

## ***Eleanor Risteen Gordon Papers*** ***1924-1996, undated***

**Creator:** Eleanor Risteen Gordon (1935-1994)

**Extent:** 8.5 linear feet (16 boxes and 1 file folder)

**Language:** English and French

**Repository:** Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago

### **Administration Information**

**Access Restrictions:** None.

**Usage Restrictions:** The copyright of materials created by Eleanor Risteen Gordon was transferred to the WLA.

**Preferred Citation:** Identification of item, date, box #, folder #, Eleanor Risteen Gordon Papers, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

**Provenance:** Eleanor Risteen Gordon's papers were donated by her husband, Henry Gordon on October 3, 2009. The materials were received by the Women and Leadership Archives from the donor on September 25, 2009 (WLA2009.38).

**Processor:** Beth Loch, February 2012. WLA graduate assistant Laura Pearce updated and corrected the finding aid in 2013.

**Processing Information:** Finding aid updated January 2025.

**Separations:** 5.75 linear feet of extraneous and duplicate material was removed and discarded.

**See Also:** University of Illinois, Chicago Archives, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences—Department of English Records.

### **Biographical History**

Eleanor Risteen was born to Herbert and Esther Risteen in Baraboo, Wisconsin on July 11, 1935. Eleanor was the middle child, with an elder brother (Landon Risteen) and a younger sister (Betty Risteen Hasselkus). Eleanor's father was one of the foremost crossword puzzle creators, contributing many of them to the *The New York Times*.

After high school, Eleanor continued her studies in literature at the University of Wisconsin at Madison where she was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa sorority. She graduated with her BA in June of 1957 and subsequently pursued her PhD at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). While at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (UWM) she met Henry Gordon and the two were married September 12, 1959. Henry and Eleanor had a son (Jared), followed by a daughter (Naomi). Henry worked in advertising for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Dr. Gordon taught at UIC's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences from 1975 to 1988. She began as a teaching assistant while working toward a master's degree in English. In 1977, she became a lecturer in English while continuing work toward a PhD in rhetoric and composition and eventually became a Professor of Literature and Composition. In 1988 and 1989, Dr. Gordon commuted to Omaha, where she taught as an Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska.

Dr. Gordon was a published poet and also wrote freelance articles. She was an editor for the Chicago feminist magazine *SHE: Serving Human Equality* in the 1970s. Besides her short stories and poetry writings, Dr. Gordon was also an antique jewelry authority who wrote many articles on the subject. She co-wrote a book with Jean Nerenberg entitled *In Praise of Plastic*. The manuscript also appeared as a shortened version called *Early Plastic Jewelry* in such publications as "The Antique Trader" (November 26, 1974).

A resident of Evanston, Illinois, Dr. Gordon was highly involved in her local community, volunteering at the YMCA and giving poetry readings at Evanston Public Library. Dr. Gordon was also a participant in a bowling league and bowled a 300-game during league play in 1986. Gordon also spent time sketching and drawing; in her artwork Gordon focused on landscapes, still life, and women's fashions.

On March 16, 1994, at the age of 58, Eleanor Gordon passed away. In her memory Henry Gordon organized and published her poetry in one work, *Naming the Colors: Poems by Eleanor Risteen*. The manuscript was published in a limited number.

### **Scope and Content**

The Eleanor Risteen Gordon Papers consist of 8.5 linear feet of materials (16 boxes and 1 file folder) and span the years 1924-1996, with some undated material. The collection contains materials related to her activities as a professor at University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) and University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO), artist, and writer. This collection also includes many items regarding Eleanor's education, providing a vivid picture of women's education from high school to graduate work. Materials include correspondence, newspaper articles, artwork, handwritten notes, books, photographs, and three-dimensional objects. The records are arranged alphabetically within each series.

#### **Series 1: Biographical, 1925-1996, undated, Box 1**

Series contains materials relating to Dr. Gordon's childhood, family, and artwork. Other materials include her World War II ration books, driver's license permit, safety deposit box item list, and knitting instructions for "Eleanor's Beret." Other materials include her cremation/death records, Dr.

Gordon's memorial materials, Esther Risteen's (her mother's) estate papers, and Illinois Women's Bowling Association Awards.

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1946-1996, undated, Boxes 1-3**

This series contains Dr. Gordon's personal and professional correspondence. Much of the correspondence includes letters sent between Eleanor and her family while she attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison from 1953-1957. Other materials relate to the publication of her writings (poetry and short stories), and her time as a professor at University of Illinois, Chicago and University of Nebraska, Omaha.

