



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
Dave Broadfoot fonds**

Inventory #F0530

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F0530 - Dave Broadfoot fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0530

Title: Dave Broadfoot fonds

Dates: 1917, ca. 1940-2007

Extent: 2 m textual records and other material
92 video cassettes

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Dave Broadfoot (1925-) is a comedian, actor, writer, producer and director born in Vancouver, B.C. on December 5, 1925. Although Broadfoot's parents were staunch evangelistic Protestants, Broadfoot found his religion in the world of comedic performance. Leaving high school in 1943, Broadfoot enlisted in the Merchant Navy where he served until 1947 and attained the status of Marine Engineer while seeing the world, mostly in convoys during World War II. Broadfoot, a member of the Canadian Seamen's Union, recognized that the arrival of the Seafarers' International Union controlled by mobster Hal Banks signaled that it was time to find a new line of work and left the merchant navy to work in the apparel business. At 21 years of age, Broadfoot joined an amateur theatre group called the North Vancouver Community Players and discovered that he had a gift for making people laugh. Resolving to turn a hobby into a career, Broadfoot gained his early experience by joining three amateur theatre companies in the Vancouver area simultaneously, and having decided to concentrate on comedy, he volunteered his services free of charge wherever he could hone his skills in front of a live audience such as at banquets, conventions and club dates. In 1952, Broadfoot made his professional debut in Victoria, British Columbia and shortly thereafter left his steady job to seek fame and fortune in Toronto, arriving the week that television broadcasting in Canada was born. Within weeks of his arrival Broadfoot made his television debut in the variety show "The Big Revue" where he was spotted by Mavor Moore. He also appeared with Wayne & Shuster on their television specials in 1952. From 1954-1964, Moore enlisted Broadfoot as a feature comedian and writer with the satirical stage revue "Spring Thaw." Broadfoot appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1955 but always resisted the call to move to the United States, preferring instead to focus on Canadian humour. He has performed across the country in nightclubs, vacation resorts (in particular the Gateway resort in Muskoka), small theatres, and in various CBC radio and television programmes in Toronto and Montreal over the decades including "Comedy Crackers," "Funny You Should Say That," "Comedy Cafe," and a 15-year stint with the Royal Canadian Air Farce troupe from 1973-1988. Broadfoot has also undertaken tours to entertain Canadian troops in Korea and the Middle East in the 1950s, and exported Canadian humour to London, England in the Canadian review "Clap Hands" in 1962. His popularity with fans has persisted well into the 1990s and into the 21st century with television specials, one-man stage shows, guest appearances, gala presentations for heads of state including Queen Elizabeth and President Ronald Reagan, and appearances at banquets and conventions where his humanitarianism is greatly appreciated. In 1959 Broadfoot was nominated "comedian of the year" by Canadian television critics. He is also the recipient of a Juno award for comedy recording, and more than a dozen ACTRA awards for writing and performing for radio and television. In 1983 Broadfoot was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada, and has been awarded honorary doctorates by Athabasca University (1988), University of Windsor (2000) and York University (2008). He has received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal (1977), and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal (2002). He was awarded the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Canadian comedy in 2003, and has also been made an Honorary Sergeant Major of the RCMP thanks to his recurring character Sergeant Renfrew.

Scope and Content: Fonds consists of Broadfoot's correspondence, both personal and professional; character monologues and scripts (including for Big Bobby Clobber; David J. Broadfoot, the MP for Kicking Horse Pass; and Sergeant Renfrew); scripts for roasts, tributes and special events; touring information; publicity photographs; clippings; mementoes and certificates; records pertaining to his autobiography "Old enough to say what I want" (2002); and videos documenting his career as one of Canada's longest serving comedians.

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Restrictions on Access and Use: Access is open.

Finding Aid: File list available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000530.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2008-010. No further accruals are expected.

Related Records: Related records may be found in the Mavor Moore fonds (F0359), the Norman Campbell fonds (F0476) and the New Play Society fonds (F0364).

Associated Material: There are records of the New Play Society and of Dora Mavor Moore in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; Dora Mavor Moore collection, 1888-1979; New Play Society collection, 1946-1971.

Immediate source of acquisition: Donated by Broadfoot in 2008.

Other Notes: The donor has organized the records pertaining to monologues and scripts alphabetically by character and/or topic. Although often not dated, these records are working files that span Broadfoot's career from ca. 1947-2007.

Provenance Access Points: Broadfoot, Dave, 1925-

Date of creation: 2009/04/01

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