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## Display - British Columbia Archival Union List (BCAUL)

- Provenance:** Simon Fraser University. Archives, collector
- Title:** Gordon Shrum collection
- Dates:** 1922-1986
- Physical desc.:** 31.5 cm of textual records and other material
- Bio/Admin History:** Gordon Merritt Shrum (1896-1985) was a scientist, teacher, administrator, and the first Chancellor of Simon Fraser University. He was born in Smithville, Ontario in 1896. He entered the University of Toronto in 1913 with the intention of becoming a teacher. He joined the Canadian Officers' Training Corps in 1915 and joined the army the following year. After serving in France and receiving the Military Medal, he returned to finish his university studies. He received his BA in 1919, MA in 1921 and PhD in 1923 in physics. His notable achievements included liquefying helium in 1923 and discovering the origin of the auroral green line in the Northern Lights in 1925. Later that year he left Toronto to become professor of physics at the University of British Columbia. Over the next 36 years, he served that institution as an academic and administrator. During his time at UBC, Shrum became a colonel in the COTC, and received the Order of the British Empire during World War II. He was also appointed a director of the BC Research Council in 1944. In 1958, he served as chairman of a royal commission investigating the BC Power Commission. This led to his appointment as Chair of the BC Energy Board in 1959. In 1961, Shrum had to leave UBC because he had reached the compulsory retirement age of 65. He was immediately appointed head of BC Electric (later BC Hydro) by Premier W. A. C. Bennett. In that capacity he was responsible for the Peace River hydro project. Bennett also selected Shrum to create the new university recommended by the Macdonald Report of 1963. Shrum built Simon Fraser University, as it would be named, in 18 months earning it the title of "the Instant University." Shrum served as SFU's first chancellor until June 1969 and continued to head BC Hydro until 1972. In May 1975 he became director of the Vancouver Museum and Planetarium Association and reorganized the museum-planetarium complex at Vanier Park. Now in his eighties, Shrum was approached by Premier Bill Bennett to take charge of the financially-troubled Robson Square Courthouse project. He successfully completed the project and was next asked to develop a trade and convention centre for Vancouver. He stepped down from this project when the federal government took over construction. Gordon Shrum died at the age of 89 in 1985.
- Scope/Content:** The collection was compiled by the staff of the University Archives over a period of years. Collection is comprised primarily of interview material in the form of audio and video tapes, transcripts and notes. The material provides both a broad biographical overview of the life and achievements of Gordon Shrum and a description of his work at SFU in particular. The collection includes a copy of Shrum's doctoral thesis. Collection includes textual records, audio cassettes, audio reels, U-matic video tapes, and VHS video tapes: Doctoral thesis, 1922-1923; Biographical materials, 1973-1986; Shrum and SFU, 1973-[198-].
- Title source:** Title based on the contents of the collection.
- Physical desc. note:** Includes: 40 audio cassettes, 18 audio reels, 13 U-matic videos, and 2 VHS video cassettes.
- Finding aids:** A file list is available.
- Record No.:** F-31
- Repository:** [Simon Fraser University Archives](#)
- Online Finding Aid:** <http://www.sfu.ca/archives/F-31/F-31.html>
- Names:** Shrum, Gordon M., 1896-1985

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