Jackson Gillis Papers

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive
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2018
Descriptive Summary
Title: Jackson Gillis Papers
Dates: 1946-1992
Collection Number: WGF-MS-046
Creator/Collector: Gillis, Jackson, 1916-2010
Extent: 8.5 Linear Feet
Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048
Abstract: The Jackson Gillis Papers, 1946-1992, contains manuscripts, correspondence, and development materials created by the television writer Jackson Gillis. The bulk of the collection consists of produced and unproduced manuscripts written by Gillis over his career.
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 patron.
Preferred Citation
Jackson Gillis Papers. Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Acquisition Information
Donated by Candida Gillis, November 16, 2011.
Biography/Administrative History
Jackson Gillis was a prolific television writer whose career spanned over four decades and covered nearly every television genre and format. Gillis was born on August 21, 1916 in Kalama, Washington to Ridgway, a highway engineer, and Marjorie Lyman, a piano teacher. When Gillis was a teenager, his family moved to California where he attended Fresno State University and graduated from Stanford. Following Stanford, he pursued a career in acting, performing at London’s Westminster Theater and eventually appearing at the esteemed Barter Theater in Virginia where he met fellow actor Patricia Cassidy. Gillis and Cassidy soon wed and remained married for 62 years until Cassidy’s death in 2003. During WWII, Gillis served in the Pacific as an Army intelligence officer. Following the war, he and Patricia moved to Los Angeles, where he began a career writing for radio. Gillis wrote for such radio shows as “The Whistler” and “The Amazing Mrs. Danbury” and became a member of the Writers Guild of America in 1954. In the 1950’s, Gillis transitioned to writing for television and worked steadily in the medium for over 40 years. He’s perhaps best known for his work on “Adventures of Superman,” “The Mickey Mouse Club,” “Perry Mason,” on which he served as the show’s script consultant from 1959-1960 and producer from 1960-1961, and “Columbo,” for which he was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Writing with the episode “Suitable for Framing.” His numerous credits include “Racket Squad,” “Lassie,” “Sugarfoot,” ”Lost in Space,” “Wild, Wild, West,” “The Man from U.N.C.L.E.,” ”Bonanza,” “Ironside,” “Starsky and Hutch,” and “Murder She Wrote,” among many others. In addition to his screenwriting career, Gillis also authored two novels, The Killers of Starfish in 1977 and Chainsaw in 1988. After a long and successful television writing career, he retired from screenwriting in 1996 and moved with his wife to Moscow, Idaho. Gillis passed on August 19, 2010 at the age of 93. He is survived by his daughter Candace Gillis and one grandson.
Scope and Content of Collection
Correspondence and Treatments, 1956-1988, contains notes, ideas, outlines, and correspondence pertaining to Gillis’ produced and unproduced television work.

**Indexing Terms**

Made-for-TV movies
Television scripts
Superman (Television program : 1952-1958) Lassie (Television program) Perry Mason (Television program) Columbo (Television program) Murder, she wrote (Television program)
Television writers