

ULMAN PAPERS
SETH ULMAN PAPERS

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Biography

Seth Powers Ulman, a Reed faculty member from 1959 to 1973, died in July at age 80 in Monterey, California, after a long struggle with cancer. Ulman came to Reed as a professor of literature and director of theatre. When he retired, he held the position of professor of theatre. While at Reed, he directed many productions, one of which starred both Eric Overmyer '73 and Lee Blessing '71, now both notable playwrights. Ulman was also active outside Reed, delivering many lectures about various aspects of theatre, including Japanese Noh, to the Portland community.

Born in 1920, Ulman received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught as an assistant professor of dramatic art before he joined the Reed faculty. He also served as a Fulbright visiting professor of English and drama at Waseda University in Japan from 1956 to 1958. Ulman visited Reed in 1997 and gave his last performance on campus, a one-man show on Walt Whitman. Craig Clinton, professor of theatre, wrote of this performance: "The theatre was crowded the evening of his performance. Former colleagues were on hand, as well as a great many of Seth's former students. The performance was enthusiastically received, and following his presentation he was warmly greeted by persons he had not visited with in many years."

Tom Dunne, professor of chemistry, recalls that "Seth's one-person theatre department was a very active one. . . Seth always attracted a student complement of appropriate size with excellent results, in my opinion, wonderful productions followed, in some cases, by captivation toward outstanding careers in theatre."

[From an online sketch by Lee Anne Phillips, 2009.]

Scope and Content

This collection of papers contains materials relating primarily to Seth Ulman's time as a faculty member at Reed College, though his own earlier college notes and papers are included. The Papers encompass correspondence, play production notes, reading notes, some original work, programs, props, flyers, and translations. Many of the programs and some papers show singeing from the fire that burned down the old theatre, formerly the original Student Union, in the fall of 1969.

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