Descriptive Summary
Title: J. Fred Buzhardt Papers, White House Central Files, 1970-1973
Dates: 1970-1973
Collection Number: 2455047
Creator/Collector: Buzhardt, J. Fred (Joseph Fred), 1924-1978
Extent: 35 linear feet, 10 linear inches; 82 boxes
Online items available: http://research.archives.gov/description/2455047
Repository: Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum
Abstract: Fred Buzhardt succeeded John W. Dean as Counsel to the President on May 10, 1973. The materials in this file group reflect all aspects of Buzhardt's White House employment and are arranged in series including the Subject Files and Legal Files of White House Counsel's Office attorneys Richard Hauser and George Williams, General Files, Case Files, Subject Files, Safe Files, Printed Legal Briefs and Books, Legal Papers and Transcripts, Staff Files, and Publications.
Language of Material: English
Access
Collection is open for research. Some materials may be unavailable based upon categories of materials exempt from public release established in the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974.
Publication Rights
Most government records are in the public domain, however, this series includes commercial materials, such as newspaper clippings, that may be subject to copyright restrictions. Researchers should contact the copyright holder for information.
Preferred Citation
Acquisition Information
These materials are in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration under the provisions of Title I of the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-526, 88 Stat. 1695) and implementing regulations.
Biography/Administrative History
Joseph Fred Buzhardt, Jr. was born February 21, 1924 in Greenwood, South Carolina. He attended Wolford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina before being appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he became a member of the Class of 1946 on July 1, 1943. He completed Air Cadet training and graduated with a B.S. degree from West Point as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps. While on graduation leave, Buzhardt married Imogene Sanders on June 14, 1946. He then served at McChord Air Force Base in Washington and in Japan before resigning his commission in 1950. Buzhardt returned to school after leaving the military and received his LLB law degree at the University of South Carolina, Columbia in 1952. He then practiced in his father's law firm in McCormich, South Carolina until he became a legislative aide to United States Senator Strom Thurmond in 1958. Buzhardt specialized in military affairs and remained on the Senator's staff until returning to private practice in 1966. In 1969, Buzhardt was appointed Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense and was Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel in 1969-70. He was then appointed General Counsel for the Department of Defense in 1970. On May 10, 1973, Buzhardt was appointed White House Counsel for matters pertaining to the Watergate investigation. He resigned from the position on August 16, 1974 but briefly remained in Washington, DC in order to assist with Gerald Ford's transition to President. Afterwards, he returned to private legal practice as counsel to the Dowling, Sanders, Dukes, Novit and Svalina law firm in Beaufort, South Carolina. J. Fred Buzhardt died of a heart attack in Hilton Head, South Carolina on December 16, 1978.
Scope and Content of Collection
Joseph Fred Buzhardt, Jr. was the Special White House Counsel for Watergate Matters (appointed May 10, 1973) and White House Counsel (appointed January 4, 1974) to President Richard Nixon. The files reflect his responsibilities in the position of Special White House Counsel for Watergate Matters as President Nixon's top legal defender during the hearings of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities and as the Administration's legal authority on the White House tapes. After just eight months as the Special White House Counsel for Watergate Matters, Buzhardt was elevated to the position of White House Counsel taking on additional duties unrelated to the President's Watergate defense. This resulted in a grueling schedule that took a toll on Buzhardt's health. On June 13, 1974, in the midst of 120-hour workweeks, the 50-year-old White House Counsel suffered a heart attack which left him incapacitated until just a few weeks prior to President Nixon's resignation. Buzhardt resigned as White House Counsel on August 16, 1974, one week after President Gerald R. Ford took office. The materials in this file group reflect all aspects of Buzhardt's White House employment and are arranged in series including the Subject Files and Legal Files of White House Counsel's Office attorneys Richard Hauser and...
George Williams, General Files, Case Files, Subject Files, Safe Files, Printed Legal Briefs and Books, Legal Papers and Transcripts, Staff Files, and Publications. In a general sense, the materials within these series include carbons, desk calendars, drafts, letters, memorandums, position papers, and press releases. Watergate related materials include summaries and transcripts of testimony in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and before the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, documents dealing with the operation and maintenance of the White House taping system, and transcripts of White House tapes. This file group also contains documents on petitions for Presidential pardons and commutations of sentences, impeachment, campaign finances, and various other non-Watergate related matters.