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## **Finding aid for the Philip Ahn papers 3007**

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USC Libraries East Asian Library

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Doheny Memorial Library

3550 Trousdale Parkway

Los Angeles, California 90089-1825

URL: <http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/east-asian-library>

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**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** USC Libraries East Asian Library

**Title:** Philip Ahn papers

**creator:** Ahn, Philip, 1905-1978

**Identifier/Call Number:** 3007

**Identifier/Call Number:** 947

**Physical Description:** 4 Linear Feet4 bankers boxes

**Date (inclusive):** 1935-2001

**Date (bulk):** 1935-1978

**Abstract:** Philip Ahn was a Korean American actor, WWII veteran, and USC alum. This small collection comprises primarily personal and family photographs, film and television stills, and awards and realia documenting Ahn's professional career, personal life, and his numerous involvements within the Korean community. It also contains scripts, teleplays, and some biographical materials.

#### **Organization**

The Philip Ahn papers have been organized into the following series: 1. Film and TV stills; 2. Scripts and teleplays; 3. Biographical materials, awards, and realia; 4. Personal and family photographs.

The original arrangement of the film and TV stills was primarily chronological; this organization has been kept intact and applied to the remainder of the series excluding the scripts and teleplays series, which has been arranged alphabetically, as documented in the separated materials note.

#### **Scope and Contents**

The Philip Ahn papers, 1935-2001 (bulk 1935-1978), consist of film and television stills, scripts and teleplays, biographical materials, certificates, awards, realia, and photographs created and collected by Philip Ahn as well as by family members after his death. The materials document Ahn's career as a film and television actor, as well as his armed service history and many commitments to the Korean community.

Photographs make up the bulk of the papers, both in the form of film and television stills as well as personal and family related items. There are numerous headshots, portraits, and family events, as well as materials collected after Ahn's death, including photo albums from his funeral and his posthumous induction into Hollywood Walk of Fame. The papers also include certificates of Ahn's achievements, such as his multiple appointments as honorary mayor of Panorama City, receipt of the Heart Service Award, and his acceptance as a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Awards and realia (mainly in the form of plaques) are also prevalent within the collection and largely relate to Ahn's armed service history and contributions, as well as his local involvement in the Korean community. The remainder of the collection consists of scripts and teleplays, articles and clippings, some correspondence, and various publications and programs, including a program and invitation for the 46th Annual Academy Awards.

#### **Biographical**

Philip Ahn, born March 29, 1905 in Los Angeles, was a Korean American film and television actor (despite his portrayal as Japanese in many roles) and USC alum. He was discovered for his first film role ("The General Died at Dawn", 1936) while on campus and subsequently dropped out after completion of his second year in order to seriously pursue acting.

Ahn was the son of Dosan Ahn Chang-ho and Helen Lee Ahn; his family was reportedly the first of Korean descent to settle in Los Angeles, emigrating to the United States in 1902. His father was an activist and educator during the colonial period of the Korean Independence movement and returned to Korea in the 1920s to continue his efforts there. Ahn was the oldest of two brothers and two sisters, one of whom was Susan Ahn Cuddy, the first ever Asian-American woman to join the U.S. Navy.

Ahn revealed his desire to be involved in society by the young age of 13, selling war bonds for which he received commendation of his excellence. This drive extended into Ahn's academic career at USC, where he was the member of multiple honor societies, assistant to the Dean of Men, president of the USC Cosmopolitan Club, and chairman of the All University Committee on International Relations.

Despite his active film career during the 1930s and 1940s, wherein he worked with such actors as Bing Crosby, Shirley Temple and Anna May Wong, Ahn found the time to assist during World War II as a member of the U.S. Infantry. Ahn continued his armed services involvement during the Vietnam War, visiting American and Korean soldiers at the invitation of the U.S. Government, for which he received a number of awards and accolades. Ahn was also an instrumental part of establishing the Do San Memorial Park in Seoul, Korea and worked to make Los Angeles a sister city of Pusan, Korea. He helped bring the Korean Bell of Friendship to San Pedro, California and served as honorary mayor of Panorama City,

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California for twenty years.

Philip Ahn died on February 28, 1978 due to complications from surgery. He was 72. On November 14, 1984, he posthumously became the first-ever Korean American actor to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

**Conditions Governing Access**

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. Advance notice required for access.

