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## **Guide to the William Duncan Allen Papers**

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## Guide to the William Duncan Allen Papers

### Collection number: MS 70

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** William Duncan Allen papers

**Dates:** 1975-1994

**Bulk Dates:** 1975-1977

**Collection number:** MS 70

**Creator:** Allen, William Duncan.

**Collection Size:** 1.5 linear feet (1 oversized box)

**Repository:** African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Abstract:** The William Duncan Allen papers include photographs, certificates, plaques, and a diploma documenting the life and career of concert pianist, teacher, and music critic William Duncan Allen. The bulk of the papers consist of 288 photographs of Allen's music colleagues and friends at receptions in the Bay Area and while traveling in Europe in 1975-1977.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

### Access Restrictions

Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

### Publication Rights

Permission to publish from the William Duncan Allen Papers must be obtained from the African American Museum and Library at Oakland.

### Preferred Citation

William Allen Duncan papers , MS 70, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library. Oakland, California.

### Accruals

Accession 2013-062 added on October 1, 2013.

### Processing Information

Processed by Sean Heyliger, 10/01/2013.

### Biography / Administrative History

Pianist, teacher, and music critic William Duncan Allen Jr. (1906-1999) was born on December 15, 1906 in Portland, Oregon the oldest son of William Duncan Allen Sr. and Lillian Medley. Allen was raised in Portland, Oregon, where his father owned and operated the Golden West Hotel, at the time the largest black-owned hotel on the West Coast. After graduating from Portland's Jefferson High School, he attended Oberlin College in Ohio earning bachelor and master's degrees in music in 1928 and 1936 before studying one year at the Julliard School of Music.

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In 1929, Allen accepted a position teaching music and piano at Howard University until 1935 when he returned to Oberlin College to continue his studies. After studying with Dutch pianist Egon Petri in Poland in the 1930s, Allen returned to teach music at Fisk University in Nashville until 1943. Beginning in 1944, Allen accompanied tenor Todd Duncan on a world tour playing at venues in the U.S., Australia, South America, and Europe. Allen continued to tour with Duncan until 1953 when he moved to San Francisco where he worked as an accompanist, music teacher, and music critic. He served as the minister of music at the South Berkeley Community Church, director of the Berkeley Junior Bach Festival, and music critic for the *San Francisco Sun-Reporter* and the *Oakland Post*.

Allen was a visiting professor and artist in residence at Talladega College for the 1981-1982 academic year and was awarded an honorary doctorate of music in 1978 from the Center for Urban-Black Studies.

#### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The William Duncan Allen papers include photographs, certificates, plaques, and a diploma documenting the life and career of concert pianist, teacher, and music critic William Duncan Allen. The bulk of the papers consist of 288 photographs documenting Allen's music colleagues and friends at receptions in the Bay Area and while traveling in Europe in 1975-1977. The photographs include several notable musicians and vocalists including George Shirley, William Parker, Peter Van Derick, and William Warfield. The papers also include a small assorted of certificates and plaques awarded to William Duncan Allen for his musical contributions as a teacher, performer, and critic.

#### **Arrangement**

Series I. Photograph album Series II. Biographical

#### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog. Allen, William Duncan.

African Americans--California--East Bay--History.

African American musicians--California.

*William Duncan Allen, Teacher, Pianist, and Accompanist to Concert Artists, an oral history conducted in 1995 by Caroline Crawford, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1996.*

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#### **Photographs**

**Physical Description:** 288 photographs

#### **Series Scope and Content Summary**

Includes photographs of William Duncan Allen's friends and musical colleagues at receptions in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Europe in 1975-1977.

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged by photograph identification number.

Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen and George Shirley reading music at piano [001] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen and George Shirley reading music at piano [002] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>George Shirley singing [003] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen and George Shirley reading music at piano [004] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>George Shirley singing while William Duncan Allen plays the piano [005] circa 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>Elayne Jones and George Shirley embracing at party [008] circa 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>Elayne Jones, George Shirley, and unidentified man sitting at dining table [010] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen and man sitting on couch [011] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Elayne Jones, George Shirley, and unidentified man sitting at dining table [012] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Elayne Jones, George Shirley, Florence Quivar, and unidentified man and woman at dining table [013] circa 1976</b>

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Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen, Elayne Jones, and two unidentified men sitting at dining table [014] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Three women talking [015] circa 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen and two women sitting on couch [017] circa 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Woman putting pork chops into oven [018] circa 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>William Duncan Allen standing in living room in coat and hat in Bill Allen's studio [031] 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>Cres, Pearl and son, Tony, Arthur Croley, John Cottin, Carol Creswell and her daughters, Mrs. Davis, Creswell residence, Nashville, Tennessee [038] 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Cres, Pearl and son, Tony, Arthur Croley, John Cottin, Carol Creswell and her daughters, Mrs. Davis, Creswell residence, Nashville, Tennessee [039] 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Cres, Pearl and son, Tony, Arthur Croley, John Cottin, Carol Creswell and her daughters, Mrs. Davis, Creswell residence, Nashville, Tennessee [040] 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Cres, Pearl and son, Tony, Arthur Croley, John Cottin, Carol Creswell and her daughters, Mrs. Davis, Creswell residence, Nashville, Tennessee [041] 1976</b>
Box OM10	<b>Cres, Pearl and son, Tony, Arthur Croley, John Cottin, Carol Creswell and her daughters, Mrs. Davis, Creswell residence, Nashville, Tennessee [042] 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>Grace Goens standing next to tree in the snow [052] circa 1976</b>
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Box OM10	<b>Grace Goens, William Duncan Allen, and unidentified man standing in front of building [055] circa 1976</b>

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Box OM10	<b>Grace Goens standing in front of building [056] circa 1976</b>
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### **Biographical**

#### **Series Scope and Content Summary**

Includes certificates and plaques awarded to William Duncan Allen for his contributions as a pianist, teacher, and music critic. Also includes Allen's diploma from the Center for Urban-Black Studies.

#### **Arrangement**

Arranged by format.

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### **Certificates**

- Box OM10 **Music Teachers' Association of California certificate of merit 1991**
- Box OM10 **County of Alameda resolution commending Dr. William Duncan Allen 1991**
- Box OM10 **State of California Secretary of State Commemoration 1991**
- Box OM10 **City of Oakland Dr. William Duncan Allen Day proclamation 1991**
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**Plaques**

Box OM10

**Friends for the Preservation of Tradit  
African American Spirituals 1994**

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**Alameda Publishing Corporation pub  
award of excellence 1991**

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**NAACP certificate of life membership**

Box OM10

**National Association of Negro Musici**

Box OM10

**Golden Gate Branch 1988**

**Atlanta University Center 11th annua**

**Afro-American Music Workshop homa**

**William Duncan Allen 1982**

Box OM10

**National Association of Negro Musici**

**distinguished contribution award 198**

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**National Association of Negro Musici**

**Golden Gate Branch gala award 1991**

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**Center for Urban-Black Studies diploma 1978**