

Alvina E. Krause (1893-1981) Collection, 1929-2003

Series 20/67

Boxes 1-6, including one drop-front box

Biography

Alvina Eloise Krause was born January 28, 1893 in New Lisbon, Wisconsin, to Charles Frederick and Caroline (Tesch) Krause. The youngest of five children, Krause grew up on the family farm near New Lisbon. She attended high school there, where a declamation contest first revealed her interest in drama. She graduated from high school in 1912. After briefly attending the University of Wisconsin, she enrolled at Northwestern University's School of Oratory (now School of Communication) in 1914. She graduated from the two year program in 1916 and began teaching high school drama that same year. She taught in Seaside, Oregon, where several of her siblings then lived, and in Springfield, Missouri. In Oregon, in addition to the dramatic productions she led, she proudly coached the girl's basketball team to a state championship.

In 1925 Krause returned to Northwestern University to complete her education. After receiving her Bachelors in Science from the School of Speech in 1928, Krause taught for one year at Hamline University in Minnesota. While there she produced a play for a college drama competition held at Northwestern University. Her student group won the competition and Krause was subsequently asked to join the faculty of her alma mater. She was appointed an Instructor of Voice and Interpretation in 1930. Krause received her Masters in Science from Northwestern in 1933. Her Masters Thesis, entitled *A Study of Creative Imagination*, attempted to use scientific method to define the creative process. She became an Assistant Professor in 1941 and an Associate Professor in 1957. Krause taught at Northwestern for more than thirty years, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1961 and continuing as a lecturer until 1963.

During her early years at Northwestern, Krause's primary responsibility was giving students private instruction in voice and interpretation. In the early 1940's, the School of Speech was forced by budgetary constraints to drop its private instruction program and Krause was appointed to Assistant Professor, responsible for the one year basic acting course. Over the next few years, Krause revamped the basic acting program, transforming it into a three year program. The first year focused on developing student's artistic skills, including work in voice and movement, and cross-disciplinary work in other artistic fields. The second year, students worked on developing their dramatic skills, using classical dramas and characters to understand the art of playmaking. During the third year, students focused on principles of "style" – developing their own sensibilities and polishing their communications skills. Krause's approach to teaching acting through this three year program became a model for the field and continues at Northwestern to this day.

In addition to her contributions to the form of acting courses at Northwestern, Krause was known for her innovative teaching methods and style. She forced students to develop their dramatic skills from the inside out, using physical and emotional exercises to get students to understand the inner techniques of acting. Students in her courses were required to keep detailed journals of their work that she would then comment on and grade. She was a hard task-master in her classes, allowing no laziness or unprofessional behavior. She strongly believed that college-age students could become polished actors, and designed her classes to produce such actors. Her high expectations were in large part responsible for the high level of performances given by students at the University and the reputation that Northwestern's acting program developed, both on campus and throughout the U.S. Many of Krause's students went on to have stellar acting

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careers including: Richard Benjamin (1959), Charlton Heston (1945), Patricia Neal (1947), Paula Prentiss (1960), and Tony Roberts (1961).

Krause was actively involved in developing and running the University Theatre program at Northwestern, realizing her goal of providing her students with a wide variety and number of performance opportunities. To further this goal, in 1945 she developed a summer program at a small theatre in Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania for selected Northwestern students. For twenty summers she ran the Eagles Mere Playhouse with her lifelong friend Lucy McCammon, leading students through an intense production schedule of nine plays in ten weeks. A summer spent at Eagles Mere became the goal of many acting students at Northwestern.

Krause retired from Northwestern in 1963, eventually moving to Pennsylvania with McCammon. For many years, she was unconnected with any school or theatre group. She and fellow Northwestern professor John Van Meter started the Harpur Theatre in Chicago. She traveled and gave lectures, participated in smaller projects, and for two seasons directed plays at the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts. In the late 1970's, Krause began work on developing a new local theatre group in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Her work resulted in the formation of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble in 1977

[http://www.bte.org/about/about_bte.htm]. The last years of her life were devoted to making this ensemble, and its acting programs for public school students, strong and viable.

Krause received many awards during her life for her professional work, including the President's Medal for distinguished service from Northwestern University (1981); the Centennial Award from the American Association of University Women; the Hazlett Memorial Award for excellence in theatre; and an Honorary Doctorate from Doane College in Nebraska.

