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August 2, 2011

Penn Libraries Receive the Archive of Famed Songwriter Ray Evans

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The University of Pennsylvania Libraries are honored to announce the acquisition of the papers and memorabilia of Ray Evans (W'36) and his wife Wyn, thanks to a generous gift from The Ray & Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation. The Foundation will also fund the two-year appointment of a project cataloger who will fully integrate the materials into the Libraries' collections.

Ray Evans was the lyricist for one of the world's most successful songwriting duos. He and his partner, Jay Livingston, attended the University of Pennsylvania, where they met in 1934 through the Beta Sigma Rho fraternity.

"Ray and Jay were proud alumni of Penn and began to develop their unique songwriting style while attending the University," said Anthony E. Nicholas, Director of The Ray & Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation. "The University of Pennsylvania Libraries' renowned music collection is the ideal destination for Ray's archive."

Already home to the papers of several well-known figures in music, including Eugene Ormandy, Leopold Stokowski, and Marian Anderson, Penn's Rare Book & Manuscript Library will serve as the permanent repository for the study and appreciation of Evans and his work.

"The Penn Libraries are pleased to be the chosen recipients for these unique materials that trace the life and career of such a prolific and esteemed figure in the world of music," said H. Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director of Libraries.

After graduating from Penn, Evans and Livingston found success in New York with a song they co-wrote with Olsen and Johnson for the latter's musical revue, *Hellzapoppin'* (1941). Following World War II, Livingston and Evans moved to California, where they worked at Paramount Studios, earning three Academy Awards for best original song and penning



“Silver Bells,” now a Christmas standard, for the 1951 movie, *The Lemon Drop Kid*, starring Bob Hope. The pair later freelanced, composing music for eight movies at Universal, including the Oscar-nominated song “Tammy” for *Tammy and the Bachelor* (1957). They also wrote theme songs for television shows, such as *Bonanza* and *Mr. Ed*, and their first Broadway musical opened in 1958. Livingston and Evans were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1977 and received their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1995.

Items in the collection include Evans’s clarinet, his gold records and ASCAP awards (among many other awards), recordings of his songs, photographs, letters and telegrams, sheet music, and press clippings. Through the support of The Ray & Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation, the project cataloger will not only make the original materials readily accessible on campus but also create digital facsimiles to make them available on the World Wide Web, as well as curate an exhibition promoting the Evans Collection and the celebrated songwriter’s legacy at Penn.

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