**Conditions Governing Use**

All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Curator of the Korean Heritage Library. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Korean Heritage Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

**Preferred Citation**

[Box/Folder# or Item name]. Philip Ahn papers, Collection no. 3007, Korean Heritage Library, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Gift of the Ahn family.

**Related Archival Materials**

Related materials pertaining to Philip Ahn's father can be found within USC's Korean-American Digital Archive under An Chang Ho, as part of the Korean American Private Records subcollection. <http://libguides.usc.edu/KADA>

**Separated Materials**

This collection includes correspondence between USC and the Ahn family regarding the processing of Philip Ahn's papers, specifically that the scripts would be housed as part of USC's Cinematic Arts library. There is an inventory within the collection (compiled by Ahn's family members) of the scripts that were given to the Cinematic Arts library, as well as a listing of the film and tv stills that were to be kept within this current collection and housed at the Korean Heritage Library. As the Ahn scripts in the Cinematic Arts library have yet to be processed, please consult Box 1, Folder 40 for a complete list of their holdings. It should also be noted that some scripts and teleplays, many incomplete and that were not featured on the inventory, remained loose within Box 1 of this collection; these have now been organized into their own series and arranged alphabetically.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Academy Awards (Motion pictures) -- Archival resources  
Actors -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Actors -- California -- Los Angeles -- Photographs  
Asian American men -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Asian Americans in the motion picture industry -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Awards -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Korean American men -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Korean American motion picture actors and actresses -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Municipal officials and employees, Honorary -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources  
Vietnam War, 1961-1975 -- Archival resources  
World War, 1939-1945 -- Archival resources  
United States -- Armed Forces -- Asian Americans -- Archival resources  
Certificates  
Film stills  
Realia  
Scripts (documents)  
Television scripts  
Ahn, Philip, 1905-1978 -- Archives  
Cuddy, Susan Ahn, 1915- -- Archives  
An, Ch'ang-ho, 1878-1938 -- Archives

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**Film and television stills**

Box 1, Folder 13 **"Kung Fu" (TV series) undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 14 **Make-up series undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 15 **Miscellaneous/unidentified film/TV stills undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 1 **"Anything Goes" 1935**  
 Box 1, Folder 2 **"The General Died at Dawn" 1936**  
 Box 1, Folder 3 **"Thank You, Mr. Moto" and "Daughter of Shanghai" 1937**  
 Box 1, Folder 12 **"Something to Sing About", "Let's Get Tough", and Rogue's Regiment" 1937-1948**  
 Box 1, Folder 4 **"King of Chinatown" and "A Yank on the Burma Road" 1938-1941**  
 Box 1, Folder 5 **"Forever Yours" and "The Adventures of Smilin' Jack" 1942**  
 Box 1, Folder 6 **"China" and "The Story of Dr. Wassell" 1943**  
 Box 1, Folder 7 **"China Sky" 1944**  
 Box 1, Folder 8 **"The Cobra Strikes" and "Women in the Night" 1948**  
 Box 1, Folder 9 **"Hell's Half Acre" and "Shanghai Story" 1952-1953**  
 Box 1, Folder 10 **"The Way to the Gold", "Battle Hymn", and "Never So Few" 1957-1959**  
 Box 1, Folder 11 **"Thoroughly Modern Millie" 1967**

**Scripts and teleplays**

Box 1, Folder 16 **"An Almost Perfect Plan" 1959**  
 Box 1, Folder 17 **Chan #12 - one line breakdown 1947-08-18**  
 Box 1, Folder 18 **"Chinese Checkers" 1955**  
 Box 1, Folder 19 **[Commercial teleplays and unidentified/incomplete scripts] 1963-1977**  
 Box 1, Folder 20 **"Daughter of Shanghai" 1937-09**  
 Box 1, Folder 21 **"Dawn Lily" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 22 **"Diamond Sutra" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 23 **"Disputed Passage" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 24 **DLC #464 undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 25 **"A Girl Named Tamiko" 1961-12-14**  
 Box 1, Folder 26 **"The Healers" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 27 **"Jackson and Jill in "It's a Deal" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 29 **"Miracles Do Happen" - A Christmas radio program undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 28 **"Lillie May" undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 30 **Ohanian - "Death Watch" 1976-01-30**  
 Box 1, Folder 31 **"Survival Mechanism" 1955**  
 Box 1, Folder 32 **"The Tokyo Doll" 1960**  
 Box 1, Folder 33 **"Whodunit?" 1941-12-11**