**Series 3: Education: 1948-1993, undated, Boxes 3-8**

Includes the educational materials of Dr. Eleanor Gordon as both a student (high school to graduate work) and a professor (assistant and full). Materials include class notebooks and essays from high school and university covering numerous subjects, High School Minnewaukan Yearbooks from 1950-1952, high school anniversary reunion booklets, and student evaluations. Her diplomas from Baraboo High School, UWM BA, and MA from UIC (1953, 1957, and 1977 respectively) are included. The series also holds her student activity materials; high school band contest score cards, conference programs, Phi Beta Kappa materials from UIC, and graduation materials.

**Series 4: Published Materials and Writings, 1924-1996, undated, Boxes 8-15**

The largest series in the collection, it includes Dr. Gordon's published and unpublished writings.

**Subseries 4.1: General, 1924-1996, undated, Boxes 8-14**

Her father's, Herb Risteen, published crossword puzzles (1980-1989) are listed in this series. The series consists of journals, magazines, and newspapers in which Dr. Gordon was published; *Chicago Magazine* (1979-1992), *Two Hand News* (1977-1980), *Poetry Out of Wisconsin* (1980), and many more, including one in French. Also in this series are rough and final drafts of Dr. Gordon's poetry, short stories, and the manuscript she wrote with Jean Nerenberg, *In Praise of Plastic* (1976). Her poetry and short stories are listed alphabetically by title. The early and final drafts of *Naming the Colors: Poems by Eleanor Risteen*, a memorial book of Dr. Gordon's poetry published by her husband, Henry Gordon, are also included.

**Subseries 4.2: Newspapers, 1952-1985, Box 15**

This subseries includes newspapers and newspaper articles relating to Dr. Gordon's writings and interests. It includes four papers and various articles including: *American Observer* (1952), *Haymarket: Progressive Journal of Politics and Arts* (1985), *New York Times Magazine* (1954-1981), and *SHE: Serving Human Equality* (1975-1978). Newspaper editions are missing within year spans.

**Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, 1928-1987, undated, Box 14**

The smallest series in the collection, it contains floppy disks (5.25"), negatives, and photographs. The floppy disks hold copies of Dr. Gordon's dissertation and her vitae. The negatives contain images of plastic jewelry used in her research and publications. The photographs are of Eleanor, her childhood, family, and plastic jewelry.

**Series 6: Oversize and 3-D Materials, 1941-1986, undated, Box 16**

This series holds Dr. Gordon’s bowling awards, oversize artwork, high school awards, and scrapbooks. The undated artwork includes cartoons and sketches. Two scrapbooks are included; one on Eleanor’s childhood and the other on her early drawings. Other 3-D materials included are a handkerchief stitched with Eleanor’s name, bowling patches/pins, and her high school letters and pins.

**Subjects:**

Eleanor Risteen Gordon (1935-1994)  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
University of Wisconsin—Madison  
Evanston Free Public Library (Evanston, Ill.)  
Poetry and the arts

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
		<b><i>Eleanor Risteen Gordon Papers, 1924-1996, undated</i></b>	
		<b>Series 1: Biographical, 1925-1996, undated</b>	
1	1	Address Book and Rolodex	undated
1	2	Baby Book	1925-1936
1	3	Baptismal Booklet	1935
1	4	Certificate of Appreciation: Evanston Township High School	undated
1	5	Childhood Artwork	undated
1	6	Chicago Women Writers’ Conference Program	1980
1	7	Cremation/Death Records	1994
1	8	“Declaration of Trust”	1992
1	9	Drawing: Man	undated
1	10	Drawings/Sketches: Landscapes, Stills, and Maps	undated
1	11	Drawings/Sketches: Women	undated
1	12	Esther Risteen’s Estate Papers	1962-1991
1	13	European Trip Itinerary and Home Care Instructions	1976, undated
1	14	Evanston Public Library Memorial	1983, 1994, undated
1	15	Historical Drawings/Sketches	undated
1	16	Illinois Women’s Bowling Association Awards	1986
1	17	Knitting Instructions: Eleanor’s Beret	undated
1	18	Lists of Places to Submit Poetry	undated
1	19	Memorial Service: Invitation Lists	undated
1	20	Memorial Service: Materials	1994
1	21	Notes from England Trip	undated
1	22	“Our Wedding Day” Booklet	1959
1	23	Passport	1984
1	24	Personal Affiliation Cards	1973-1994, undated