Alvina Krause died on December 31, 1981. Memorial services were held in various locations across the country including Bloomsburg, PA; the Alvina Krause Theater in New York City; and at Northwestern. On January 15, 1982 friends, coworkers, and former students gathered in the auditorium of Annie May Swift Hall, the School of Speech building, to remember the work of Alvina Krause and the contributions she made to Northwestern's acting program. In 1984, the Alvina Krause Theatre was dedicated at the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble in Pennsylvania.

Description of the Series

Note: The bulk of Alvina Krause's papers were given to the Library of Congress after her death. Most of the material in this collection was gathered over many years by David Downs, a former student of Krause's and faculty member in Northwestern University's School of Communication. The collection includes a substantial number of photocopies that Downs made. While the collection lacks the depth that complete personal papers would have, it contains much original material and provides a useful and informative resource for researchers studying Krause's life and work.

The Alvina Krause Collection fills five legal-sized boxes and one drop front box and spans the dates 1929–2003. The bulk of the collection consists of Krause's teaching notes from her years at Northwestern University's School of Speech. These course notes are also one of the

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highlights of the collection, offering an insight into Krause's teaching method and style, as well as her general approach to the art of acting. Krause's notes to cast members at both the Eagles Mere Playhouse and Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble are additional highlights, revealing her individualized approach to working with students. In addition, the collection includes biographical materials, correspondence, and materials documenting theatrical productions at Northwestern, Eagles Mere Playhouse, and the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble.

Biographical Materials files span the dates 1929-1996. One general file contains a small number of biographical materials, including quotes from an interview Krause gave on her years at Northwestern University; general notes made for a biographical entry on Krause in *Notable Women in American Theater*; a promotional flyer regarding a film about Krause called "Acting – A Study of Life" done by the University of South Dakota; and a booklet describing the 1969 season of the Pacific Conservatory of the Arts, where Krause served as director. Clippings files include newspaper and magazine articles written about Krause from 1929-1996. One file contains copies of articles written about Krause for various publications. Two articles written by Krause for publication are included in a Publications folder. Several of the memorial services that were held for Krause upon her death in 1981 are documented in a Memorials folder. A copy of Krause's will dating from 1972 and hand written notes regarding the disposition of her papers are included in one folder. These folders are arranged in order of informational value and then chronologically within each folder.

Correspondence files span the dates 1936-1991 with the bulk of the correspondence from the 1970's. Letters from Krause to David Downs are contained in two folders, with an additional folder containing a photocopy of Downs' course notes from his early teaching days at Northwestern with Krause's comments in the margins. One folder contains correspondence with John Van Meter, a student of Krause's and fellow faculty member at Northwestern from 1959 until 1964. Krause's correspondence with Downs and Van Meter is restricted and can only be used with permission of David Downs or the University Archivist. Correspondence files are arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically within each folder.

Northwestern University – School of Speech files span the dates 1933 through 1995, with the bulk of the materials dating from the 1950's and 1960's. Course notes and materials files include both subject files, containing notes Krause made on various topics, and course files for specific courses she taught. Many of these files include photocopies of originals. One file contains Krause's personal copy of *Greek Plays: Modern Translations* with her notes in the margins. Two folders contain transcripts of tape recordings of courses that Krause taught. Several files contain teaching notebooks that she kept during her years at Northwestern. Three folders contain teaching materials from the basic acting classes that were Krause's specialty. Productions files include programs and promotional materials from many of the productions that Krause was involved in during her years at Northwestern.

Productions – Eagles Mere Playhouse files span the dates 1946 through 1985, with the bulk of the records from the 1940's and 1950's. Two folders contain programs from many of the productions at the Playhouse. One folder contains more recent promotional materials. One folder contains photocopies of notes that Krause made to cast members. Two of Krause's production notebooks from her time at the Playhouse are contained in two folders. Note that promotional posters from the Eagles Mere Playhouse are in Box 6 of this collection.

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Productions – Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble files date from 1972 through 2003, with the bulk of the records from the 1970's. Promotional Materials dating from Krause's time at the theatre through more recent times are included in one folder. Four folders contain photocopies and originals of Krause's notes to cast members in the Ensemble. One folder contains photocopies and originals of production notes that Krause made. One folder contains materials regarding the dedication of the Alvina Krause Theatre at the Ensemble, including a program for the dedication, correspondence regarding planning of the dedication and notes David Downs' made for a speech he gave at the dedication.