**Biographical materials, awards, and realia**

Box 3, Item 021 **[Clay mold of face (Philip Ahn)] undated**  
 Box 3, Item 019 **In Appreciation: 1st Logistical Command Special Services Vietnam [commemorative goblet] undated**  
 Box 3, Item 016 **In Recognition of Your Contribution to the Usarhaw Special Services Entertainment Program [plaque] undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 34 **[Philip Ahn memorial and bio] undated**  
 Box 3, Item 017 **Sgt. Philip Ahn [ nameplate, wood] undated**  
 Box 1, Folder 35 **[Casting calls] 1937-1972**  
 Box 1, Folder 36 **[Programs and publications] 1946-1986**  
 Box 1, Folder 37 **[Correspondence] 1948, 1973**  
 Box 1, Folder 38 **[Articles and clippings] 1957-1987**  
 Box 3, Item 018 **With Deep Affection and Gratitude for a Decade of Service as Honorary Mayor, Panorama City [commemorative bowl] 1962-1972**  
 Box 1, Folder 39 **Certificates and awards 1965-1978**  
 Box 2, Item 002 **Young Men's Christian Association [plaque] 1965-1967**  
 Box 2, Item 001 **Honorary Mayor's Award [plaque] 1966**  
 Box 2, Item 003 **[Red standing frame with Korean writing] 1967-05-15**  
 Box 2, Item 005 **[Service related plaque] 1968-07-18**  
 Box 2, Item 004 **To Mr. Philip Ahn presented by Yoo Hak Seong [plaque] 1968-07-19**

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Box 2, Item 006	<b>Presented by Captain Doan-Ngoc-Bich President of the Tae Kwon Do Association of the Vietnam Navy to Philip Ahn [plaque] 1968-07-20</b>
Box 2, Item 007	<b>Republic of Korea Forces, Vietnam [plaque and pins] 1968-07</b>
Box 2, Item 008	<b>To Philip Ahn in appreciation for visit to troops of Nha Trang from Col. LH Lockhart [plaque] [circa 1968]</b>
Box 2, Item 009	<b>Korean Catholic Association of Southern California Korean Night Festival honor [plaque] 1969-04-12</b>
Box 2, Item 010	<b>Panorama City Chamber of Commerce Honorary Mayor appreciation [plaque] 1970</b>
Box 2, Item 011	<b>Newhall-Saugus-Valencia Chamber of Commerce Chun-an Sister City Program honor [plaque] 1970</b>
Box 3, Item 023	<b>Television Academy Awards [paperweight] 1970-04-18</b>
Box 3, Item 022	<b>3rd Annual National Tae Kwon Do Tournament Appreciation Award 1974-08-18</b>
Box 2, Item 012	<b>Korean Association of Southern California Miss Korea Beauty Contest services recognition [plaque] 1975-04-25</b>
Box 2, Item 014	<b>ANKC All Nations Open Karate Championships Award for appreciation of dedication and service [plaque] 1975</b>
Box 2, Item 015	<b>KWHY-TV Appreciation Award [plaque] 1975</b>
Box 3, Item 024	<b>[Signed baseball on stand] 1975</b>
Box 2, Item 013	<b>Soodo Women's University Appreciation Award [plaque] 1976-06-10</b>
Box 1, Folder 40	<b>[USC correspondence and Philip Ahn Collection documents] 1987, 2001</b>
	<b>Personal and family photographs</b>
Box 4, Item 3	<b>[Banquet photo, enlarged, cardboard] undated</b>
Box 4, Item 2	<b>[Dorothy Jordan, MGM headshot, enlarged] undated</b>
Box 4, Item 4	<b>[Framed b&amp;w photo] undated</b>
Box 4, Folder 2	<b>[Personal and family] undated</b>
Box 4, Folder 1	<b>[Philip Ahn headshots/portraits] undated</b>
Box 4, Item 1	<b>[Philip Ahn in uniform, enlarged b&amp;w print in soft frame] undated</b>
Box 4, Folder 3-4	<b>[Personal and family] 1940s-1970s</b>
Box 4, Folder 5	<b>ROK Navy 1963</b>
Box 4, Item 5	<b>Thanksgiving at Philip's 1971</b>
Box 4, Item 6-8	<b>[Philip Ahn Funeral (3 photo albums)] 1978</b>
Box 4, Folder 6	<b>[Birthday party, Byung Mo] 1978-1979</b>
Box 4, Folder 7	<b>[Hollywood Walk of Fame Star Ceremony, Ahn Family] 1984</b>