



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
David Wurfel fonds**

Inventory #F0577

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F0577 - David Wurfel fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0577**Title:** David Wurfel fonds**Dates:** 1950-2000**Extent:** ca. 2.52 metres of textual material
ca. 200 photographs : col. slides ; 35mm.

Biographical Sketch/ Administrative History: David Wurfel (22 May 1929 - 12 November 2012) was a political scientist specializing in South East Asian history, politics and economic policy. Born in Seattle, Washington, Wurfel and his parents moved to the Philippines in 1947 where his father had been posted as a colonel in the Judge Advocate General's corps (JAG) for the Philippines Ryukyus Command. Wurfel's mother, Violet taught political science at the University of the Philippines and wrote her dissertation "U.S. assistance to the Philippine transition to independence". Wurfel himself enrolled at the University of the Philippines, where he took courses on Philippine government and history as well as Spanish and U.S. governance. It was during this period that Wurfel developed his interest in agrarian reform and social justice for farmers. In the spring of 1948 the Wurfel family travelled to Japan, where Colonel Wurfel was posted on temporary duty. In addition to travelling the countryside, David Wurfel observed the proceedings of the International War Crimes Tribunal involving Tojo and U.S-Soviet sessions of the Allied Council for Japan as well as visiting the Diet while the Lower House was in session. In December 1948 Wurfel travelled to Hong Kong and Bangkok. Upon returning to the United States in February 1949, Wurfel switched his focus at San Diego College (where he was previously planning for a career in law and politics) to South Asian political science and history. It was at this point that Wurfel considered registering for CO (conscientious objector) status which he later modified as IAO (army officer in non-combatative roles). Wurfel pursued his M.A. thesis on the agrarian policy of the Philippines at the University of California, Berkeley (1950-1953), where he studied with Hebertus J. van Mook, former governor-general of Indonesia, and Robert Scalapino. Wurfel pursued his PhD at Cornell University under the supervision of George Kahin, where his research focused on the Philippines. In September 1953 Wurfel was drafted into the American Army, where he worked in Kansas City in the Army Hometown News Service. In 1954 Wurfel was transferred to Tokyo to work in the research unit preparing background information for Army broadcasts to China and North Korea. During this period he also made connections with The Society of Friends (Quakers) missionaries working in Japan. After being discharged in July 1955 Wurfel conducted research in the Philippines as well as studying land reform in Korea and Taiwan. His research assistant in the Philippines, Casiano Flores, who would later be employed as Secretary of the Senate and Executive Secretary of the Commission on Appointments, became a long-time source for research materials and interview subjects. In September 1956, Wurfel visited Vietnam to study land reform under the ICA (International Co-operative Alliance) which was influential in the Diem regime. At that time agrarian reform was seen by CIA operatives in the area as the best strategy against communism in the region. As a result, Wurfel came into contact with Col. Edward Lansdale and Wolf Ladejinsky. At this time Wurfel also visited Cambodia, Indonesia, and Burma. Wurfel returned to the United States in 1957 to complete his dissertation in 1960. Wurfel was an election observer in South Vietnam in 1967 on behalf of the United Methodist Church and ran as an NDP candidate in the federal election of 1980 for the riding of Essex-Kent. He represented the United Church of Canada as part of the Asia Advisory Committee, participating in a delegation to Vietnam in 1986 and serving on the Task Group for Ethical Investment in the Middle East since 2006. He was also an observer in UN delegation at the 1999 referendum in East Timor. Wurfel has taught at the University of Missouri, the University of Windsor, and the International Christian University in Tokyo. He has been a visiting lecturer and professor at the University of Singapore, University of Michigan, the International University of Japan, the Institute of International Relations in Hanoi, the University of the Philippines and the University of Hawaii. He has served in the Peace Corps in Thailand, and served on the Executive Committee of the Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies (1986-1988) and as a senior research associate for the Centre

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(1995-2002). Since 2002 he has been a senior research associate for the York Centre for Asian Research at York University. David Wurfel is married to Katherine Watada Wurfel and has three children.

Scope and Content: Fonds consists of research sources, articles, reports, publications, political ephemera, correspondence and maps related to Wurfel's activities as a researcher in South East Asia. In particular, the materials relate to research funded by SSHRC between 1984-1985 to study of Japan and the Philippines and a 1994-1995 Mombusho grant to study Japanese NGOS in SE Asia, although there is material relating to earlier field research in the 1950s. Materials include research materials and resources specifically dealing with the Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma/Myanmar and Indonesia including the work of NGO (Non-governmental organizations) in these countries, the reputation and imagery of the Japanese in the Philippines, agrarian policies and reforms, foreign policy, and federal elections in the Philippines.

Language of material note: Some materials are in Japanese, Tagalog and Filipino.

Restrictions on Access and Use: To be determined.

Finding Aid: File lists available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/submissions/fonds/ON00370-f0000577.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2006-063, 2009-060, 2009-061, 2010-033. Further accruals may be expected.

Immediate source of acquisition: Materials donated by David Wurfel in 2006, 2009 and 2010.

Provenance Access Points: Wurfel, David

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