See also: Alumni Biographical Files, University Archives, Series 51/14, Box 107. Alvina Krause's Masters Thesis, *A Study of Creative Imagination*: Northwestern University Library, call number Diss 378 NU 1933. Video cassettes in the University Archives: #892: Krause teaching an acting class, 1978; #893: an appearance by Krause on a PBS program in Pennsylvania. Audio cassettes in the University Archives: #38: a recording of a memorial service held for Krause at Northwestern; #1668-1702: recordings of Krause leading acting classes at Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble.

Provenance: The records in this series were transferred to the University Archives by David Downs in four separate accessions: Accession No. 04-21 (February 27, 2004); Accession No. 04-35 (March 4, 2004); Accession No. 04-36 (March 12, 2004) and Accession No. 04-56 (April 16, 2004). Materials from the University Archives' Faculty Biographical Files and Alumni Biographical files were also incorporated.

Restrictions: Krause's correspondence with David Downs and John Van Meter is restricted and can only be used with permission of David Downs or the University Archivist.

Separations: Two inches of duplicate and extraneous materials were separated and placed in University Archives General Files or discarded. 205 photographs were separated and placed in University Archives Photographic Files.

Processor: Lori J. Osborne, August 25, 2004; Zoe Streicker-Howard, June 2005.

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Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
		Biographical Materials	
1	1	General	1950-1982, n.d.
	2	Resumes	1965-1981
	3	Clippings & Press Releases (1)	1929-1978
	4	Clippings & Press Releases (2)	1979-2002, n.d.
	5	Articles about Alvina Krause	1969-1996
	6	Publications	1962, n.d.
	7	Memorials	1982
	8	Will and Disposition of Papers	1972
		Correspondence	
	9	General Correspondence	1936-1973, n.d.
	10	David Downs (1)	1972-1977
	11	David Downs (2)	1978-2002
	12	David Downs (3) – Course Notes (photocopies)	1973-1975
	13	John Van Meter	1963-1980, n.d.
		Northwestern University – School of Speech	
	14	Course Schedules	1937-1941
		Course Notes and Teaching Materials	
2	1	General	n.d.
	2	Voice	n.d.
	3	Greek Drama (photocopies and originals)	1959, n.d.
	4	<i>Greek Plays: Modern Translations</i> – with Krause’s notes	n.d.
	5	Contemporary Theatre (photocopies and originals)	n.d.
	6	Samuel Beckett (photocopies)	1970
	7	Henrik Ibsen	n.d.
	8	William Shakespeare	n.d.
3	1	George Bernard Shaw (photocopies and originals)	n.d.
	2	<i>Long Day’s Journey Into Night</i> (photocopies)	n.d.
	3	<i>Three Sisters</i> (photocopies and originals)	n.d.
	4	Beginning Acting (transcript)	1960-1995
	5	Comments by Krause (transcript)	1964-1965
	6	Teaching Notebook	1930’s
	7	Teaching Notebook	1947
	8	Teaching Notebook	1959
	9	Teaching Notebook (photocopy)	n.d.

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
	10	Basic Acting – First Year (photocopies)	n.d.
	11	Basic Acting – Second Year (photocopies)	1930's
4	1	Basic Acting – Third Year (photocopies and originals)	n.d.
	2	B43	n.d.
	3	C11	1960
	4	C41	1959
	5	C49	1960-1963
		Productions	
	6	Programs	1933-1956
	7	Department of Theatre – Promotional Materials	n.d.
	8	University Theatre – Programs	1939-1956
	9	University Theatre – Major Productions – Programs	1940-1952
		Productions -- Eagles Mere Playhouse	
	10	Programs	1946-1964
	11	Programs (photocopies)	1945-1964
	12	Promotional Materials	1985, n.d.
	13	Notes to Cast (photocopies and originals)	1950-1956
	14	Production Notebook	1949
5	1	Production Notebook	n.d.
		Productions -- Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble	
	2	Promotional Materials	1978-2003
	3	Theatre Arts in the Classroom Programs	1930, n.d.
	4	Notes to Cast (photocopies and originals)	1972-1978
	5	Notes to Cast (photocopies and originals)	1978
	6	Notes to Cast (photocopies)	1979
	7	Notes to Cast (photocopies)	1978-1979
	8	Production Notes (photocopies and originals)	n.d.
	9	Alvina Krause Theatre – Dedication	1984
6	1	Promotional Posters – Eagles Mere Playhouse	n.d.