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**Billy Rose Theatre Division**

Guide to the

**George Grizzard papers**

circa 1900-2007 (bulk 1951-2007)

\*T-Mss 2008-012

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, April 2013

## **Summary**

**Creator:** Grizzard, George

**Title:** George Grizzard papers, circa 1900-2007 (bulk 1951-2007)

**Size:** 11.84 linear feet (29 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by William Tynan, 2008.

**Abstract:** George Grizzard (1928-2007) was an American actor, working in theatre, film and television. The George Grizzard papers document his professional and personal life with scripts, correspondence, photographs, programs, publicity materials, writings, and ephemera.

**Access:** Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice maybe required. Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

**Copyright information:** For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

**Preferred citation:** George Grizzard papers, Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library.

## **Creator history**

George Grizzard was born in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, on April 1, 1928. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington D.C., and from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1949. Grizzard appeared in local amateur theatre during college and made his professional debut at Arena Stage in Washington in 1950, appearing in *The Delectable Judge*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Alice in Wonderland*.

In 1951, Grizzard went to New York, where he studied acting with Sanford Meisner, and made his television debut in an episode of *Crime Photographer*. He spent 1952 to 1954 back at the Arena Stage Theatre, working on over twenty productions. Returning to New York in 1955, he made his Broadway debut in *The Desperate Hours*, and worked regularly on television for the next few years, appearing in such series as *Star Tonight*, *Justice*, *Playwrights '56*, *The Kaiser Aluminum Hour*, and *Goodyear Playhouse*. Grizzard's stage career proceeded simultaneously, with Broadway shows like *The Happiest Millionaire* (1956), for which he won a Theatre World Award, and *The Disenchanted* (1958), for which he received his first Tony Award nomination.

In 1960 Grizzard made his feature film debut in *From the Terrace*, and continued to act on television steadily. His Broadway career continued, with roles in *Face of a Hero* (1960); *Mary, Mary*, (1961); *Big Fish, Little Fish* (1961); and *The Glass Menagerie* (1965). In 1962, Grizzard began a career-long association with the playwright Edward Albee, when he originated the role of George in Albee's most famous play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* The same year, Grizzard made one of his most memorable film appearances, in Otto Preminger's *Advise and Consent*.

Grizzard was also active in regional theatre during the late 1950s and the 1960s. In 1959 he played opposite Rosemary Harris in *Much Ado About Nothing* in Wellesley, Massachusetts; and in 1963 and 1964, he appeared in *Hamlet*, *Volpone*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Miser*, *Henry V*, and *Saint Joan* at the Guthrie Theatre. During the late 1960s, Grizzard's Broadway plays included *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running* (1967), Noel Coward's *Sweet Potato* (1968), and *The Gingham Dog* (1969). His television appearances included *Warning Shot* (1967); *A Case of Libel* (1968); *Teacher, Teacher* (1969); and *The Choice* (1969).

During the 1970s Grizzard acted on Broadway in *Inquest* (1970), *The Country Girl* (1972), *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972), *Crown Matrimonial* (1973), *The Royal Family* (1975), *California Suite* (1976), and *Man and Superman* (1978). Grizzard's 1970s and 1980s television and film work includes *The Front Page* (1970); *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* (1971); *Indict and Convict* (1974); *The Adams Chronicles* (1976); *Comes a Horseman* (1978); *Firepower* (1979); *Attica* (1980); *The Oldest Living Graduate* (1980); *Wrong is Right* (1982); *Midas Valley* (1984); *Embassy* (1985); *International Airport* (1985); *The Deliberate Stranger* (1986); and *False Witness* (1989). Some of Grizzard's off-Broadway productions in the 1980s include *The Beach House* (1985), at Circle Repertory Theatre; *Another Antigone* (1988), at Playwrights Horizons; and *Love Letters* (1989), at the Promenade Theatre.

In the 1990s and 2000s Grizzard appeared on Broadway in Albee's *A Delicate Balance* (1996), for which he won a Tony Award; *Judgment at Nuremberg* (2001); and *Seascape* (2005); and off-Broadway in *Beautiful Child* (2004); and *Regrets Only* (2006). He also appeared in the national tour of Harold Prince's revival of *Show Boat* (1995-1996) and many productions in such regional theatres as Hartford Stage, Yale Repertory, Bucks County Playhouse, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Paper Mill Playhouse, and the Berkshire Stage Festival. Film and television appearances from the 1990s and 2000s include *The Golden Girls* (1990), *Not in My Family* (1993), *Scarlett* (1994), *Sisters and Other Strangers* (1997), *Wonder Boys* (2000), *Small time Crooks* (2000), and Clint Eastwood's *The Flags of Our Fathers* (2006).

Grizzard died on October 2, 2007, in New York City, of complications from lung cancer. He was survived by his longtime companion, William Tynan.

### **Scope and content note**

The George Grizzard papers document the professional and personal life of American actor George Grizzard (1928-2007). Production files document Grizzard's theatre, film, and television appearances, with scripts, correspondence, photographs, programs, and publicity materials. Personal materials include correspondence between Grizzard and family members, honors, awards and tributes to Grizzard, friends, and colleagues; photographs of Grizzard's family, himself as a child, and his professional head shots; and writings.

