Summary

Creator: Gordon, Sol

Title: Owen Dodson collection

Date: 1943-1984

Size: 2 folders

Source: Gift, Gordon, Sol, 05/--/1991

Abstract: The Owen Dodson Collection consists principally of printed matter describing Dodson's career as a poet, playwright and novelist. There are also programs, obituaries and a memorial, a few of his poems and an extensive bibliography. Additionally, the collection contains a handwritten poem (1940's), postcards he wrote to his friend Sol Gordon, court documents and correspondence regarding Dodson's estate and his will.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Owen Dodson collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Owen Dodson, poet, novelist, playwright and educator who influenced the course of African-American drama. Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1914, he received a Bachelor's degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale University with the writing of the play "Divine Comedy" (1938).

Dodson wrote the novels "Come Home Early, Child," (1977) and "Boy at the Window" (1951) and books of poetry including "The Harlem Book of the Dead" and "Powerful Long Ladder." His plays, totalling fifteen, "Divine Comedy," "Garden of Time," and "Bayou Legend," among others, were more akin to poetic dramas than to plays. His short story "The Summer Five" won a Paris Review award.

Teaching at Atlanta University, Hampton Institute, and Spellman College, as well as serving in the U.S. Navy, helped prepare Dodson for the task that lay before him at Howard University in 1944, where he
taught or worked with many contemporary successful African-American actors. With two fellow professors, Dodson established Howard University as a primary source in African American theater. He remained at Howard as chairman of the Drama Department and poet in residence until he retired in 1969. Dodson lectured at colleges throughout the country and directed various colleges and repertory groups in major cities. In 1964 he was an advisory board member for the Harlem School of the Arts Community Theater. Dodson's death occurred in 1983.

Scope and Content Note
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Key Terms

Subjects
African American authors
African American dramatists
African American novelists
African American poets
African American teachers
African Americans in the performing arts

Titles
Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

Names
Gordon, Sol
Dodson, Owen, 1914-1983