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Ford, Edsel, collection, 1948-1971

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#86 Ford, Edsel (1928 – 1970) Collection, 1948 – 1971
.8 linear feet

INTRODUCTION

The papers and materials in this collection pertain to poet Edsel Ford. Included are Ford's writings, personal and professional correspondence, bibliographical and biographical materials, clippings, programs, obituaries, and tributes to his life and work.

DONOR INFORMATION

The materials in the Edsel Ford Collection were purchased and compiled by the Leonard H. Axe Library at Pittsburg State University from 1970 to 1997. Materials collected by former Special Collections curator Eugene DeGruson, during those same years, are also included.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edsel Ford was born on December 28, 1928, near Eva, Alabama, but he spent the majority of his childhood in Avoca, Arkansas. According to his father, Ford began to write poems at young age--his first poem was written at age seven. He won his first poetry contest at age 14 and this poem was printed in the *Kansas City Star*.

He attended Rogers High School and later graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1952. Following graduation he joined the U.S. Army and served for two years in Germany. While he was in service he wrote poems about the farm he grew up on and also wrote for the European edition of *Stars and Stripes*.

After he finished his tour of service, he returned to Arkansas where he continued to write poetry as his only means of income. However, he had to return to his family farm shortly after when realized he couldn't support himself. In 1961 he moved to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, where he met Hank Spruce, his soon-to-be close friend and patron. He began his career giving lectures to colleges on the importance of poetry writing. (He inspired James Tate, of Pittsburg State University, to write "How Success Came to Cow Creek".) He attended several writers' conferences in Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma. He was a speaker for the University of Kansas' Writers Conference during the 1960s.

Ford received many awards in his life, including four of the top awards from the Poetry Society of America, including its top prize, a \$3,500 Alice Fay di Castagnola Award for "A Landscape for Dante," a work in progress. He also received a Distinguished Alumni Citation from the University of Arkansas, the Devins Memorial Award, and he recorded some of his poems for the Library of Congress.

Ford died February 19, 1970, from a brain tumor at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is buried in Rogers Arkansas.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in the Edsel Ford Collection are incomplete; however, they give a good picture of his personal life and life as a poet. The materials are arranged into nine series: **Writings, Bibliographical, Biographical, Correspondence, Clipping, Program, Obituary, Tribute and Pea Ridge Materials**. These series are arranged chronologically.

The **Writings** series contains several of Ford's poems and a short story. The poems were published in clippings and from some magazines; the short story is from the Porter Library.

The **Bibliographical** series contains his bibliographies. There are several compilations of Ford's published works; one bibliography was compiled by Gene DeGruson. There is a bibliography of his works that were in printed in magazines and books; and a compilation of all of his published works. There is also a list of his paintings.

The **Biographical** series includes clippings, a news story from The New Yorker; the journal, Arkansas Alumnus; correspondence, and obituary. There is a biography in the Porter Library Bulletin by Gene DeGruson, a friend of Ford's.

The **Correspondence** Series contains letters to and from Ford. The letters discuss Ford's personal life, his poems and works, and awards. A few of the letters discuss Ford's death and his funeral and memorial. The letters are arranged in two orders: chronologically and then separated into categories by group (i.e. all the letters from Ford to DeGruson are together).

The **Clipping** series consists of articles printed from 1959 to 1970 with undated clippings behind. The clippings discuss Ford's life, poems and awards.

The **Pamphlets** series includes programs and flyers of events that featured Ford. The programs are from 1961 to 1970. A few of the programs are from The University of Kansas Writers Conference.

The **Obituary** series contains various obituaries for Ford. There are 16 clippings in this series.

The **Tribute** series consists of dedications to Ford following his death. These are primarily newspaper clippings from magazines and a newsletter.

The **Pea Ridge Materials** series includes the poem Ford wrote about Pea Ridge and information about Pea Ridge.

FOLDER LIST

Writings Series

- f. 1 Different (1948)
- f. 2 1956 – 1951
- f. 3 1962
- f. 4 1963
- f. 5 1964
- f. 6 1965 – 1966
- f. 7 1967 – 1970
- f. 8 1970
- f. 9 Undated
- f. 10 Miscellaneous

Bibliographical Series

- f. 11 1951 – 1975

Biographical Series

f. 12 1959 – 1970

Correspondence Series

- f. 13 Ford to Klose (1948)
- f. 14 Ford to DeGruson (1961 – 1962)
- f. 15 Ford to DeGruson (1963)
- f. 16 Ford to DeGruson (1964)
- f. 17 Ford to DeGruson (1965 – 1967)
- f. 18 DeGurson (1970 – 1971)
- f. 19 Ford to Buchan (1963)
- f. 20 Ford to Vaught (1964 – 1970)
- f. 21 Vaught to DeGruson (1970)
- f. 22 Vaught to DeGruson (1971)
- f. 23 Vaught (1970 – 1971)
- f. 24 Ford to Post (1965 – 1970)
- f. 25 Ford to Shapiro (1967 – 1968)
- f. 26 Miscellaneous (1963 – 1971)

Clippings Series

- f. 27 1959 – 1964
- f. 28 1966
- f. 29 1967 – 1969
- f. 30 1970
- f. 31 Undated

Pamphlets Series

f. 32 1961 – 1970

Obituary Series

f. 33 Clippings (1970)

Tribute

f. 34 Clippings (1970); The Benton Country Pioneer (1971); Edsel Ford Newsletter (1970); Rural Arkansas (1971); Opportunities (1971)

Pea Ridge Materials

- f. 35 Return to Pea Ridge (1962); Reports on the Historic marker Program (1963); The Battle of Pea Ridge; Guide; Postcards

INDEX ENTRIES

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