FINDING AID FOR
Bella Itkin papers
Collection Description

Bella Itkin papers  
**Date Range:** circa 1920s-2011  
**Bulk Dates:** 1935-1999  
**Quantity:** 2.25 LF, 6 boxes

Creator
Itkin, Bella

History
Dr. Bella Itkin was a theatre director and acting coach for 47 years, working at both the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and DePaul University. Born in Russia in 1920, she immigrated to the United States in 1932 with her mother and sister Israella "Iza" Itkin. Her father, David Itkin, previously a member of the Moscow Art Theatre, had already settled in Chicago and found work at both the Goodman School of Drama (then affiliated with SAIC) and the DePaul University Department of Drama. Bella went on to study at the Goodman, receiving a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1943. She later received her doctorate from Case Western Reserve University.

Bella started her career at the Goodman as her father's assistant, but soon developed her own name in the theatre community. As a Goodman faculty member, she saw firsthand the administration's plans to close the school in the early 1970s, its acquisition by DePaul in 1978, and its reemergence as the Theatre School at DePaul University in 1985. She directed more than 200 stage productions at the Goodman/Theatre School, including "The Seagull," "The Cherry Orchard," "Romeo and Juliet," and "A Streetcar Named Desire." Affectionately known as "Dr. Bella," her students included Joe Mantegna, Lois Nettleton, Kevin Anderson, Betsy Palmer, and Geraldine Page, among many others. From 1945-1950, she also operated the Lake Zurich Playhouse, a summer theater established by Bella and colleagues and students from the Goodman School. She served as Artistic Director of Chicago Playworks (formerly known as the Goodman Children's Theatre) for 15 years.

In 1967, Bella met carpenter Frank Konrath on the set of "Hamlet." The two were married until his death in 2002. Bella retired from full time teaching in 1989, but continued to teach part time until 2000. She died in 2011 at the age of 90.

Scope
The Bella Itkin papers contain director's scripts, photographs, publicity, videotaped lectures, scrapbooks, awards, notes, class materials and syllabi, and memorial materials related to Dr. Bella Itkin.

Itkin's 1954 dissertation from Case Western University, "The Patterns of Verbal Imagery as Found in Ten Major Works of O'Neill," has been removed from the collection and cataloged within the Special Collections department. The call number is SpC.812.5 O58Yi1954.

Arrangement
The collection is organized into two series: 1. Biographical Files; 2. Career. The Biographical
Files series is arranged chronologically. The Career series is further divided into subseries: 2.1 Theatre Performances; 2.2 Class Materials. See series-level arrangement notes for additional details.

Provenance
Accession 1989.31; 1995.47; 2011.18

Assoc Materials
Collection on Theatre at DePaul
David Itkin papers

Location
3/19/G

Restrictions
This collection is open for research use.

Language
In English

Prepared By
SS 1996; KEL 2003; JMC 2014
Series Descriptions

Series 001: Biographical Files
Date Range: circa 1920s-2011
Quantity: 1.32 LF

Scope:
The Biographical Files series contains a biographical statement, press clippings, awards, photographs, videotaped interviews, memorial service programs, and other personal materials related to Dr. Bella Itkin and her family. This series includes both a videotape and a transcript of Bella Itkin's lecture at a "Friends of the Library" event at DePaul University on November 8, 1995. It also contains materials related to Bella's early life, including an album of family photographs and images from Bella's time at Camp Chi, a Jewish girl's summer camp. A 1935 class photograph from Ogden School features either Bella or her sister Iza in the front row, 5th from the left.

Arrangement: This series is arranged chronologically, with photographs arranged in a separate chronology at the end and videos following photographs.

