



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Paul A. Distler collection of American Theatre Association materials

1950s-1987

*T-Mss 1996-022

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Distler, Paul A., 1937-

Title: Paul A. Distler collection of American Theatre Association materials

Date: 1950s-1987

Size: 2.1 linear feet (5 boxes)

Source: Donated by Paul Distler, 1996.

Abstract: The Paul A. Distler collection of American Theatre Association materials chiefly dates from 1968 to 1987 and holds publications, conference programs, and materials related to the organization's fiftieth anniversary in 1986.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

Conditions Governing Use: The author/creator retains copyright of materials. For information on obtaining permission to publish, contact the Theatre Division at theatrediv@nypl.org.

Preferred citation: Paul A. Distler collection of American Theatre Association materials, *T-Mss 1996-022. Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Creator History

The American Theatre Association (ATA) was founded in 1936 as the American Educational Theatre Association; the name was changed in 1972 when the organization was restructured. The group promoted theater and theater education, with emphasis on children's theater, theater in secondary schools and colleges, and community theater.

Paul A. Distler was a professor of theater and director of the School of Arts at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He served as American Theatre Association (ATA) president in 1977, and remained active as a member of the ATA until its dissolution in 1986. He is Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Theater at Virginia Tech.

Scope and Content Note

The Paul A. Distler collection of American Theatre Association materials chiefly dates from 1967 to 1987 and holds publications, conference programs, photographs, correspondence, and a small number of notes. Publications date from 1968 to 1987, and include an incomplete run of ATA's *Theatre News*, as well as publications from other groups within the ATA such as *Children's Theatre Review*, *The Secondary School Theatre Journal*, and *American College Theatre Festival Playwriting Awards Newsletter*. A small number of publications from other theater organizations are also present. The collection holds correspondence, notes, photographs, and slides related to the work of the ATA Golden Anniversary Committee. Photographs and slides consist of images of conferences and events, Winifred Ward, and officers through ATA's history. While most of the early photographs are later copies, the collection also holds a small number of original photographs from the 1950s.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in three categories: American Theatre Association Golden Anniversary material, Conference Programs, and Publications.

Key Terms

Names

American Educational Theatre Association

Container List

- b. 5 f. 6-7 American Theatre Association Golden Anniversary Celebration 1950s, 1968-1986

Conference Programs

- b. 4 f. 6-8 American Theatre Association Convention 1967-1975
- b. 5 f. 1-4 American Theatre Association Convention 1976-1984
- b. 5 f. 5 National Educational Theatre Conference 1986

Publications

- b. 2 f. 7 The Association for Theater in Higher Education 1987
- b. 3 f. 1-7 American Theatre Association Divisions 1968-1982
- b. 4 f. 1-5 American Theatre Association Divisions and Other Theater Organizations 1969-1986
- b. 1 f. 1-6 Theatre News 1968-1979
- b. 2 f. 1-6 Theatre News 1980-1985