

University of Toronto Archives

Loryl MacDonald
February 1999



Marion Walker
Personal Papers
B1998-0036

Accession No.

B1998-0036

Provenance Heading

Walker, Marion Dorothy

Records [1920?]-1998, 3.53 m textual; graphic; works of art**Access:** All material is open.**Biographical Note:**

Marion Dorothy Walker (1919 - 1998) was a production assistant at Hart House Theatre and a professor in the Department of Fine Arts, University of Toronto.

Ms. Walker was born in Toronto, September 23, 1919. Her father, George Walker, was the head of Woolworth's Canada. Ms. Walker attended Bishop Strachan School. During her early years, she was a figure skater and talented golfer. She won the Ontario Junior Girl's Golf Tournament in 1939 and 1940.

Ms. Walker's main interests, however, were in the arts. She received her B.A. in English and Fine Arts in 1942 from the University of Toronto. When Hart House Theatre opened after the war in 1946, Ms. Walker became its Production Assistant. In this capacity, she designed and painted sets, made props and created costumes. From her Hart House Theatre work, she earned a reputation for her stage flair, sensitivity to colour and line, and daring use of unusual materials.

Ms. Walker eventually left the Theatre in 1957 to become a librarian and reader in the University of Toronto's Department of Fine Arts. She also began graduate studies in art history. Upon completing her M.A. in 1963, Ms. Walker was appointed Special Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts. Later, in 1977, she became Assistant Professor in the Department. She remained in this position until her retirement in 1985. She also served as Special Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts' Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, between 1966 and 1976. Ms. Walker's teaching and research interests were the history of costume and stage design. As a result, she spent many summers in Europe, especially Italy, investigating the works of early theatre designers, Filippo Juvarra, Ferdinando Bibiena, Fratelli Gallieri and Pietro Gonzaga.

Marion Walker passed away from cancer on June 7, 1998. In commemorating her life, Ms. Walker's friend and colleague, Phyllis Grosskurth, wrote in the *Globe and Mail*, "She was respected by her peers, loved by her students, adored by her friends. No one will ever fill the particular emptiness she left in our lives, but those her knew her have been enriched beyond measure."

Scope and Content:

This accession consists of the personal records of Marion Dorothy Walker. The records document Ms. Walker's activities as a production assistant for Hart House Theatre, as a professor in the University of Toronto Department of Fine Art and as a creative writer. Types of records include: personal correspondence, manuscripts, theatre programmes, playbills, lecture notes, research notes, scrapbooks, costume designs, stage designs, photographs and slides. This accession is arranged in the following 4 series:

- Series 1 Early Biographical Information
- Series 2 Personal Correspondence
- Series 3 Hart House Theatre
- Series 4 Department of Fine Art
- Series 5 Fiction

Related Records:

For Hart House Theatre's administrative records, programmes, costumes designs and set designs, see accessions A1973-0039, A1975-0009 and A1977-0048. For the personal records of Hart House Theatre director, Robert Gill, please see accessions B1977-0046, B1973-0012, B1995-0028 and B1995-0033.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**SERIES 1 Early Biographical Information**

[1921?]-[1942?] .07m textual; graphic

The records in this series provide biographical information on Marion Walker's early life, 1921-1942. Series includes 7 photographs. Subjects are: 5 portraits of Marion Walker; the Phi Beta sorority, 1940; and the University College graduating class, 1942. Also included is a scrapbook of newspaper clippings concerning Ms. Walker's amateur golfing activities, 1937-1941. See Box /001

SERIES 2 Personal Correspondence

1936 – 1998 [predominant 1950's] .34 m textual

This series consists of chronologically arranged, incoming personal correspondence, documenting Ms. Walker's personal life from 1936 to 1998. Correspondents include family, friends, Hart House Theatre colleagues, sorority sisters and fine art students. Major correspondents are: Burgon Bickersteth, Pat Carson, Norman Endicott, Robert Gill and James Reaney. The letters, mostly written in the 1950's, document Ms. Walker's friendships, romances, interest in theatre, and travels throughout Europe. See Boxes /002 and /003

SERIES 3 Hart House Theatre

1946-1974 [predominant 1950's] .17 m textual; graphic; works of art

Marion Walker was Production Assistant at Hart House Theatre from 1946 to 1957. Under the directorship of Robert Gill, she designed sets and costumes for each of the Theatre's annual four plays. Her first production was *St. Joan*, starring Charmian King. Other early performers who worked with Ms. Walker at Hart House Theatre included Kate Reid, Donald Sutherland, and William Hutt.

The records in this series pertain to Ms. Walker's involvement with Hart House Theatre. Textual records include scripts 1946, annotated Hart House Theatre programmes 1946 – 1957, and obituaries for Robert Gill, 1974.

Series also includes approximately 100 photographs of various productions for which Ms. Walker designed costumes and sets. The photographs depict various scenes, actors and set designs. Productions represented are: *Romeo and Juliet*, 1947; *Julius Caesar*, 1948; *the Seagull*, 1948; *The Skin of Our Teeth*, 1948, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1948; *Crime and Punishment*, 1949; *Othello*, 1949; *Fortune My Foe*, 1950; *The Guardsman*, 1950; *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, 1950; *Medea*, 1950; *Henry IV*, 1950; *Marco Millions*, 1950; *Richard II*, 1951; *Pygmalion*, 1951; *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, 1951; *The Admirable Crichton*, 1952; *The Winslow Boy*, 1952; *Macbeth*, 1952; *The Wild Duck*, 1953; *The School for Wives*, 1956; and *The Innocent*, 1957.

Series also contains 8 sketchbooks of costume designs for the following Hart House productions: *The Internal Machine*, 1946; *Othello*, 1949; *Medea*, 1950; *Richard II*, 1951; *School for Wives*, 1956; *Hamlet*, [n.d.]; and *King Lear*, [n.d.].
See Boxes /007 to /009

SERIES 4 Department of Fine Art

[197-] – 1985

.34m

textual; graphic; works of art

Between 1957 and 1985, Marion Walker was a professor in the history of stage and costume design in the Department of Fine Art and its Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama. In this capacity, she taught Stage Design (FAS 333Y) and 18th Century Stage Design (FAS 435). She also assisted in the staging of the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama's 1974 productions of *Marsh Hay* and *T'is a Pity She's a Whore*.

The records in this series document Ms. Walker's teaching and research activities in the Department of Fine Art. The textual records mainly consist of subject files containing research and lectures notes. Topics covered include: correspondence, Baroque theatre, Ferdinando Bibiena, Comedia dell' Arte, Elizabethan theatre, Fratelli Gallieri, Greek theatre, Filippo Juvarra, Renaissance theatre, opera, research grants and Wagner's *The Ring*. Also included is a scrapbook commemorating Ms. Walker's retirement from the Department in 1985.

This series also consists of approximately 130 slides used to teach the History of Stage and 18th Century Stage Design. Subjects include the stage designs of *Marsh Hay*, Ferdinando Bibiena, Filippo Juvarra, Fratelli Gallieri and Pietro Gonzaga.

Also included are 10 stage plans created by Ms. Walker for the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama's 1974 productions of *Marsh Hay* and *T'is a Pity She's a Whore*.

The series also contains one scrapbook of costume designs for the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama's production of *Fuente Ovejuna (The Sheep Well)*, [n.d.].

See Boxes /004, /005, /007, and /010

SERIES 5 Fiction

[194-?] – [197-?]

.17 m

textual

The series documents Ms. Walker's creative writing and includes correspondence with publishers, research notes, as well as drafts of short stories and poems.

See Box /006