Abstract
The Kenneth F. Hoke-Witherspoon Collection contains correspondence, articles, and scripts by and relating to the American playwright Kenneth F. Hoke-Witherspoon. Transferred to the University of Maryland from Johns Hopkins University, the materials in this collection cover the period 1988 to 1992. The collection has been separated into two series: Papers (including written correspondence and newspaper clippings) and scripts (published and unpublished).

Important Information for Users of the Collection
Restrictions: The collection is open for research use.
Preferred citation: The Kenneth F. Hoke-Witherspoon collection, Special Collections in Performing Arts, University of Maryland Libraries.
Publication rights: Materials from this collection must be used in the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library's Irving and Margery Morgan Lowens Special Collections Room, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Contact the curator for an appointment: http://www.lib.umd.edu/scpa/contact
Status: This collection is PROCESSED.

Historical Note
Kenneth F. Hoke-Witherspoon (b. 1951) is an American playwright that was born in Baltimore, Maryland to a father who was a brickmaker and a mother who worked as a domestic employee. Hoke-Witherspoon was awarded a scholarship to the Northfield Mount Hermon School — a preparatory school in Northfield, Massachusetts — and was later one of the first African-American male freshmen to attend Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. While at Vassar, Hoke-Witherspoon majored in Psychology but was also extensively involved with theater. He held a variety of jobs in fields such as special education, crisis intervention and working with abused children. He was also a senior research specialist at the Welch Medical Library of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Hoke-Witherspoon wrote ten plays in five years before entering the Catholic University of America’s graduate program in playwriting in 1983. After receiving his Master’s degree in 1987, Hoke-Witherspoon spent time volunteering as Playwright-In-The-School for the Young People’s Theater of the Baltimore Center Stage. The Baltimore Playwrights Festival produced two of his plays: Last Night at Ace High (1988) and All Partial Evil, Universal Good (1989). Subjects of his plays range from the effects of the Vietnam War on the African-American community to the civil rights sit-ins in Baltimore in the 1950s to abortion. He frequently employed Baltimore as a setting for his plays.

Scope and Contents of the Collection
Custodial History and Acquisition Information
Transferred to the Special Collections in the Performing Arts at the University of Maryland on July 1, 2016 by Jordan Steele, University Archivist at John Hopkins University.

Processing Information
Processed by Samantha Flores in November 2016. Materials are arranged chronologically. All physical materials have been foldered and rehoused into archival boxes. All materials are processed and described at the item level.

Arrangement of Collection
This collection is organized into two series.

Series 1: Papers
Subseries 1.1: Correspondence
Subseries 1.2: Newspaper/Magazine Clippings

Series 2: Scripts
Subseries 2.1: Unpublished Scripts
Subseries 2.2: Published Scripts

Series Descriptions

This series consists of written correspondence and clippings from magazines and newspapers.

Subseries 1.1: Correspondence, 1989 (2 items)
This subseries contains letters from Cynthia H. Requardt and Betty Ronayne at the Milton S. Eisenhower Library.

Subseries 1.2: Newspaper/Magazine Clippings, 1992 (2 items)
This subseries contains an article from The Baltimore Sun on Hoke-Witherspoon’s play Babies’ Breath, and an article from Welch Library Issues on Hoke-Witherspoon as a recipient of FOX 45’s Champions of Courage award.

Series 2: Scripts, 1991, undated (3 items)
Subseries 2.1: Unpublished Scripts, 1991 (1 item)
Subseries 2.2: Published Scripts, 1991, undated (2 items)

Box Inventory


Subseries 1.1: Letters and Notes, 1989

BOX 1
Folder 1: Letters and Notes, 1989
  Item 1: Letter from Cynthia H. Requardt, manuscripts librarian at Milton S.
        Eisenhower Library, March 9, 1989
  Item 2: Handwritten note from Betty Ronayne, September 23, 1989

Subseries 1.2: Newspaper/Magazine Clippings, 1992

BOX 1
Folder 2: Newspaper/Magazine Clippings, 1992
  Item 1: J. Wynn Rousuck, “For city playwright, big issues onstage,” The Baltimore
        Sun, November 3, 1992
  Item 2: “Hoke-Witherspoon Wins Champions of Courage Award,” Welch Library
        Issues Vol. 4, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1992


BOX 1

Subseries 2.2: Published Scripts, 1988–1989, undated

BOX 1
Folder 5: The Fool Who Cried Love at the World: A Definitive Black Play and Tract for
        Poets, undated

Subjects
African American dramatists.
African American theater--History--20th century.
African Americans--Maryland--Baltimore.
Dramatists, American--20th century.