This collection also includes live performance audiocassettes. Audio/visual materials may be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access. Inquiries regarding audio materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound at [rha@nypl.org](mailto:rha@nypl.org).

This collection includes Grizzard's Emmy Award and his Theatre World Award, which have been separated to the T-Cabinet, and will be available to researchers on request.

## **Arrangement**

The George Grizzard papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: Productions, 1955-2007

Series II: Personal Files, circa 1900-2007

## **Key terms**

### **Subjects**

Acting  
Motion pictures  
Television  
Television acting  
Theater -- 20th century

### **Occupations**

Actors

### **Names**

Grizzard, George

### **Special formats**

Correspondence  
Photographs  
Programs  
Scripts

## Container list

### **Series I: Productions, 1955-2007** (21 boxes. Arranged in alphabetical order)

Production files cover the theatre, film, and television projects, in which Grizzard appeared. Production files consist mainly of scripts. There are also photographs, programs, contractual negotiations, and publicity materials, such as, interviews, feature articles, flyers, and posters. Other Productions consist of materials from unidentified productions, or unsorted materials from productions which are not represented extensively.

- b.1 f.1-5 *Abdication-Advise and Consent*
- b.2 f.1-5 *All Honorable Men-Another Antigone*
- b.3 f.1-7 *Ansel Adams-Big Fish, Little Fish*
- b.4 f.1-7 *The Bluebonnet State-Child's Play*
- b.5 f.1-9 *Cocktail Hour-Cyrano*
- b.6 f.1-4 *Deathtrap-A Delicate Balance*
- b.7 f.1-9 *The Desperate Hours-Flags of our Fathers*
- b.8 f.1-9 *Flapjack-Happy Birthday, Wanda June*
- b.9 f.1-9 *Harvey-Judgment at Nuremberg*
- b.10 f.1-6 *Judgment at Nuremberg-Lost Colony*
- b.11 f.1-8 *Man and Superman-Murder, She Wrote*
- b.12 f.1-7 *Not in My Family-The Physicists*
- b.13 f.1-7 *Planet Fires-Regrets Only*
- b.14 f.1-6 *Regrets Only-Scarlett*
- b.15 f.1-6 *Screen Play-Show Boat*
- b.16 f.1-7 *The Show-Off-To Kill a Mockingbird*
- b.17 f.1-8 *To Kill a Mockingbird-Wrong is Right*
- b.18 f.1-8 *You Know I Can't Hear You When the Water's Running-Yma Dream, Other Productions*
- b.19 f.1-3 Other Productions  
Most of the photographs in the collection are in Box 19, Folder 1
- b.28 f.1-2 Other Productions
- b.29 f.2 Other Productions

**Series II: Personal Files, circa 1900-2007** (11 boxes. Arranged in alphabetical order)

Personal materials are divided into four categories: Correspondence; Honors, Awards, and Tributes; Personal miscellany; and Writings. Correspondence contains letters, cards and telegrams to and from Grizzard from 1951 to 2007. Correspondents include family members, such as Grizzard's mother, Mary Grizzard; father, George Cooper Grizzard, Sr.; and his cousin, Vernetta Dean. There is also correspondence from theatre notables such as Edward Albee, Lauren Bacall, Noel Coward, Hume Cronyn, John Gielgud, Guthrie McClintic, Roddy McDowall, Ellis Rabb, Jason Robards, and Budd Schulberg; and from politicians, such as Robert F. Kennedy, and President Lyndon B. Johnson. Honors, Awards and Tributes include those honoring Grizzard himself, as well as for friends, colleagues, and other artists, including Edward Albee, Bella Bartok, Tyrone Guthrie, Julie Harris, Helen Hayes, John Houseman, William Inge, Jason Robards, Maureen Stapleton, and Charles Strouse. Also included are materials on organizations such as HB Studios, the International Poetry Forum, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Honors, awards, and tributes are documented with programs, invitations, and other correspondence; photographs; and awards certificates. Personal miscellany includes early 20th century family photographs and materials relating to Grizzard's family, childhood, and youth. There are documents from his high school and college years, the latter of which were spent at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Also included here are programs from theatrical performances Grizzard attended in the 1940s, clippings on his career in general, biographies, interviews, professional headshots, and samples of his personalized stationary and Christmas cards. Grizzard's writings include drafts of letters, drafts of speeches, rehearsal notes and logs, fiction, and memoir excerpts.

- b.20 f.1-4 Correspondence, 1951-2007
- b.21 f.1-4 Correspondence, 1951-2007
- b.22 f.1-4 Correspondence, 1951-2007
- b.23 f.1-3 Honors, Awards, and Tributes, 1981-2006
- b.24 f.1-3 Honors, Awards, and Tributes, 1981-2006
  - b.29 f.1 Honors, Awards, and Tributes, 1981-2006
  - b.24 f.4 Personal Files and Photographs, circa 1900-2006
- b.25 f.1-6 Personal Files and Photographs, circa 1900-2006
- b.26 f.1-6 Personal Files and Photographs, circa 1900-2006
- b.27 f.1-5 Writings, circa 1900-2006