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

1	25	Poetry Reading Invitations	1996
1	26	Political Cartoons	undated
1	27	Safety Deposit Box Item List	1985
1	28	Short Biography	undated
1	29	Voluntary Service Award	1992
1	30	Wisconsin Temporary Driver's Permit	1952
1	31	World War II Ration Books	undated
		<b>Series 2: Correspondence, 1946-1996, undated</b>	
1	32	Eleanor's Poetry Collection	1995
1	33	"Garbage: A Letter to Eleanor Gordon"	undated
1	34	General Correspondence	1946
1	35	General Correspondence	1953-1989
1	36	General Correspondence	1990-1996
2	1	General Correspondence	undated
2	2	Get Well Cards and Letters after Eleanor's Stroke	1989-1990, undated
2	3	<i>In Praise of Plastic</i> Publishing	1977-1979
2	4	Interdepartmental Correspondence: University of Nebraska, Omaha	1989
2	5	Letters and notes regarding the Modern Language Association (MLA) Conferences	1977-1981, undated
2	6	Letters of Condolence	1994, undated
2	7	Letters to Parents	1967
2	8	Letters to Parents and Sister	1953
2	9	Letters to Parents and Sister	1954
2	10	Letters to Parents and Sister	1955
2	11	Letters to Parents and Sister	1956
2	12	Letters to Parents and Sister	1957
2	13	Letters to Parents and Sister	1958
2	14	Letters to Parents and Sister	1960-1962
2	15	Orders for <i>Naming the Colors: Poems</i>	1995-1996, undated
2	16	Postcards	1980-1996, undated
2	17	Publications	1973-1975
2	18	Publications	1976-1978
2	19	Publications	1979-1981
2	20	Publications	undated
2	21	Publication and Article on Christopher Smart	1981-1987
2	22	Special Occasion Cards	undated
3	1	Special Occasion Cards to Henry Gordon	undated
3	2	University of Nebraska, Omaha	1988-1990, undated
3	3	University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC)	1981
3	4	UIC Candidacy Examination	1985
3	5	University of Wisconsin, Madison (UWM)	1954-1956
3	6	Wedding Invitation	undated

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

<b>Series 3: Education: 1948-1993, undated</b>			
3	7	Civics Course Paper Outline	1951
3	8	Class Notebook: American Institutions	undated
3	9	Class Notebook: Art History	1956, undated
3	10	Class Notebook: Biology	1950-1951
3	11	Class Notebook: Classics	undated
3	12	Class Notebook: Comparative Literature	1956-1957
3	13	Class Notebook: Comparative Literature A	1955-1956
3	14	Class Notebook: Comparative Literature B	1956
3	15	Class Notebook: Creative Writing	undated
3	16	Class Notebook: Economics 1A	1954-1955, undated
3	17	Class Notebook: Economics 144	1956-1957, undated
4	1	Class Notebook: English	1954-1955
4	2	Class Notebook: English II	undated
4	3	Class Notebook: English Literature	undated
4	4	Class Notebook: English 32 B	1953-1954
4	5	Class Notebook: English 127 B	undated
4	6	Class Notebook: English 170 A	1955-1956
4	7	Class Notebook: English 170 B	1956, undated
4	8	Class Notebook: English 174	1956, undated
4	9	Class Notebook: Historical Geography	1956, undated
4	10	Class Notebook: History	1955-1956
4	11	Class Notebook: History of American Thought and Culture	1956
4	12	Class Notebook: History 151	1957
4	13	Class Notebook: Philosophy	1956
4	14	Class Notebook: Physiology	undated
5	1	Class Notebook: Political Science	1956-1957
5	2	Class Notebook: Zoology	1953-1954
5	3	Class Notes: Arts	undated
5	4	Class Notes: "Bleak House" and "Dramatis Personae"	undated
5	5	Class Notes (Typed): Classics	undated
5	6	Diplomas	1953, 1957, 1977
5	7	Early Syllabi Drafts	1981, undated
5	8	English Class Literature Critiques	undated
5	9	English Department Roster	undated
5	10	English 101 Assignment	undated
5	11	English Papers (University)	1975-1981
5	12	English Papers (University)	1982-1983
5	13	English 385 and 386 Class Materials	1981-1982, undated
5	14	Graduate Seminar Notes: Piers Plowman Seminar	1980, undated
5	15	High School Band Contest Score Cards	undated
5	16	High School Course Work	1948-1950, undated
6	1	High School Graduation Invitations and Programs	1953
6	2	High School Junior Year Course Work	1951-1952, undated

