Stan Burns Collection

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive
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2019
Descriptive Summary
Title: Stan Burns Collection
Dates: 1951-1980
Collection Number: WGF-MS-075
Creator/Collector:
Extent: 10 Linear Feet
Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048
Abstract: The Stan Burns Collection contains television scripts and unproduced film scripts accumulated throughout his career as a writer.
Language of Material: English
Access
Available by appointment only.
Publication Rights
The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
Stan Burns Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Acquisition Information
Donated by Stan Burns, on 01/12/2002
Biography/Administrative History
Stan Burns was an Emmy-winning variety comedy writer best known as a writer for Steve Allen. Burns was born on September 4, 1923 in Brooklyn, New York. After graduating high school, he joined the Marines and served in the South Pacific during World War II. After the war, he returned to New York and embarked on a four decade long comedy writing career. His first TV series work was in 1950 on Broadway Open House. In 1953, Burns met and became the first writer for Steve Allen on his local late night talk show. The show went national in 1954 and eventually became known as The Tonight Show. Burns remained with Allen throughout his years as host of Tonight [The Tonight Show] and subsequent variety and talk shows. Burns would expand the writing team to include Herb Sargent and Bill Dana among others. Burns followed Allen to LA in 1959 and worked with him until the mid-1960s. He went on to write for other variety shows and sitcoms such as The Carol Burnett Show, The Mary Tyler Moore Hour, Get Smart, and The Smother Brothers. He created, along with writing partner Mike Marmer, a short-lived Saturday morning children’s show Lancelot Link: Secret Chimp which filmed real chimpanzees and dubbed the footage over with human voices. Stan Burns garnered one WGA Award nomination for the Steve Allen Show as well as four Emmy nominations and one win for work with Steve Allen, Carol Burnett and Flip Wilson. Burns died of heart failure on November 5, 2002. He is survived by his wife Shirley, his daughters, Laurie and Bonnie, son-in-law, Martin Green; and grandchildren, Adam, Josh and Megan.
Scope and Content of Collection
The Stan Burns Collection is organized into three series. Series I: Television Scripts, 1951-1980 is comprised of produced episodic television scripts from shows including The Big Show, The Carol Burnett Show, The Mary Tyler Moore Hour, The Mac Davis Show, Kraft Music Hall, Get Smart, Milton Berle Show, The Smother Brothers, The Flip Wilson Show, and The Steve Allen Show. The majority of these scripts are digital. Series II: Film Scripts, 1931-1980 is comprised of Burn’s produced and unproduced scripts for feature films as well as features written by other writers that Burns used as reference. Series III: Professional Papers contains ephemera from throughout Burn’s career including Lancelot Link: Secret Chimp stickers and early comedic bits written by Woody Allen. Also included are audience question cards, many with typed joke answers, created for the Steve Allen Show, c.1962-1964.
Indexing Terms
Teleplays
Television writers