Dee Caruso Papers

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2018
Dee Caruso Papers

Descriptive Summary
Title: Dee Caruso Papers
Dates: 1960-2007
Collection Number: WGF-MS-043
Creator/Collector: Caruso, Dee, 1929-2012
Extent: 9.2 Linear Feet
Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048
Abstract: The Dee Caruso Papers, 1960-2007, consist mostly of produced television and film scripts and treatments of unproduced TV shows and film. Some of the popular shows include The Jerry Lewis Show, Get Smart, The Monkees, The Red Skelton Hour, and The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour. This collection also contains personal and professional documents like promotional materials for films, course materials and instruction manuals from Caruso’s UCLA career, and issues of Sick magazine, which he worked on.
Language of Material: English
Access
Majority of materials stored off site. One week advance notice required for retrieval.
Publication Rights
The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the researcher.
Preferred Citation
Dee Caruso Papers. Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Acquisition Information
Donated by Dee's wife Sandra Caruso, June 16, 2016.
Biography/Administrative History
Dee Caruso, born on April 27, 1929 in New York, is known for his work on the television shows Get Smart, The Monkees, and The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour. He got his start writing for nightclub acts such as Don Adams (of Get Smart! fame) and Allen & Rossi. From there he went on to work with some of the brightest stars in comedy, including Jerry Lewis and Red Skelton. He studied at Syracuse University, where he got his BA in American Literature and Journalism, and UCLA where he received his MA in Cinema. In addition to his screenwriting work, Caruso worked as a writer and editor on Sick magazine, a predecessor to Mad magazine, from 1960 to 1964. In 1965 he married his wife Sandra Maley and relocated to Los Angeles to work in television. Teaming up with writer Gerald Gardner, they worked on a number of different television programs. They wrote 22 episodes of The Monkees, were head writers for Get Smart, wrote for The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, Happy Days, What’s Happening!!, The Bill Cosby Show, The Ghost & Mrs. Muir, and Gilligan’s Island and produced The Red Skelton Hour. Together they were also nominated for a Primetime Emmy for their work on David Frost’s That Was The Week That Was. Caruso and Gardner occasionally wrote specials for famous comedians including Jack Benny, Jerry Lewis, Don Rickles, Debbie Reynolds, Robin Williams and Bill Cosby. While primarily known for writing for television, Caruso and Gardner also co-wrote a number of feature films. The most notable of these was the Disney film The World’s Greatest Athlete in 1973, which starred Tim Conway, Jan-Michael Vincent and John Amos. They also wrote the screenplay for the Jerry Lewis film Which Way to the Front? in 1970 and television movies including How to Break Up a Happy Divorce, and Break Up. Caruso co-wrote the film Doin’ Time in 1985 with Frenelle Silver and Ron Zwang. After retiring from screenwriting, Caruso taught What’s Funny, What’s Not, with his wife at UCLA Extension for 10 years, before teaching screenwriting for 20 years in the UCLA film school. Dee Caruso died on May 27, 2012 at the age of 83 and was survived by his wife of 47 years, Sandra Caruso.
Scope and Content of Collection

Dee Caruso Papers

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Brothers, Love American Style, Tay-Gar King of the Jungle, How to Break Up a Happy Marriage (a film based on the book Mortmain), Drag: A Comedy, Beatlemania, and several others. Subseries B: Treatments, 1960-2007, contains treatments of unrealized television shows and films, including The Closet President, The Italian Sports Car Agency, This is Barney Starker, A Slight Case of Murder, The Spy in E-Flat, and several others. Series III: Professional Papers, 1960-2007, contains original manuscripts for two unpublished books by Caruso, What’s Funny, What’s Not, and The New Screenwriters Handbook. It also contains promotional materials for The World’s Greatest Athlete (posters, newspaper clippings, Disney correspondence) and for That Was the Week that Was, The Pickle Brothers, and The Hertz Brothers. Also included are course materials for a UCLA Class entitled “Intro to Comedy Writing in Film,” a number of copies of Sick magazine as well as various story ideas and cover mockups, and many pages containing hundreds of Caruso’s typed jokes.

Indexing Terms
Made-for-TV movies
Screenplays
Television scripts
World’s greatest athlete (Motion picture) Sick (Magazine)
Screenwriters
Television Writers