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

6	3	High School Minnewaukan Yearbook	1950
6	4	High School Minnewaukan Yearbook	1951
6	5	High School Minnewaukan Yearbook	1952
6	6	High School Plays	1932-1951, undated
6	7	High School 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Booklet	1983
6	8	High School 35 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Booklet	1988
6	9	High School 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Booklet	1993
6	10	Inter-fraternity Conference Materials	1955
6	11	Model Essay Collection, Composition 101	1978
6	12	Personal Notebook (handwritten)	1987, undated
6	13	Personal Notes (handwritten): Untitled	undated
6	14	Phi Beta Kappa Materials	1957, undated
6	15	Phi Kappa Phi Membership	1957
6	16	Philosophy Course Exercises and Notes	1982, undated
6	17	Psycholinguistics Course Notes and Paper	1982, undated
6	18	Rhetoric Course Packet	1989
6	19	Student Evaluations	1977-1978
7	1	Student Evaluations	1989
7	2	Student Records	1940-1987
7	3	Student Study List Card	1954-1955
7	4	Undergraduate Junior Year Class Schedule	1955
7	5	University Course Study Note Cards	undated
7	6	University English Papers	1975-1981
7	7	University English Papers	undated
7	8	University Essays	1976-1978
7	9	University Essays	undated
7	10	University Final Exams	1985, undated
7	11	University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) Commencement Program	1989
7	12	UIC Dissertation Agreement	1988
7	13	UIC English M.A. Qualifying Manuscript	1957
8	1	UIC English Papers	1983, undated
8	2	UIC Student Evaluation Data	1978-1979
8	3	UIC Student Evaluation Data	1989
8	4	UIC Student Evaluations	1977, undated
8	5	UIC Student Evaluations	1979, undated
8	6	UIC Teaching Theory Material	1977, undated
8	7	University of Wisconsin, Madison (UWM) Graduation Materials	1957
8	8	UWM Undergrad Class Schedules	1957, 1958
8	9	UWM Honorary Sorority Certificates	1954-1957
8	10	UWM Senior Yearbook, Honors	1957
		<b>Series 4: Published Materials and Writings, 1924-1996, undated</b>	

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

<b>Subseries 4.1: General, 1924-1996, undated</b>			
8	11	“A Day in the Life”	undated
8	12	“Another Chicago Magazine”	1977-1978
8	13	“Anthology”	1983
8	14	“Art Deco: Chicago” Manuscript	undated
8	15	Article Edited by Gordon	undated
8	16	“Arts and Events”, Theater Article	1983
8	17	“Banyan Anthology 2”	1982
8	18	“Banyan Press Anthology”	1977
8	19	“Changing Rhetorics of Plastic Jewelry”	1990, undated
9	1	Chicago Creative Writers Directory	1981
9	2	“Chicago History”	1979-1980
9	3	“Chicago Magazine”	1979-1992
9	4	“Chicago Poetry Letter News”	1984
9	5	“Chicago’s Art Deco Terra Cottas” Article	1978, undated
9	6	“Chicago’s Art Deco Terra Cottas” Article with Notes	undated
9	7	“December”	1976, 1981
9	8	“Earthquake on Ada Street”	1979
9	9	Eleanor Gordon’s Obituaries	1994
9	10	“EPOS”	1976
9	11	Evanston Art Center Newsletter	1993
9	12	Evanston Public Library Poetry Awards Booklet	1994
9	13	“Everywoman’s Jewelry” Articles	undated
9	14	Far West Popular Culture Association Conference Entry Essay	1988
9	15	“FIT: A One Act Play”	1986, undated
9	16	“Fundamentals of Cataloging and Classification”	1995
9	17	“Garland Court Review”	1975
9	18	“Greater Golden Hill Poetry Express”	1980
10	1	Herb Risteen’s Published Crossword Puzzles	1980-1989
10	2	<i>In Praise of Plastic</i> : Chapters 1-6	undated
10	3	<i>In Praise of Plastic</i> : Early Manuscript Draft	1976, undated
10	4	<i>In Praise of Plastic</i> : Early Manuscript Draft	undated
10	5	<i>In Praise of Plastic</i> : Outline and Chapter Three	undated
10	6	“In Their Spaces”	1979
10	7	“I Only Laugh When It Hurts”, Poetry Article	undated
10	8	“Jean’s Journal”	1975
10	9	“Journal of Popular Culture”	1980
10	10	“King Home” Newsletter	1991
10	11	“Lake Superior Review”	1979
10	12	<i>Le Symbolisme</i> (French)	1924
10	13	Literary Reviews and Notes (handwritten)	undated
10	14	“Maenad”	1982
10	15	“Menomonie Review”	1982
10	16	“Modern Language Association (MLA) International	1989

