



# ArchivesSpace

a community served by †Lyrasis

## Robert N. Caldwell Correspondence 4078574

---

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 13, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

### Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor  
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127  
535 W. 114th St.  
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

[rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu](mailto:rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu)

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

---

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	3
Summary .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Administrative Information .....	5
Related Materials .....	6
Controlled Access Headings .....	6
Collection Inventory .....	7
Series I: Letters to Mark van Doren .....	7
Series II: Letters from Mark van Doren .....	7
Series III: Other Correspondence and Clippings .....	8

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
<b>Creator:</b>	Caldwell, Robert N., 1908-1973
<b>Title:</b>	Robert N. Caldwell Correspondence
<b>ID:</b>	4078574
<b>ID:</b>	MS#0182
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1949-1969
<b>Physical Description:</b>	1.26 linear feet 3 document boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	In 1949, New Jersey newspaper editor Robert N. Caldwell began a close friendship with his former professor at Columbia University, Mark van Doren. The two frequently discussed politics, literature, philosophy, and their day-to-day lives. This collection consists of correspondence, between Robert Caldwell and Columbia professor Mark van Doren spanning two decades.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Robert N. Caldwell Correspondence; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

Robert N. Caldwell first met Mark van Doren in one of his English classes at Columbia University in 1928. Upon graduating in 1932, Caldwell returned to his home state of New Jersey where he joined the staff of a local newspaper, The Record. Sixteen years later, after he had become the managing editor of another local paper The Bayonne Times, Caldwell and van Doren's paths would cross again. A controversy in Bayonne over the transferring of a secondary school teacher, another of van Doren's former students, would spark a letter to the editor from the professor, thus igniting a close friendship and twenty year correspondence.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

Just as van Doren lent a friendly ear throughout the Bayonne school board controversy, so too did Caldwell when van Doren and his publications were accused of promoting communism in 1951. The two frequently wrote each other of personal crises as well as triumphs. Also in 1951, van Doren, through the Association of the Alumni of Columbia College, nominated Caldwell for the association's Alexander Hamilton Medal, an award for distinguished service and accomplishment in any field of endeavor.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Biographical / Historical

---

In 1961, Caldwell returned to The Record and was named its assistant editor in 1967. Robert Caldwell died on May 31, 1973, at the age of 64.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Summary

---

The Robert N. Caldwell Papers consist almost entirely of correspondence between Caldwell and Mark van Doren. The two began their correspondence over local politics, specifically those in Bayonne, NJ, where Caldwell worked as a newspaper editor. As the friendship progressed, topics moved to parenting, philosophy, and literature, with van Doren frequently sharing his poems.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

This collection is arranged in three series.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Statement

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor  
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127  
535 W. 114th St.  
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

[rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu](mailto:rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu)

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

### Revision Description

File created. xml document instance created by Lea Osborne EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2009-06-26 2010-12-29 2019-05-20

### Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

### Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML approves permission to publish that which it physically owns; the responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Caldwell, Robert N. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--1969. Accession number--M-69.

### Ownership and Custodial History

Gift of Robert N. Caldwell, 1969.

### **Processing Information**

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 04/14/1989.

### **Processing Information**

Papers processed Christina N. Manzella, Pratt SILS 2011 2010 August.

### **Processing Information**

Cataloged Lea Osborne 2010 December 29.

### **Accruals**

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared.  
Contact [rbml@columbia.edu](mailto:rbml@columbia.edu) for more information.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Related Materials**

---

### **Selected Related Material at Columbia**

[Mark van Doren Papers, 1917-1976](#) Columbia University, Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Controlled Access Headings**

---

- Newspaper publishing -- New Jersey
- Journalism
- Literature
- Philosophy
- United States -- Politics and government -- 1945-1989
- Correspondence
- Van Doren, Mark, 1894-1972

## Collection Inventory

### Series I: Letters to Mark van Doren, 1949-1969

#### Scope and Contents

Series I is comprised of typed carbon copies of Caldwell's letters to van Doren, dating from February 26, 1949 to March 20, 1969

Title/Description	Instances	
1949 February-1950 December	box 1	folder 1
1951 February-March	box 1	folder 2
1951 April-May	box 1	folder 3
1951 June-July	box 1	folder 4
1951 August-October	box 1	folder 5
1951 November-December	box 1	folder 6
1952 January-March	box 1	folder 7
1952 April-July	box 2	folder 1
1952 August-December	box 2	folder 2
1953 January-December	box 2	folder 3
1954 January-1955 December	box 2	folder 4
1956 January-November	box 2	folder 5
1957 January-December	box 2	folder 6
1958 February-1969 March	box 2	folder 7

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

### Series II: Letters from Mark van Doren, 1949-1969

#### Scope and Contents

The second series consists of van Doren's primarily handwritten letters, some with accompanying envelopes, and postcards to Caldwell dating from February 19, 1949 to September 9, 1969.

Title/Description	Instances	
1949 February-1951 June	box 3	folder 1
1951 July-1952 May	box 3	folder 2
1952 June-1954 May	box 3	folder 3

1954 June-1958 December	box 3	folder 4
1959 January-1963 December	box 3	folder 5
1964 January-1969 September	box 3	folder 6

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

### Series III: Other Correspondence and Clippings, 1951-1969

#### Scope and Contents

Series III contains miscellaneous correspondence as well as newspaper clippings. There is a postcard from van Doren to Caldwell's daughter, Cathy, and letters from Dorothy and Charlie van Doren, Mark's wife and son, to Caldwell. There is a small collection of correspondence between Caldwell and Verb Gabbert. Finally, there are a variety of newspaper clippings of articles written either about van Doren or by Caldwell.

Title/Description	Instances	
Letters from the van Dorens to the Caldwells, undated	box 3	folder 7
Verb Gabbert Correspondence, 1951 August-1955 May	box 3	folder 8
Newspaper Clippings, 1951-1969	box 3	folder 9

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)