

A Guide to the

Robert Deane Pharr Papers 1978

1978

A Collection in the Archives and Special Collections Department of the L. Douglas Wilder Library MS-0002
Archives and Special Collections Department, L. Douglas Wilder Library, Virginia Union University
2002

History

Processed by: Cathy Lynn Mundale
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Title Statement

A Guide to the

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Collection: MS-0002

Author: Cathy Lynn Mundale

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word 2000, created by Scott Kay, 1978

Language Usage: Description is in English

Revision Description

Feb 17, 2004 PUBLIC "-//Virginia Union University::L. Douglas Wilder Library::Archives and Special Collections Department//TEXT (US::ViRVU::virvu00003::Robert Deane Pharr Papers)//EN" "virvu00003.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).
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Descriptive Summary

Accession number

MS-00002

Language

English

Creator

Robert Deane Pharr Papers

Physical Characteristics

1.0 linear feet

Repository

Archives and Special Collections Department, L. Douglas Wilder Library, Virginia Union University

Administrative Information

Access

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Received from Robert Deane Pharr, 1978.

Processing Information

Collection processed in June 1998

Preferred Citation

Robert Deane Pharr Papers, MS-0002, Archives and Special Collections Department, L. Douglas Wilder Library, Virginia Union University

Biographical/Historical Information

Waiter and novelist Robert Deane Pharr was born July 05, 1916 in Richmond, VA to John Benjamin (minister) and Lucie Deane Pharr (schoolteacher). He was raised in New Haven, CT and returned south to attend school. He was graduated from Virginia Union University (B.A., 1939) and did graduate work at Fisk, Columbia and New York Universities. He pursued his interest in writing at Virginia Union, where he was an editor on the school newspaper, and at Fisk. His race and medical history, a three year sanatorium stay for tuberculosis and a battle with alcoholism, limited his career opportunities and he became a waiter, working in exclusive resort hotels and private clubs.

Pharr's first novel, *The Book of Numbers*, was published in 1969 to critical praise. The story of an illegal lottery system in a southern town during the depression (reputedly based on Richmond's Jackson Ward), the book won favorable reviews for its realistic portrayal of Black Americans. The next three novels, *S.R.O.*, *The Welfare Bitch*, and *The Soul Murder Case*, were less successful portrayals of crime and addiction in a Black urban setting. His fifth novel, *Giveadamn Brown*, relates the experiences of Lawrence "Giveadamn" Brown who moves from Florida to Harlem and takes over the empire of his kinsman, crime boss Harry Brown. The book is described as a thriller that follows Brown through his transition from naif to con man.

Robert Deane Pharr died during surgery for an aneurysm on April 01, 1992 in Syracuse, NY.

Scope and Content Information

These papers consist chiefly of a draft and galleys for the book *Giveadamn Brown*. The draft is Pharr's original typescript and the galleys are printed by the publisher, Doubleday. The correspondence and clippings consist of a letter enclosed with the draft sent to Virginia Union and two clippings from Richmond newspapers regarding the novel.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged by subject.

Contents List

Series 1. Correspondence and Clippings 1978

Extent 3 items

Scope and Content

The correspondence consists of a letter dated June 05, 1978, from Pharr to Verdelle V. Bradley, Virginia Union Librarian, that he enclosed with the original draft and which states "from time to time I will be sending you more papers". The two 1978 clippings are from Richmond newspapers; one lists Giveadamn Brown as one of the year's top fiction choices, and the other profiles Pharr's return to Richmond for a Giveadamn Brown book signing.

Correspondence and Clippings 1978

Box-folder 1.1

Extent 3 items

Series 2. Novels 1978

Extent 4 items

Scope and Content

The approximately 700 page draft is annotated with Pharr's changes and comments and includes quite a bit of unpublished material. The draft is folded as it was found, and seems to be slightly out of chapter order. The proof and galley are also annotated, though considerably less so.

Giveadamn Brown-draft

Box-folder 1.2-1.8

Giveadamn Brown-final gallery

Box-folder 2.9

Giveadamn Brown-foundry proof

Box-folder 2.10

Giveadamn Brown-reader's gallery

Box-folder 2.11-2.13