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

		Bibliography”	
11	1	“Modern Poetry Studies”	1983
11	2	“Naming and Creating”: Dennis School Students	undated
11	3	<i>Naming the Colors</i>	undated
11	4	<i>Naming the Colors</i> : Binding	1995-1996, undated
11	5	<i>Naming the Colors</i> : Early Manuscripts (1 of 2)	undated
11	6	<i>Naming the Colors</i> : Early Manuscripts (2 of 2)	undated
11	7	<i>Naming the Colors: Poems by Eleanor Risteen</i> (unbound)	undated
11	8	National Women’s Council Program	1977
11	9	Newspaper Articles (photocopied)	1953-1986
11	10	“North Shore” Magazine	1980
11	11	Notes on Feminist Writers (handwritten)	undated
11	12	“Open Stock”	1980
11	13	“Ornament” Magazine	1980
11	14	“Overtures”	1986
11	15	“POEM”	1978
11	16	Poems: A-D	undated
12	1	Poems: E-M	undated
12	2	Poems: M-P	undated
12	3	Poems: R-T	undated
12	4	Poems: U-W	undated
12	5	Poems: Untitled	1979, undated
12	6	“Poetry &”	1977, undated
12	7	Poetry and Women’s Newsletters	1978-1985
12	8	Poetry Newsletters: “Two Hands News”	1977-1980
12	9	<i>Poetry Out of Wisconsin</i>	1980
12	10	Poetry Reading Fliers	1982, undated
12	11	“Primavera”	1977
12	12	“Popular Culture Review”	1980
13	1	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America (PMLA) Directory	1989
13	2	Qualifying Manuscript: “Days Are My Fears”	1957
13	3	“RHINO”	1976-1978
13	4	“RHINO”	1979-1987
13	5	“Scheherazade and the Postman”	undated
13	6	“Significance of the Art Deco Movement in Chicago”, Essay	undated
13	7	Short Stories: A-De	1976, undated
13	8	Short Stories: Do-J	undated
13	9	Short Stories: L-W	undated
13	10	“Skywriting 9”	1979
13	11	“Spoon River Quarterly”	1980
13	12	“Stairway to the Stars”	1977
14	1	“Uncle”	1980-1981
14	2	Untitled Article with Notes for “SHE”	undated

*Women and Leadership Archives  
Loyola University Chicago*

14	3	“Yankee”	1977
		<b>Subseries 4.2: Newspapers, 1952-1985</b>	
15	1	“American Observer”	1952
15	2	“Haymarket: Progressive Journal of Politics and Arts”	1985
15	3	“New York Times Magazine”: Herb Risteen’s Crossword Puzzles	1954-1981
15	4	Oversized Newspaper and Magazine Articles	1977-1979, undated
15	5	“SHE: Serving Human Equality,” November 1975-February 1977	1975-1977
15	6	“SHE: Serving Human Equality”	1977
15	7	“SHE: Serving Human Equality”	1977
15	8	“SHE: Serving Human Equality”	1978
		<b>Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, 1928-1987, undated</b>	
14	4	Floppy Disks (5.25”): Eleanor’s Dissertation and Vita	undated
14	5	Negatives: Plastic Jewelry	undated
14	6	Photograph Album: Family, Part I	1946-1973, undated
14	7	Photograph Album: Family, Part II	1946-1973, undated
14	8	Photographs: Eleanor	undated
14	9	Photographs: Eleanor’s Childhood	undated
14	10	Photographs: Family	1928-1987
14	11	Photographs: Family	undated
14	12	Photographs: Group Gatherings	1954, undated
14	13	Photographs: Plastic Jewelry	undated
14	14	Photographs: Women’s Style	undated
		<b>Series 6: Oversize and 3-D Materials, 1941-1986, undated</b>	
16	1	Bowling Award Patches	1971-1976, undated
16	2	Bowling Award Pins	1986, undated
16	3	Cartoons	undated
16	4	Drawings/Sketches	undated
16	5	Handkerchief	undated
16	6	High School Letters and Pins	undated
16	7	Scrapbook: Eleanor’s Childhood	1941, undated
16	8	Scrapbook: Special Occasion Cards and Artwork	undated
FF4	1	Sketches on the back of Wallpaper, Oversized Landscape Sketch	undated