

Richard D. Thompson:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Thompson, Richard D.
Title:	Richard D. Thompson Papers
Dates:	1953-1972
Extent:	5 document boxes (2.1 linear feet), 3 oversize folders (osf)
Abstract:	The Richard D. Thompson Papers consist of personal and committee papers, including copies of letters sent, reports, proposals, and a draft directory concerning professional theater design consultation originating from his work as director of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT). Thompson's student papers from UT Austin and Yale are also included in the collection, as is his salesman's catalog from Ward Leonard Electric Company.
Call Number:	Performing Arts Collection PA-00093
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
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Administrative Information

Acquisition: Gift, 1982?; gift transfer, 2007

Processed by: Erin Lawrimore, 2001; Helen Adair, 2007; Daniela Lozano, 2017

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

Richard D. Thompson (1933-2007) was a professional lighting consultant and a sales engineer for Ward Leonard Electric Company. His father was a distinguished professor of aeronautical engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. Thompson earned a B.F.A. from The University of Texas at Austin in 1955 and an M.F.A. in Technical Theatre from the Yale School of Drama in 1961. He was among the earliest members of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) in the 1950s, and was an active member for much of his life. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer in 1963, and worked with USITT to recommend revisions to national theatre safety regulations. Thompson died on February 12, 2007.

Scope and Contents

The Richard D. Thompson papers, 1953-1972, consist of personal and committee papers, including copies of letters sent, reports, proposals, and a draft directory concerning professional theater design consultation. These papers mostly originate from his work as director of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT). Thompson's student papers from UT Austin and Yale are also included in the collection, as is his salesman's catalog from Ward Leonard Electric Company. The papers are organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1968-1971; II. Organization and Committee Reports, 1960-1972; and III. Miscellaneous, 1953-1970, undated.

Related Material

Thompson's 1961 Yale thesis is located in the Ransom Center Library. Additional material relating to the early years of USITT can be found in the papers of John Rothgeb.

Series I. Correspondence, 1968-1971

1968

Container 1.1

1969

Container 1.2

1970

Container 1.3

1971

Container 1.4

Series II. Organization and Committee Reports, 1960-1972

National Council of the Arts in Education, 1962-1968	Container 1.5-7
National Council on the Arts and Government, 1962-1968	Container 1.8
USITT	
Engineering Committee	
Correspondence, 1961-1970	Container 1.9
Subcommittee on Acoustics, 1970-1971	Container 1.10
Committee reports, 1961-1965	Container 1.11-12
Committee minutes, 1961-1971	Container 1.13
Standards recommendations, 1969-1971	Container 2.1
Committee on Theatre Architecture	
Reports, 1963-1970	Container 2.2
Reports and miscellaneous, 1960-1971	Container 2.3
Miscellaneous information, 1961-1972	Container 2.4-6, 3.1-2, osf 1
Treasurer reports, 1971	Container 3.3
Financial statements, 1968-1971	Container 3.4
Miscellaneous administrative reports, 1965-1967	Container 3.5
Administrative Committee, supplements, committee minutes, 1964-1970	Container 3.6-8
Membership Committee, committee reports, 1971	Container 3.9
Report on potential sustaining members, 1971	Container 3.10
Convention information	
1968	Container 3.11
1969	Container 3.12

1970

Container 4.1

Confrontation programs correspondence, 1970

Container 4.2

Consultant's directory project correspondence, 1967

Container 4.3

American Theatre Association. Newsletters and notes, 1960-1972

**Container
4.4-6**

Series III. Miscellaneous, 1953-1970, undated

Published articles, 1961-1970	Container 4.7
Student work	
History of Stage Lighting. Drama 355 at UT Austin, 1954	Container 4.8, osf 1
Hollywood Music Circus: A Final Project in Theater Manag[e]ment. Drama 121B at Yale, 1960	Container 4.9
The Lark: A Costume Plot. Drama 115 at Yale, 1960	Container 4.10
Lighting of a Music Circus Utilizing an Aluminum Geodesic Dome for the Theater. Drama 134 at Yale, 1959	Container 5.1, osf 1
A Proposed Switchboard for the Drama Department at The University of Texas. Drama 219, 1953	Container 5.2-3, osf 2
Switchboard Project for Drama 365. UT Austin, 1954	Container 5.4, osf 3
Ward Leonard Electric Company, Salesman's Master Catalog, looseleaf binder, undated	Container 5.5