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# Guide to the Margaret Danner Papers 1940-1984



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## **Descriptive Summary**

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.DANNERM
<b>Title</b>	Danner, Margaret. Papers
<b>Date</b>	1940-1984
<b>Size</b>	1 linear foot (2 boxes)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** Margaret Esse Danner, poet, editorial assistant, and community activist. The Margaret Danner Papers contain drafts, manuscripts, publications, unpublished poems, poetry journals, ephemera, biographical material, correspondence, newspaper articles, cassette tapes, course materials, and interviews. The papers document Danner's literary career.

## **Acknowledgments**

The Margaret Danner Papers were processed and preserved as part of the "Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project," funded with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

Box 1 contains audio material that does not include access copies. Researchers will need to consult with staff before requesting material from this series.

The remainder of the collection is open for research.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Danner, Margaret. Papers, [Box#, Folder#], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

### **Biographical Note**

Margaret Esse Danner was born on January 12, 1915 in Pryorsburg, Kentucky, to Caleb and Naomi Danner and spent most of her childhood living in Chicago, Illinois. In the eighth grade Danner won first prize for her poem titled "The Violin" which describes Guarnerius and Stradivarius violins.

After graduating from Englewood High School in Chicago, Danner attended Loyola University, Roosevelt College, Northwestern University, and YMCA College, studying under poets Paul Eagle and Karl Shapiro. In 1945 she won second place at Northwestern's Poetry Workshop of the Midwestern Writers Conference. Danner became editorial assistant for *Poetry: The Magazine of Verse* in 1951 and was promoted to assistant editor in 1956, the first African-American to serve in that position.

Danner's first collection of poetry was *Impressions of African Art Forms*, published by the Contemporary Studies of Miles Poetry Association at Wayne State University in 1960, and republished by Broadside Press in 1961. Danner's poetry was included in *Forerunners: Black Poets in America* in 1975, where she wrote, "As for my poetry: I believe that my dharma is to prove that the Force of Good takes precedence over the force for evil in mankind. To the extent that my poetry adheres to this purpose it will endure." Other publications by Danner include *To Flower: Poems* (1963), *Iron Lace* (1968), *Not Light, Nor Bright, Nor Feathery* (1968), *Poem Counterpoem* with Dudley Randall (1969), and *The Down of a Thistle: Selected Poems, Prose Poems, and Songs* (1976).

In 1951 Danner received the John Hay Whitney Fellowship Award and used it to travel to Africa in 1966. She went to Dakar, Senegal to read some of her poems at the World Exposition of Negro Arts and used the remainder of the fellowship to travel to Paris to research an exhibit of African art. Other awards she earned include the Harriet Tubman Award in 1965, the Poets in Concert Award in 1968, and the African Studies Association Award.

In the early 1960's Danner, along with Robert Hayden, became active in the Baha'i faith which promotes unity, harmony, and peace. From 1964 to 1966, Danner became a touring poet with the sponsorship of the Baha'i Teaching Committee.

Danner was a member of the society of Contemporary Artists, Afro-American Culture, National Council of Teachers of English, Nologonyu's, Boone House, and Chicago Southside Community Art Center.

Danner died on January 1, 1984 in Chicago, Illinois.

### **Scope Note**

The Margaret Danner Papers contain drafts, manuscripts, publications, unpublished poems, poetry journals, ephemera, biographical material, correspondence, newspaper articles, cassette tapes, course materials, and interviews. The papers document Danner's literary career.

There are manuscripts and drafts of Danner's poems and essays. The poetry journals contain Danner's published poems "Impressions of African Art Forms," "Iron Lace," and "Poem Counterpoem." Also included are poems by other authors such as Jennie Barr, Harry Bryce, Margaret Cunningham, Langston Hughes, Arthur Pfister, Dudley Randall, John Smith, and John Williams. The biographical material includes bibliographies and newspaper articles on Danner. The correspondence is between Danner and Ward Banks, Richard K. Barksdale, Alice Browning, William Harper, Robert Hayden, Langston Hughes, George Jackson, Don L. Lee, Isabella Gardner McCormick, Emilie A. Newcomb, Sterling D. Plumpp, and Walter Stone. The interviews are with Gwendolyn Brooks and Danner and the audio cassette tapes are of Danner and Langston Hughes. The course material is from the University of Chicago course "Humanities I: Notes on Reading Modern Poetry" from 1958. There are brochures and fliers from poetry festivals such as the Sixteenth Annual Fine Arts Festival in 1973 and the Black Poetry Festival in 1976.

## **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Poetry: Magazine of Verse. Records

## **Subject Headings**

- Danner, Margaret
- Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967
- Poetry
- Poetry: The Magazine of Verse

## **INVENTORY**

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 1**

Biographical, 1956

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 2**

Biographical, 1960-1970

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 3**

Biographical, 1970-1971

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 4**

Biographical, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 5**

Cassette Tapes, Margaret Danner and Langston Hughes, undated

### **Box 1**

**Folder 6**

Correspondence, 1942-1969

**Box 1**

**Folder 7**

Correspondence, 1970-1984

**Box 1**

**Folder 8**

Correspondence, undated

**Box 1**

**Folder 9**

Correspondence, undated

**Box 1**

**Folder 10**

Course Material, 1958

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

Cumbaya OBAC Newsletter, 1975

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

Interviews, undated

**Box 2**

**Folder 3**

Manuscripts, Margaret Danner, undated

**Box 2**

**Folder 4**

Poems, African, 1950

**Box 2**

**Folder 5**

Poems, Margaret Danner, 1940-1947

**Box 2**

**Folder 6**

Poems, Margaret Danner, 1972

**Box 2**

**Folder 7**

Poems, Margaret Danner, undated

**Box 2**

**Folder 8**

Poems, Others, 1965-1975

**Box 2**

**Folder 9**

Poetry Festivals, 1973

**Box 2**

**Folder 10**

Poetry Festivals, 1976

**Box 2**

**Folder 11**

Poetry Journals, 1963-1966

**Box 2**

**Folder 12**

Poetry Journals, undated