

Viola Lawrence film editor

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Finding aid written in English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Archives and Special Collections

Pollak Library South
800 N. State College Blvd.
Fullerton, , CA 92831-3599

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<http://www.library.fullerton.edu/services/special-collections.php>

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Summary Information

Repository: University Archives and Special Collections

Creator: Lawrence, Viola, 1894-1973

Title: Viola Lawrence film editing (Collection)

Identifier: APC-SC-68

Date: 1915-1973

Date: Majority of material found within 1915 - 1973

Physical Description: 4 boxes (2 legal size boxes, one mini box, and one manuscript box)

Scope and Contents note

The Viola Lawrence was the first female film editor in Hollywood. The collection contains awards, film industry magazines, photographs, and articles pertaining to her career.

Most of her 30 year career was spent at Columbia Pictures. She was nominated for Academy Awards for her work on the films Pal Joey and Pepe.

Biographical / Historical

Regarded as Hollywood's first lady film cutter, Viola Lawrence began her career holding title cards for the Brooklyn-based film company Vitagraph. In 1911, she earned a meager \$5 as a messenger. But she persisted in the business and worked her way up to edit her first film in 1912. Five years later, she resettled in Hollywood where she was signed by Carl Laemmle for Universal. During the 1920's, she was under contract to First National and to the independent companies of Gloria Swanson and Samuel Goldwyn at United Artists (1927-30). She spent the remainder of her lengthy career at Columbia (1931-60), where she rose to the position of supervising editor. She avidly believed in the power of close-ups and in highlighting actor's eyes to convey drama and emotion.

Lawrence did some of her finest work on two seminal films noir: *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947) and *In a Lonely Place* (1950)); and on the musical *Pal Joey* (1957), for which she received an Oscar nomination. Her swan song was the big budget musical comedy *Pepe* (1960), an ill-advised attempt at replicating the success of *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956). Lawrence later claimed that it had been her toughest assignment to date, as she had to pare down 500,000 feet of exposed film to just 20,000. In the end, the picture still ran to 195 minutes. Its relative failure may well have precipitated Lawrence's retirement.

Viola Lawrence was married to pioneer editor Frank Lawrence, who had been her mentor back in her days at Vitagraph.

Source: IMDb Mini Biography By: I.S.Mowis

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Controlled Access Headings

- Motion pictures--Editing
 - Women motion picture editors
-

Collection Inventory

Trophy

Trophy: Critics Award for the Eddie Duchin Story, 1956

Mini document box 1 (Memorabilia)

Film Industry Magazines, 1936 - 1971

American Cinema Editors (p. 224 with owner's notes), 1971

Legal document box 2 (Books)

Hollywood Magazine (p.14), 1936

Legal document box 2 (Framed artwork)

Movie Stars Paralyze (p.31), 1954

Legal document box 2 (Text)

Certificate of Membership to the American Cinema Editors, 1951

Legal document box 2 (Text)

Various Articles and Ephemera

Legal document box 2 (Mixed Materials)

Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences Certificate of Nomination for "Pal Joey", 1957

Legal document box 2 (Text)

Viola Lawrence Photographs

Photographs (Personal)

Legal document box 3 (Photograph)

Various Articles, Certificates, 1942 - 1973

Legal document box 3 (Text)

Frank Lawrence - "Hells Angels" Photograph

Legal document box 3 (Photograph)

Letter to Karol Reisz, 1949-11-22

Legal document box 3 (Text)

Oversize Certificates

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science Oversize Certificate, 1957-12-31

Manuscript box 4 (Framed artwork)

Virginia Bruce Photographs

Manuscript box 4 (photo album)