

# Guide to the Juanita Moore Papers

JWJ MSS 383



by Janet Lopes

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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 383

**CREATOR:** Moore, Juanita, 1917- , author

**TITLE:** Juanita Moore papers

**DATES:** 1930-2005

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 6.75 linear feet (10 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Juanita Moore papers contain correspondence, scripts, photographs, awards, printed material, electronic files, and other papers created by or relating to Juanita Moore. The collection includes seven scripts; most notable is the revised final screenplay for *Imitation of Life*. Moore played Annie Johnson in her Academy Award-nominated role in the 1959 film. Other highlights include documents related to the Cambridge Players, a black theater troupe founded, in part, by Moore. Close to 600 photographs capture Moore's life both personally and professionally. Prints include performances and promotions as well as images of Moore in her 20s and 30s alongside family and friends. The collection also includes several awards, one of them from the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.moorej>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.moorej>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Langdon Manor Books, LLC on the Sinclair Lewis Fund, 2023.

## Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 10 (born digital): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Juanita Moore papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Juanita Moore Papers. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Biographical / Historical

Juanita Moore (1914-2014) was born in Greenwood, Mississippi and spent a majority of her life as a dancer, actress, and stage performer. She appeared in more than 70 movies and numerous plays during her 60-year career which began at the age of 17 as a dancer. Moore is best known for her role as Annie Johnson, an African-American housekeeper in the 1959 film *Imitation of Life*. It earned her an Academy Award nomination, only the third black actress to be nominated for the Supporting Actress category at the time. Moore turned to activism and refused to play maids or similar roles following her nomination. She appeared in several TV shows in the 1960s and pursued theater work in addition to her work on the screen. In the 1980s, Moore was a founding member of the Cambridge Players, a black theater troupe. Moore worked well into the early 2000s. She died at her Los Angeles home at the age of 99.

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## Scope and Contents

The Juanita Moore papers contain correspondence, scripts, photographs, awards, printed material, electronic files, and other papers created by or relating to Juanita Moore. The collection includes seven

scripts; most notable is the revised final screenplay for *Imitation of Life*. Moore played Annie Johnson in her Academy Award-nominated role in the 1959 film. Other highlights include documents related to the Cambridge Players, a black theater troupe founded, in part, by Moore. Close to 600 photographs capture Moore's life both personally and professionally. Prints include performances and promotions as well as images of Moore in her 20s and 30s alongside family and friends. The collection also includes several awards, one of them from the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

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## Arrangement

Arranged into five series: I. Scripts, 1958-1991. II. Personal and professional papers, 1961-2005. III. Photographs, 1930-2004. IV. Awards, 1958-2004.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Scripts, 1958-1991

.52 linear feet (1 box)

This series contains scripts and related materials.

Materials in this series are arranged chronologically by date of creation.

|     |   |                                  |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| b.1 | <i>Imitation of Life</i>  | 1958 July 10                     |
| b.1 | <i>Serena Grace Monguet</i>   | circa late 1970s-<br>early 1980s |
| b.1 | <i>And They're Off!</i>   | 1982                             |
| b.1 | <i>The Brothers</i>   | 1983                             |
| b.1 | <i>Reunion at Bartersville</i>  | circa 1985                       |
| b.1 | <i>Slenderella</i>  | circa 1980s                      |
| b.1 | <i>Made to Order</i> , script adaptation and laid in photographic print | 1991 June 29                     |

**Series II: Personal and professional papers, 1961-2005***0.5 linear feet (2 boxes)*

This series contains correspondence, pamphlets, photographs, computer media, and other materials related to Juanita Moore's life and work.

