



**Special Collections and University Archives**

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**Willis E. Pratt Collection  
Manuscript Group 22**

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**Willis E. Pratt Collection, Manuscript Group 22**  
**Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Special Collections and University Archives**  
**4 boxes; 4 linear feet**

**Biographical Note**

Willis Everett Pratt (November 25, 1906-January 16, 1992) was a native of Pittsburgh. He received his BA from Allegheny College in 1927. He earned his MA (1932) and his Ph.D. in Administration (1940) from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Pratt began his career in education as an assistant superintendent of the Erie County School District. From 1938-1941, he served as Superintendent of Erie County Schools. Dr. Pratt was the President of Mansfield State Teachers College from 1941 to 1945.



World War II prompted Dr. Pratt to serve in the United States Army. From 1943 to 1945, Captain and later Major Pratt served with the 1675<sup>th</sup> regiment of the American Fifth Army, and later the British Eighth Army in the Mediterranean Theater throughout the Italian Campaign. First he served as a Civil Affairs Officer of Occupation Forces; second here was a Military Government Officer; and then he was a member of the Allied Commission before returning to the Occupation Forces. While overseas, Major Pratt continued his work in education while he was charged with the reorganization of schools and universities in 15 Italian provinces, during which time he reopened 11 Italian universities. Major Pratt also supervised and assisted in the preparation of numerous Italian textbooks. After being discharged from active duty on October 28, 1945, Dr. Pratt accepted the chairmanship of the Department of Education at Pennsylvania State University.

On July 1, 1948, Dr. Pratt became the 16<sup>th</sup> president of Indiana State Teachers College (ISTC). When Dr. Pratt arrived on campus, ISTC had 1,415 full-time students and 105 faculty members. Long-time Registrar Mary Louise Esch, Class of 1916, wrote about Dr. Pratt in 1968, "the growth and expansion of the college during his administration has been unparalleled. The campus now contains 62 acres on which are located 15 principal halls, 25 other buildings, and three athletic fields, the faculty has doubled in size, enrollment increased to more than 9,100 undergraduate students, and Indiana became the seventh largest college in Pennsylvania."

It was during Dr. Pratt's 20-year tenure as President that the rapid development and evolution of the college into its present status of state university occurred. Dr. Pratt has the distinction of being the last president of Indiana State Teachers College, the only president of Indiana State College, and the first president of Indiana University of

Pennsylvania (IUP). Dr. Pratt continued to serve in the U. S. Army Reserves until 1964, and he was instrumental in bringing ROTC to Indiana in 1957. He remained president of IUP until his retirement on December 31, 1968. According to the Board of Trustees, “The retirement of Dr. Pratt ends the longest tenure of office for any president of IUP since it was established as a Normal School in 1875.” To date, Dr. Pratt is the longest serving and arguably the most influential president of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. For a more detailed biography of Willis E. Pratt, visit <https://dspace.iup.edu/handle/2069/1183>

Constructed in 1969 and named for Dr. Willis E. Pratt, Indiana's long-tenured and progressive president, Pratt Hall was originally constructed to serve as the student union building of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Later, after the college became a university and the Hadley Union Building (HUB) was completed, Pratt Hall has continued to serve students by housing a variety of campus offices and classrooms. Dr. Pratt was an active member of the Indiana community, and he belonged to several civic organizations including the Rotary Club of Indiana and the Shakespeare Club.

### **Scope and Content**

The Willis E. Pratt papers are housed in three archival boxes. The collection includes Dr. Pratt's personal effects, including his diplomas, plaques and special awards that he earned or received. The collection also contains two scrapbooks documenting his service in World War Two.

Information and correspondence from his tenure as President of ISTC, ISC, and IUP are housed in Record Group 11: President's Office Files, Series B.

### **Provenance**

This collection of personal papers was donated by Dr. Pratt and his family.

### **Restrictions**

None.

### **Processor**

Records rearranged and inventory rewritten by Special Collections in 2001 and 2014.

### **Container List**

#### **Box 1 Dr. Willis Pratt (6 folders)**

1. Citation conferred by the All Pennsylvania College Alumni Association of Washington, DC to Willis Everett Pratt for outstanding contribution toward preserving and extending the American Ideals of Education, February 3, 1962
2. Photograph and Signature, no dates (see Record Group 81)
3. Publication: Nicholson, Arthur F. (1966). *The Story of a Man: Dr. Willis E. Pratt*. Indiana, PA: Henry Hall, Inc. Courtesy of the General Alumni Association of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Call Number (Special Collections copy): LA 2317 .P73 N53 1966

4. Publication: Dr. and Mrs. Willis E. Pratt – President and First Lady of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) edited by Samuel F. Furgiuele, no date (1968-1969) scanned
5. Folio Binder: University of Bologna, May 31, 1945 (Effects of World War II) in Italian: R. Università di Bologna, Referimento di Massima Sui Danni Subiti per Cause di Guerra. I. Rassegna Retrospettiva e Principali Dati Relativi all'Università di Bologna; II. Relazione Descrittiva ed Estimativa dei Danni di Guerra; III. Planimetrie Dimostrative dei Danni per Bombardamento; IV. Documentazione Fotografica (Photographic Documentation)
6. Photographs of Dr. Willis Pratt, including photographs with his wife, Pennsylvania Governor Bill Scranton, and IUP President John Welty (1985-1991) – these photographs were donated by Pratt's granddaughter Sharyn Fennell in 2021

### **Box 2 Dr. Willis Pratt Plaques and Awards (10 plaques and 1 envelope)**

#### **Plaques**

1. Distinguished service award, United States Junior Chamber of Commerce, no date
2. Pittsburgh Curbstone Coaches, College President of the year, Indiana State College, Dr. Willis Pratt, Pittsburgh National Bank, 1965
3. Dr. Willis E. Pratt, presented on this first day of May 1966 in recognition of the great assistance you have given in promoting the Greek system on the Indiana campus
4. Willis E. Pratt, Boss Cum Laude, IUPAES, May 21, 1966
5. Association of the United States Army awards a certificate of appreciation to Dr. Willis E. Pratt for outstanding services to the United States Army, October 12, 1966
6. For service to Youth, Willis E. Pratt, Indiana County YMCA, 1967
7. Department of the Army, Dr. Willis E. Pratt is awarded the Decoration for Distinguished Civilian Service, for distinguished service to the United States Army in active support of the Reserve Officers' Training Program, 1968
8. Presented to Willis E. Pratt, the Research Committee, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, in recognition of service to research, May 1968
9. The National Council of Industrial Management Clubs, presented to Dr. Willis E. Pratt, for outstanding contributions to the industries of Western Pennsylvania, WPIMC, 1969
10. Dr. Willis E. Pratt, President, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, in recognition of 20 years outstanding contribution to the Indiana community, Indiana County Chamber of Commerce, no date (1968-1969)

#### **Envelope**

11. Dr. Willis Pratt: World War Two medals and insignia (1943-1945) donated by his grandson Randy Baker in 2021

### **Box 3 Dr. Willis Pratt – World War Two Scrapbooks (2 scrapbooks)**

1. U. S. Army, World War II, 1943-1944 including certificates, photographs, and documents
2. U. S. Army, World War II, 1945, Major Pratt was awarded the Bronze Star

### **Box 4 Academic Regalia worn while Dr. Pratt was IUP President (1948-1968)**

1. Academic Gown
2. Mortar Board and Tassel
3. Doctoral Hoods (3)