Location: 3/19/G
Restrictions: None

Container List
Box#.Folder# Folder Title Date
001.001 Bella and Israella Itkin Naturalization Papers 1942
001.002 Press Clippings 1980-1990, undated
001.003 Biographical Information 1983-1986, undated
001.004 Awards 1986-1990
001.005 Prospectus on "Acting: Preparation, Practice, Performance" by Dr. Bella Itkin 1987
001.006 Invitation to Bella Itkin's Retirement Party 1989
001.007 My Bella Storybook [1990s]
001.008 Friends of the Library Lecture 1995
001.009 Dr. Bella Itkin Konrath Memorial Service Materials 2011
006.001 Photographs: Itkin Family and Camp Chi Album (oversized) circa 1920s-1934
006.002 Photograph: Ogden School June Class (oversized) 1935
001.010 Photographs: Bella Itkin/Itkin Family circa 1930s-2000s
001.011 Photographs: Retirement Party 1989
001.012 Photographs: Book Signing 1994
001.013 Photographs: Geraldine Page and Bella Itkin (copy) undated
001.014 Photographs: Bella Itkin Headshots undated
005.001 Video: "Two on Two: Bella" 1983
005.002 Video: Bella Itkin Friends of the Library Lecture 1995
Series 002: Career
Date Range: 1945-1999, undated
Quantity: 1.02 LF

Scope:
The Career series contains materials related to Bella Itkin's career in theatre, including scripts, director's notebooks, photographs, a scrapbook, and classroom teaching materials. The documents and photographs relate to Itkin's experiences at DePaul University as well as her work with the Lake Zurich Playhouse in Lake Zurich, Illinois.

Arrangement: The Career series is divided into two subseries: 1.1 Theatre Performances; 1.2 Class Materials. Each subseries is arranged chronologically.

Location: 3/19/G
Restrictions: None

Series 002.001: Theatre Performances
Date Range: 1945-1997, undated
Quantity: 0.86 LF

Scope:
The Theatre Performances subseries contains director's scripts, production photographs, notes, and promotional materials from performances Bella Itkin directed at the DePaul University Theatre School (previously known as the Goodman School of Drama). It also includes a scrapbook from Itkin's years as director at the Lake Zurich Playhouse, a summer theater she established with her colleagues and students from the Goodman School. Many of the director's scripts in this subseries arrived at the Archives in binders containing notes and related ephemera. The materials were removed from the binders and kept in their original order in the folders. Where appropriate, the folder titles reflect where in the binder the materials were kept (for example, "front pocket"). Some folders were decorated or written on to indicate the production being staged. In these cases, a photocopy of the front cover is included in the first folder of production materials.

Arrangement: This subseries is arranged chronologically, with undated material at the end. Photographs are arranged in a separate chronology following the documents.

Location: 3/19/G
Restrictions: None

Container List

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<th>Box#.Folder#</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A Midsummer Night's Dream Director's Book</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>001.016</td>
<td>The Cherry Orchard Binder (part 1 of 2)</td>
<td>1971</td>
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<tr>
<td>001.017</td>
<td>The Cherry Orchard Binder (part 2 of 2)</td>
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<td>001.018</td>
<td>Summer Brave Binder (part 1 of 3)</td>
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<td>002.001</td>
<td>The Promise Binder (front pocket)</td>
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<td>The Promise Binder (interior)</td>
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<td>002.003</td>
<td>The Promise Binder (back pocket)</td>
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<td>002.004</td>
<td>The Corn is Green Binder</td>
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Series 002.002: Class Materials
Date Range: 1977-1999, undated
Quantity: 0.16 LF

Scope:
The Class Materials subseries consists of syllabi, class assignments, and reading lists, as well as observational essays written by students of Bella Itkin. This series also includes Itkin’s resume, publicity about her teaching career, and a photograph of a class session.

Arrangement: This subseries is arranged chronologically, with undated material at the end.
Location: 3/19/G
Restrictions: None

Container List
Box#.Folder# Folder Title Date
004.009 Resume and Publicity 1977-1983
004.010 BFA/MFA Syllabi 1993-1999
004.011 Class Materials undated
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>004.012</td>
<td>Student Observation Assignments</td>
<td>undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>004.013</td>
<td>Photographs: Lecturing to Technique Class</td>
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