Box 10 (born digital): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Arranged into two sub-series: I. Personal papers, 1978-2005; and II. Professional papers, 1961-2002.

|       |  |                  |
|-------|--|------------------|
|       | Personal papers  | 1983-2005        |
|       | Box 10 (born digital): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information. |                  |
| b. 2  | Appointment book   | 1978             |
| b. 2  | Kwanza Foundation press materials and directory  | 1983-1988        |
| b. 2  | Kwanza Foundation engraved leather binder with laid in directory   | undated          |
|       | Gertrude Jeannette's 90th birthday celebration   |                  |
|       | Box 10 (born digital): Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information. |                  |
| b. 2  | Programs, handwritten notes, and photographs   | 1991-2005        |
| b. 10 | Computer media<br>1 CD-R   | 2004 November 28 |
|       | Restricted fragile. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.                        |                  |
| b. 2  | Envelope   | 1985             |
|       | Professional papers  | 1961-2002        |
|       | Cambridge Players Inc.   |                  |
| b. 2  | Programs, notes, and other papers  | 1965-2000        |
| b. 2  | Theater of Life proposal, Glenn Towery   | undated          |
| b. 2  | Junior Black Academy, programs, pamphlets, and correspondence  | 1985-2002        |
| b. 2  | Programs, composite cards, correspondence and other papers   | 1961-1995        |

**Series III: Photographs, 1930-2004***2.0 linear feet (3 containers)*

This series contains publicity, professional, and personal photographs related to Juanita Moore's life and work, along with related materials.

Materials in this series are largely arranged in chronological order.

|      |   |                                  |
|------|---|----------------------------------|
| b. 3 | Black and white photographic prints of family and friends<br><i>2 Folders</i> | circa<br>1930s-1950s             |
| b. 3 | Performance and rehearsal-related photographic prints<br><i>2 Folders</i>     | circa<br>1950s-1980s,<br>undated |
| b. 3 | Publicity and promotional photographic prints<br><i>3 Folders</i>             | circa<br>1950s-1980s             |
| b. 3 | <i>Imitation of Life</i> , promotional prints                                 | 1959                             |
| b. 3 | Event at Sally Stanford restaurant, album                                     | circa 1960s                      |
| b. 3 | Publicity, promotional, and other 8 x 10 prints                               | 1960s-1970s                      |
| b. 3 | Color photographic prints of family and friends                               | 1960s-1970s                      |
| b. 3 | Black and white photographic prints from Isabelle Cooley                      | 1961                             |
| b. 3 | Celebrity party with Don L. Lathrop   | circa mid-1960s                  |
| b. 3 | Award presentation for husband Charles T. Burris                              | 1965 January                     |
| b. 3 | Dinner awards ceremony or event<br><i>2 Folders</i>                           | 1966 March                       |
| b. 3 | Dinner parties at friends' home   | 1966 March-<br>April             |
| b. 3 | Marketing photographic prints<br><i>2 Folders</i>                             | 1966                             |
| b. 4 | Photographic prints in color of family and friends<br><i>3 Folders</i>        | 1980s-1990s                      |
| b. 4 | 45th anniversary cast reunion of <i>Imitation of Life</i><br><i>2 Folders</i> | 2004 April                       |
| b. 4 | Tour of the TRW plant with husband<br><i>4 Folders</i>                        | undated                          |
| b. 4 | Contact sheets  | undated                          |
| b. 4 | Headshots of various performers   | undated                          |
| b. 5 | Promotional photographic prints   | undated                          |



**Series IV: Awards, 1958-2004***3.83 linear feet (4 boxes)*

This series contains awards and certificates related to Juanita Moore's life and work, along with related materials.

Materials maintain order found at time of acquisition.

|      |  |                  |
|------|--|------------------|
| b. 6 | Papers related to the 32nd annual Academy Awards | 1958-1960        |
| b. 6 | Awards and certificates                          | 1983-1996        |
| b. 6 | Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame award              | undated          |
| b. 6 | Jeanie Golden Halo Award of High Esteem          | 1989 April       |
| b. 7 | Los Angeles Southwest College award              | 1995 February 27 |
| b. 8 | Faith Acting Studio award                        | 1998 April 26    |
| b. 9 | 6th Annual Celebrity Toast/Roast                 | 2004 April 25    |

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Genres / Formats**

Realia  
Screenplays

### **Subjects**

Actresses  
Actresses -- United States  
African American actors  
African American dancers  
African American political activists  
African Americans  
African American women political activists  
Motion picture actors and actresses -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Acquired From**

Langdon Manor Books, LLC , bookseller