The John C. Gowan Collection
[1949-1986]

Descriptive Summary:

Title: The John C. Gowan Collection  
Date Span: 1949-1986  
Acquisition Number: N/A  
Creator: John C. Gowan  
Donor: The Creative Education Foundation  
Date of Acquisition: 1990  
Extent: 5 boxes  
Language: English  
Location: Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State  
Processed: 2018, Heather Hartz, Hope Dunbar

Information on Use:

Access: The John C. Gowan Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation:
[Description and dates], Box/folder, Series, The John C. Gowan Collection, Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.

Biographical Note:
John Curtis Gowan was born May 21, 1912 in Boston, Massachusetts. Graduating from Thayer Academy, Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1929, John Gowan was only 17 when he
entered Harvard University, earning his undergraduate degree four years later. A master's degree in mathematics followed; he then moved to Culver, Indiana, where he was employed as a counselor and mathematics teacher at Culver Military Academy from 1941 to 1952. Earning a doctorate from UCLA, he became a member of the founding faculty at the California State University at Northridge, where he taught as a professor of Educational Psychology from 1953 until 1975, when he retired with emeritus status.

Dr. Gowan became interested in gifted children after the Russians gained superiority in space with the 1957 launch of Sputnik. He formed the National Association for Gifted Children the following year. He was the group's executive director and president from 1975 to 1979 and over the years wrote more than 100 articles and fourteen books on gifted children, teacher evaluation, child development, and creativity.

While at Northridge, he developed a program to train campus counselors, was nominated in 1973 as outstanding professor, and had been a counselor, researcher, Fulbright lecturer, and visiting professor at various schools including the University of Singapore, the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, the University of Hawaii, and Connecticut State College. He was a fellow of the American Psychological Association and was also a colleague of the Creative Education Foundation.

Besides his work in Educational Psychology as specifically related to gifted children, he also had an interest in psychic (or psychedelic) phenomena as it relates to human creativity. His work in this area was inspired by the writings of Aldous Huxley and Carl Jung. Based on his work in creativity and with gifted children, Dr. Gowan developed a model of mental development that derived from the work of Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson, but also included adult development beyond the ordinary adult successes of career and family building, extending into the emergence and stabilization of extraordinary development and mystical states of consciousness. He described the entire spectrum of available states in his classic Trance, Art, & Creativity (1975), with its different modalities of spiritual and aesthetic expression. He also devised a test for self-actualization, (as defined by Abraham Maslow), called the Northridge Developmental Scale. Dr. Gowan died on December 2, 1986.

Scope and Contents:
Articles; bibliographies; book reviews; letters; newsletters; publications; and research specified by subject.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in two series based on original order at the time of acquisition.