



Guide to the Wayne State University Dance Department Records WSR000726

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	Wayne State University. Dance Department
Creator:	Murray, Ruth Lovell
Title:	Wayne State University Dance Department Records
ID:	WSR000726
Date [inclusive]:	1925-2015
Date [bulk]:	1940-1995
Physical Description:	14.5 Linear Feet (1 MB, 7 SB, 8 OS)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	<p>These records of the Wayne State University Dance Department date mostly from the mid- to late 20th century and include departmental documents, correspondence and teaching materials. Professional and some personal papers of Professor Ruth Lovell Murray, the director/chair of the Dance Workshop and Dance Program from 1928 to 1954, as well as of some other faculty, are part of this collection. The records begin in the era when the Wayne dance program was part of the Physical Education Department. The dance program moved from the Division of Health and Physical Education to the newly formed School of the Fine Arts in 1986 and became the Department of Dance. In 2000, the department was named after supporter and donor Maggie Allesee and merged with the Theater Department in 2012 to become the Maggie Allesee Department of Theater and Dance. Also included are records of the Ethel Perrin Club and the Dance Alumni Association, as well as issues of the Dance Workshop's newsletter, ChoreoBulletin, from 1954 to 1973. There are folders of programs, choreographic notes and other materials from many performances by students over the years, particularly the annual spring concert, as well as materials from visiting professional dancers and dance groups. Series 3 of these records includes photographs, posters and scrapbooks dating from the 1920s into the 21st century.</p>

Citation Style

"Wayne State University Dance Department, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

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History

The origins of the Wayne State University Dance Department date from 1928 when a group of students from the Detroit Teachers College, led by Ruth Lovell Murray, gave a dance concert. That group became the Dance Club of Detroit Teachers College; most of its members were physical education majors at the college. As Teachers College became part of Wayne University, the Dance Club developed by the 1940s into the advanced performance group, Dance Workshop, still led by Murray, who became part of Wayne's faculty. The Workshop was an extra-curricular activity offered alongside regular dance classes that were part of the Physical Education Department. It was a unique teaching and learning environment, with dancers and musicians collaborating in original works of many types of dance. The Dance Workshop built a large following in the Detroit community and around the state, especially in the Detroit Public Schools. Dr. Delia Hussey, a long-time supervisor of physical and health education for DPS, was an active Workshop member for many years, training teachers and bringing dance classes and performances to students of all levels. The first All-City Dance Group was begun in 1953. Other groups and clubs developed to bring many types of dance such as folk, swing, and square dance to the Wayne campus. The WSU Dance Alumni Association formed in 1954 to encourage modern dance in the metro Detroit community. It has established scholarship funds and held annual Concerts for Young Folks, as well as master classes and concerts. In the late 1970s, Professor Murray created a dance minor in the WSU Physical Education Department and established a scholarship fund for students. Eventually the dance program offered the degrees of Bachelor of Science in Dance and Master of Education in Dance Education, eventually offering the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance and a Master of Arts in Theater and Dance Teaching Artistry. Important dance faculty members of the early decades--dancers, teacher and choreographers--included Harriet Berg, Amy Ellsworth, Madeline Loren, Eva Powers, Julia Sanford, Linda Simmons, Anne Weave Warren, Ann Zirulnik and music director Elizabeth Gottesleben. Their work established increasing study of various styles, choreography, notation, dance history, production and pedagogy, while maintaining a commitment to performance and creativity. Also in the late 1970s, the WSU Theater Department invited the Dance Workshop to become part of its regular theater season and collaborate on productions. The dance program moved from the Division of Health and Physical Education to the newly formed School of the Fine Arts in 1986 and became the Department of Dance. In 2000, the department was named after supporter and donor Maggie Allesee and merged with the Theater Department in 2012 to become the Maggie Allesee Department of Theater and Dance. The dance program at WSU has always been recognized for its originality and use of the movement and music of many cultural traditions. It celebrated 90 years of dance in 2018-2019. At that time, it included 90

undergraduates and 20 graduate students, with three dance companies led by Director of Dance Meg Paul.

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Scope and Content

These records of the Wayne State University Dance Department date mostly from the mid- to late 20th century and include departmental documents, correspondence and teaching materials. Professional and some personal papers of Professor Ruth Lovell Murray, the director/chair of the Dance Workshop and Dance Program from 1928 to 1954, as well as of some other faculty, are part of this collection. The records begin in the era when the Wayne dance program was part of the Physical Education Department. Also included are records of the Ethel Perrin Club and the Dance Alumni Association, as well as issues of the Dance Workshop's newsletter, ChoreoBulletin, from 1954 to 1973. There are folders of programs, choreographic notes and other materials from many performances by students over the years, particularly the annual spring concert, as well as materials from visiting professional dancers and dance groups. Series 3 of these records includes photographs, posters and scrapbooks dating from the 1920s into the 21st century. Series 1: Administrative and teaching materials, department history, dance organizations, 1924-2010 Series 2: Dancers and Dance Groups, Performances and Events, 1940-2005 Series 3: Photographs, Scrapbooks, Oversize Materials, 1933-2015

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 3 series: Series 1 (Boxes 1-4), Series 2 (Boxes 5-6), Series 3 (Boxes 7-16).

Folders in each series are simply listed by their location within each box. They are not arranged, so any given subject may be dispersed throughout several boxes within each series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

Acquisition

These records were placed in the University Archives by dance faculty member Eva Powers in 1995. A small amount of material was added by Powers shortly before the collection was opened in 2019.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Aimee Ergas on May 22, 2019.

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.

Other Copies

Some photographs in this collection may exist in digital form held by the Wayne State University Department of Theater and Dance.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Michigan Dance Archives collections; Harriet Berg Papers.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Dance
- Dance companies
- Dance -- Study and teaching

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Jazz Number, oversize, 1956	Box 9	Item 13
Jazz Number, oversize, 1956 May 23	Box 9	Item 14
Air for the G String (possibly), oversize, 1946	Box 9	Item 15
Solo dancer, possibly Ruth Murray, oversize, 1936	Box 9	Item 16
Group dance, oversize, undated	Box 9	Item 17
Technique, group, oversize, 1937-1940	Box 9	Item 18
Group of four dancers, oversize, possibly 1936	Box 9	Item 19
Group dance, oversize, possibly 1936	Box 9	Item 20
Group of five dancers, oversize, possibly 1936	Box 9	Item 21
Scrapbook, Dance Workshop history, clippings, documents, programs, 1960-1972	Box 10	Item 1
Scrapbook, clippings, documents, programs, 1973-1981	Box 11	Item 1
Scrapbook, Health Education Club, clippings, photos, women's sports teams and dance groups, 1920s-1940s	Box 11	Item 2
Scrapbook, Wayne University Dance Group, documents, programs, clippings, 1924-1944	Box 12	Item 1
Scrapbook, Dance Workshop history, clippings, documents, programs, 1950-1959	Box 12	Item 2
Scrapbook, Dance Alumni history, documents, programs, 1954-1965	Box 13	Item 1
Scrapbook, Dance Department, clippings, documents, 1981-1985	Box 14	Item 1

Scrapbook, Dance Workshop, 50th anniversary, documents, correspondence, 1978-1979	Box 14	Item 2
Ruth L. Murray, awards and certificates, 1940-1985	Box 15	Folder 1
Five posters, oversize, 1959-2015	Box 15	Folder 2
Seven posters, oversize, 2001-2007	Box 16	Item 1

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