercer School of Theology between 1975 and 1991. Witcher was also an active participant in rallying support for a building project called the Nehemiah Plan in 1982, which brought low income housing to a blighted section of Brooklyn. In 1988, Witcher participated in the Episcopalian effort in freeing Western hostages during the Lebanese Hostage Crisis. He resigned as bishop of Long Island on January 1, 1991, and returned to Louisiana to become bishop-in-residence in Baton Rouge. On June 14, 2021, Rt. Rev. Robert C. Witcher died at the age of 94.

## Scope & Content

Bishop Witcher is the primary creator of the materials included in this collection. These materials come in the form of letters, reports, newsletters, newspaper clippings, press releases, billings, recreational documents, and ephemera. While Witcher's episcopacy was held 1977-1991, the materials cover this period and an additional five years before and after. Many of the materials are relative to the Diocese of Long Island, thus the geographical provenance of many materials has connections to Long Island, Queens and/or Brooklyn. Examples of this may include church activities, personal interests and communications from the bishop, community involvement, and commentary on current events. However, some materials have been outsourced, particularly letters from various dioceses or institutions out-of-state or internationally. Many of these are relative to current events; examples include episcopal and federal commentary on major world events, such as the Lebanon Hostage Crisis (1982-1992). Majority of files pertain to Bishop Witcher's policies and programs, such as his Nehemiah Housing programs.

## Arrangement Description

This collection was processed at the collection-level; materials and individual items are categorized by folder. Each folder begins with letters "SF" for Subject Files. The initial number, 1-8, signaling which bishop the evidence pertains to. The numbers are attached to individual bishops in order of when they held their episcopacy. For example, 1 would be referring to The Rt. Rev. Abram Littlejohn and 8 would refer to The Rt. Rev. Lawrence Provenzano. The final number - separated by a period from the initial number - in two digits, referring to the collection or file itself. For example, a file titled '#SF-6.04' would be specific subject file 'number 4' referring to items related to Bishop Robert Witcher. The folders in the banker boxes are not categorized in any specific order; in terms of organization, these folders were left in the same order as they were when they were first received.

## **Related Materials**

These subject files are part of a larger group of files pertaining to the bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, which can be accessed by contacting its archivist. Other archives may hold information on Bishop Witcher and his episcopacy, including (but not limited to) the Archives of the Episcopal Church at 107 Denson Drive, Austin, TX 78752.

## **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

The collection has been property of the Episcopal Diocese since its genesis.

## **Subject Headings**

This record series is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms:

### **PERSONS:**

[REDACTED]

Royce, Robert

Sherman, Jonathan G.

[REDACTED]

Witcher, Robert C.

[REDACTED]

### **ORGANIZATIONS:**

Astor Fund

Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

Episcopal Service for Youth

Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity

General Convention

George Mercer School of Theology

Kendal at Oberlin

Interfaith Medical Center

Lambeth Conference

Long Island Council of Churches

Nehemiah Plan

Van Scoyoc

### **PLACES:**

Beirut, Lebanon

George Mercer School of Theology, Garden City, N.Y. (USA)

Interfaith Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y. (USA)

Nassau County, N.Y. (USA)

Nehemiah Housing Development, Brooklyn, N.Y. (USA)

Queens County, N.Y. (USA)

Suffolk County, N.Y. (USA)

**SUBJECTS:**

Art and religion

Diocesan history

Divorce—Episcopal Church

Economic councils—Episcopal Church

Episcopal Church—United States Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.

Episcopal Church—Education—Episcopal chanceries

Episcopal Church—Episcopalian women

Episcopal Church--Episcopalian theological seminaries

Faith

Libraries—Special collections—Religion

Marriage—Episcopal Church

Religious articles

Religious education of people with disabilities—Episcopal Church

Religious life

Religious thought

Religious tolerance—Episcopal Church

Remarriage—Episcopal Church

Sexism in religion

Socialism in religion

Spiritual thought

Women and religion

Word (Theology)

Worship

# **Using the Collection**

## **ACCESS STATEMENT**

Collection access is available upon request.

## **RIGHTS STATEMENT**

Copyright has not been assigned to the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island; see the archivist for more information. Copyright restrictions apply.

## **PREFERRED CITATION**

[ITEM DESCRIPTION], Bishop Witcher Subject Files 1972-1996,  
Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island, Garden City, New York

# Collection Inventory

<b>FILE</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>BOX</b>
Archdeacons	#SF-6.1	Box 1
Assistant to the Bishop	#SF-6.2	Box 1
Astor Fund	#SF-6.3	Box 1
Biographical Information	#SF-6.13	Box 1
Canterbury	#SF-6.4	Box 1
Chancellor Royce	#SF-6.5	Box 1
Chaplaincy at Interfaith Medical Center	#SF-6.6	Box 1
Consecration	#SF-6.7	Box 1
Consecration: Meetings and Minutes	#SF-6.8	Box 1
Consecration: Extra Copies of Invites, Forms, etc.	#SF-6.9	Box 1
Consecration: Service of Witnesses	#SF-6.10	Box 1
Consents to Elect (1 of 2)	#SF-6.11	Box 1
Consents to Elect (2 of 2)	#SF-6.12	Box 1
<b>[REDACTED]</b>		
<b>[REDACTED]</b>		
Housing Corporation 1980-1986	#SF-6.16	Box 1
Deaneries 1979	#SF-6.17	Box 1
General Convention 1988	#SF-6.18	Box 1
House of the Bishop 1984	#SF-6.19	Box 1
Korean Ministry 1978	#SF-6.20	Box 1
Lambeth Conference	#SF-6.21	Box 1
Leahy Diocesan Reorganization	#SF-6.22	Box 1
<b>[REDACTED]</b>		
Life to Health	#SF-6.24	Box 1
<b>[REDACTED]</b>		
Kendal at Oberlin	#SF-6.26	Box 1
Trustees of the Estate	#SF-6.27	Box 2
Venture in Mission	#SF-6.28	Box 2
Women's Ordination	#SF-6.29	Box 2
Pamphlets	#SF-6.30	Box 2
Lebanon Hostage Crisis	#SF-6.31	Box 2
Partners in Mission 1979	#SF-6.32	Box 2
Suffragan Bishop Consecration	#SF-6.33	Box 2
Suffragan Bishop Nominees	#SF-6.34	Box 2
Marriage Encounter Bylaws	#SF-6.35	Box 2

Nehemiah Housing	#SF-6.36	Box 2
Nehemiah Plan (1 of 2)	#SF-6.37	Box 2
Nehemiah Plan (2 of 2)	#SF-6.38	Box 2
Institution	#SF-6.39	Box 2
Miscellaneous	#SF-6.40	Box 2
Long Island Council of Churches	#SF-6.41	Box 2
Van Scoyoc	#SF-6.42	Box 2
Mercer-Hill Controversy 1982	#SF-6.43	Box 2