Descriptive Summary

Title: J. Fred Buzhardt Papers, White House Special Files, 1970-1973
Dates: 1970-1973
Collection Number: 6827252
Creator/Collector: Buzhardt, J. Fred (Joseph Fred), 1924-1978
Extent: 3 linear feet, 1 linear inch; 7 boxes
Repository: Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum
Abstract: Fred Buzhardt replaced John W. Dean on May 10, 1973, as Counsel to the President. The files identified with Buzhardt’s name are actually materials that were brought forward for his use. Many of the documents were created or received by John Dean and concerned the various activities of the Counsel to the President.

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

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
Although the materials cover the period September 1970 to February 1974, three of the boxes consist primarily of carbons of outgoing letters and memos from John W. Dean III and Fred Fielding, Counsel and Deputy Counsel to the President. It appears these materials were in the office files when J. Fred Buzhardt was appointed White House Counsel May 10, 1973. John Dean was fired on April 30, 1973. Fred Fielding, the Deputy Counsel to the President, remained on the staff. Approximately one and one half boxes contain memos or letters signed by J. Fred Buzhardt. The first three boxes of materials consist of a chronological file of incoming letters and memos, some originals, and outgoing carbons. The materials concern a variety of topics such as: consideration of endorsements and advertisements, use of the President’s name and the Presidential seal, requests for support to appointments to the White House legal office, the D.C. bar and the Supreme Court, requests for Presidential pardons and amnesty, legal briefs involving White House staff members and the President, advice on possible conflicts of interest, comments on bills pending before Congress such as the 18 year old vote, appearances of staff and administration figures before Congressional committees concerned with issues such as ITT and the milk producers. The last 2 boxes contain materials brought to the Special files from Buzhardt’s office on August 13, 1974, because they contained Top Secret materials. They consist of one box of proposals and plans for the future Nixon
Library at Camp Pendleton, California. Materials were labeled “Box 23 J. Fred Buzhardt and Assigned Special files Number #236.” Contents of box were stored in an accordion file labeled “RN Library at Camp Pendleton, Camp Pendleton, Camp Pendleton-50 Year Lease.” The last box contains clippings on Democratic candidates and major contributors and a large folder of materials concerning the advertisement in the New York Times calling for the impeachment of the President in 1972.

Additional Finding Aid