

Walter P. Reuther Library
Wayne State University Archives
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Everett R. Phelps Papers
.75 Linear feet (1.5 MB)
1948-1961

Finding aid written by Kris Kniffen on February 5, 2015.

Accession Number: WSP000175

Creator: Everett R. Phelps

Acquisition: First donated to the Reuther Library in 1968, with a secondary deposit in 1981.

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Collection is open for research.

Use: Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library *Rules for Use of Archival Materials*.

Restrictions: Researchers may encounter records of a sensitive nature – personnel files, case records and those involving investigations, legal and other private matters. Privacy laws and restrictions imposed by the Library prohibit the use of names and other personal information which might identify an individual, except with written permission from the Director and/or the donor.

Notes: Citation style: “Everett R. Phelps Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], University Archives, Wayne State University.”

Separated Material: A photograph of Professor E. Ray Sherwood has been transferred to the Audio Visual Archives.

Abstract

The papers of Everett R. Phelps were placed in the University Archives by Professor Vaden W. Miles in 1968, with an additional donation following in 1981. These papers reflect his work for the Howard A. Donnelly Award Committee and his commitment to the use of television to make the physical sciences understandable and enjoyable to average viewers.

Everett R. Phelps received his A.B. from Clark University and his A.M. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. In 1922 Phelps became an instructor in the Detroit Junior College, predecessor to the Wayne University Liberal Arts College. In 1944 he advanced to the role of professor of Physics and Astronomy. He continued in this role until his death in December of 1961, serving as acting chairman of the department from 1947-1955. During his time at Wayne State University Dr. Phelps was actively involved in the committee of the Howard A. Donnelly Award, a financial award for members of the graduating class who were deemed to have been exceptional both in scholarship and in student activities.

Phelps was perhaps best known in Detroit for his television appearance as the Master of Ceremonies for the "Magic of Science" programs on WXYZ-TV and the Wayne State University Science programs on WJBK-TV. In addition, he appeared in a number of commercials as "Mr. Weather" for WXYZ in 1950, and as the weatherman on WJBK-TV from 1951 to 1958.

In addition to his prominent role in television, Professor Phelps was the author of several books and articles, a member of numerous professional organizations, and served as the honorary president of the Windsor Center of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. He was also locally prominent due to his numerous lectures to Detroit area community groups, averaging about 30 lectures each year on topics such as the solar system and the presentation of science on television.

Important Subjects: Televised science programs
WJBK-TV
WXYZ-TV
1949 Lunar Eclipse
Hallicrafters Television
Howard A. Donnelly Award

Arrangement

The papers in Box 1 include articles, correspondence, reports and television scripts, divided into two groups; one of which deals with Phelps' work on television, the second concerning the Donnelly Award. The material consists of papers donated in 1968. Box 2 contains materials donated in 1981 and deals entirely with Phelps' work with television, with the exception of a folder of Phelps' biographical information. Materials in this collection are grouped by subject and arranged chronologically thereunder.

Box 1

1. Television Programs: Proposed Speakers and Topics, n.d.
2. Television Programs: Proposed program schedules and topics, c. 1948-1950
3. Television Programs: "Magic of Science", 1948-1949
4. Television Programs: Correspondence, 1949, c. 1951
5. Television Programs: Lunar Eclipse, 1949
6. Television Programs: Hallicrafters Television Program, 1950
7. Television Programs: Wayne University Television Science, 1951
8. Television Programs: Weather reporting, Biographical sketch, Articles, 1949, 1951
9. Howard A. Donnelly Award: History, Recipients, 1925-1959
10. Howard A. Donnelly Award: Committee, 1949
11. Howard A. Donnelly Award: Committee, 1953-1956
12. Howard A. Donnelly Award: Committee, 1957-1959
13. Howard A. Donnelly Award: Committee, 1960-1961

Box 2

14. Phelps: Biographical, n.d.
15. Phelps: Personal Correspondence, c. 1950, 1961
16. Weather Program Correspondence, 1958-1959
17. Wayne TV Committee, c. 1957
18. Phelps – Community Lecture, No Date
19. TV Weatherman, c. 1950-1954
20. Water, 1948, Dec. 21
21. Applications, Bernouli's – Bascom – 1948, Dec. 28
22. Magnetism – Leo Walton – 1949, Jan. 4
23. Atoms and Atomic Energy – Wheatley, [1949], Jan. 11
24. The Solar System – [1949], Jan. 18
25. Chemistry in the Home – J.R. Bright – 1949, Feb. 1
26. Projectiles – R.L. Judkins – 1949, Feb. 8
27. Making a Telescope – K. Chamberlain – 1949, Feb. 15
28. Glassblowing – John Silk – 1949, Feb. 22
29. Tricks with Air Pressure – A. Piltz – 1949, Mar. 1
30. Sound – E.R. Bascom – 1949, Mar. 8
31. Liquid Air – Richard Hahn – 1949, Mar. 15
32. Bird Migration – Walter Nickell – 1949, Mar. 22
33. Stability – Fred Beddow – 1949, Mar. 29
34. Finding Hidden Natural Resources – Mr. Robt. Esling, 1949, Apr. 5
35. Television: Wayne TV Science Experiments, c. 1949-1953
36. Television: Hallicrafters Experiment, 1950-1951
37. Television: Science on Television, 1949
38. Television: Wayne University, 1951-1954 & 1957-1958
39. Television: Physics of the Atomic Age, 1958