Collection Summary
Title: Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers
Span Dates: 1921-1993
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1940-1959)
ID No.: MSS85114
Creator: Gordon, Ruth, 1896-1985
Creator: Kanin, Garson, 1912-1999
Extent: 5,900 items ; 19 containers ; 7.6 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Author and actress Ruth Gordon and her husband Garson Kanin, actor, author, producer, and director. Correspondence with colleagues in the entertainment industry.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Bagnold, Enid--Correspondence.
Beaton, Cecil, 1904-1980--Correspondence.
Chevalier, Maurice, 1888-1972--Correspondence.
Cohn, Harry, 1891-1958--Correspondence.
Cukor, George, 1899-1983--Correspondence.
Evans, Edith, Dame, 1888-1976--Correspondence.
Guthrie, Tyrone, Sir, 1900-1971--Correspondence.
Holliday, Judy.
Mainbocher, 1891-1976--Correspondence.
Olivier, Laurence, 1907-1989--Correspondence.
Schary, Dore--Correspondence.
Tracy, Spencer, 1900-1967.

Organizations
Columbia Pictures Corporation. It should happen to you. 1954.

Subjects
Fashion--United States.
Motion picture actors and actresses.
Motion picture industry--United States.
Symbolism.
Theater--England--London.
Theater--United States.
World War, 1939-1945--Theater and the war.

Occupations
Actors.
Authors.
Motion picture directors.
Motion picture producers.
Theatrical directors.
Theatrical producers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Ruth Gordon, author and actress, and Garson Kanin, actor, author, director, and producer, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 2004. Material given by Ed Slakter in 2003 was added to the collection in 2006.

Transfers

A dictaphone record has been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where it is identified as part of these papers.

Related Material

The Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers complement separate collections of their papers, the Ruth Gordon Papers and the Garson Kanin Papers, which are also held by in the Manuscript Division.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Ruth Gordon

Date	Event
1915	Appeared as Nibs in Peter Pan (play)
1918	Married Gregory Kelly (died 1927)
1936	Appeared as Margery Pinchwife in The Country Wife (play)
1940	Appeared as Mary Todd Lincoln in Abe Lincoln in Illinois (film)
1942	Married Garson Kanin
1946	Wrote Years Ago (play)
1949  Wrote *Adam's Rib* (film)
1952  Wrote *Pat and Mike* (film)
1953  Wrote *The Actress* (film based on play *Years Ago*)
1955  Appeared as Dolly Levi in *The Matchmaker* (play)
1965  Appeared as Mrs. Clover in *Inside Daisy Clover* (film)
1968  Appeared as Minnie Castevet in *Rosemary's Baby* (film)
1969  Won 1968 Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in *Rosemary's Baby*
1971  Appeared as Maude in *Harold and Maude* (film)
1978  Appeared as Ma Boggs in *Every Which Way But Loose* (film)

**Garson Kanin**  
**Date**  
1912, Nov. 24  Born, Rochester, N.Y.
1932-1933  Attended American Academy of Dramatic Arts, New York, N.Y.
1933  Appeared as Tommy Deal in *Little Ol' Boy* (play)
1942  Married Ruth Gordon (died 1985)
1946  Wrote *Born Yesterday* (play)  
      Directed *Years Ago* (play)
1949  Wrote *Adam's Rib* (film)
1952  Wrote *Pat and Mike* (film)
1955  Wrote and directed *The Diary of Anne Frank* (play)
1964  Directed *Funny Girl* (play)
1990  Married Marian Seldes
1999, Mar. 13  Died, New York, N.Y.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Ruth Gordon (1896-1985) and Garson Kanin (1912-1999) span the years 1921-1993, with the bulk of the material dating from 1940 to 1959. Gordon and Kanin were a married couple prominent in the American theater and film industry as actors and writers for half a century. They used their collaborative relationship as a model for their film *Pat and
Mike starring Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. The papers consist mainly of correspondence with attached and related newspaper clippings and printed ephemera. An addition to the collection includes more correspondence and miscellaneous personal files.

The correspondence contains incoming letters and copies of outgoing letters. Chief correspondents are Enid Bagnold, Cecil Beaton, Hugh (“Binkie”) Beaumont, Main R. Bocher, Maurice Chevalier, Harry Cohn, George Cukor, Edith Evans, Tyrone Guthrie, Laurence Olivier, and Dore Schary. Letters from Bagnold discuss the symbolism and characterizations in the plays The Chalk Garden and A Matter of Gravity. The correspondence from Bocher contains an inventory of Gordon’s collection of haute couture designed for her by Mainbocher. The letters of Cohn and Cukor provide insight into film personalities, especially Judy Holliday and Spencer Tracy. They discuss all aspects of production for films such as The Marrying Kind, The Actress, and It Should Happen to You. Evans and Guthrie describe the state of London theater during World War II.

An addition contains further correspondence as well as contracts, insurance policies, investment material, printed matter, and Gordon's and Kanin's marriage certificate.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged alphabetically by correspondent, followed by an addition arranged alphabetically by type of material.
## Container List

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| BOX 1     | Correspondence  
Acheson, Dean and Alice, 1961-1969, undated  
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Bloomgarden, Kermit, 1955  
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| BOX 3     | Bolger, Ray and Gwendolyn, 1950, 1987, undated  
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