



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Bob Rule Papers

NMAH.AC.0855

Danleigh H. Kaplan

2006

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Bob Rule Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0855
Date:	ca. 1950-1999.
Extent:	1.5 Cubic feet (1 box)
Creator:	Rule, Bob (Robert M.)
Language:	English
Summary:	Materials document Bob Rule's career as a yo-yo demonstrator, expert, promoter and contest winner.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the Museum by Bob Rule in 2003.

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Duncan Family Yo- Yo Collection (AC0807)

Processing Information

Processed by Danleigh H. Kaplan (intern), 2006; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Bob Rule Papers, 1950-1999, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Bob Rule grew up in Detroit, Michigan, and began yo-yoing as a young boy in 1948. He entered his first yo-yo contest in 1949 and in 1952, began working part-time for Donald F. Duncan, Incorporated managing yo-yo contests and demonstrations in the Detroit area. In 1955, he went to work full-time for Duncan as a professional yo-yo demonstrator. In this role, he traveled across the United States and to Canada, Puerto Rico, and Mexico demonstrating yo-yo tricks, managing yo-yo contests, and appearing on local television stations to promote the Duncan line of yo-yos and spinning tops. In 1960, he began calling himself "Mr. Yo-Yo" and eventually trademarked the name in 1970.

He left Duncan when the company went out of business in 1965 and settled in Atlanta, Georgia, with his family where he went into the slot car racing business. He owned Champion Slot Racing Products, which he eventually merged with another company he founded, BoLINK Industries, a radio control car racing company. Bob Rule also founded KIEVE Enterprises, a public relations firm with a division by the name of Yo-Yo Promotions. This division combined Rule's yo-yoing skills with sales pitches for various companies that hired him to advertise their products or entertain their employees and/or customers.

From 1970 to 1973, Bob Rule went back to work as a yo-yo demonstrator in connection with the Union Wadding Company of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Although he was not on their payroll, Rule demonstrated their line of Festival yo-yos.

Rule prides himself on the confidence and presentation skills he acquired throughout his career as a yo-yo professional. He believes that these skills laid the foundation for the success he experienced in other aspects of his life. Rule and his second wife Elleda (his first wife Kathy died of cancer in 1988) reside in Duluth, Georgia, where he continues to promote the yo-yo by attending yo-yo contests, staying in contact with other yo-yo personalities, and hosting a website that documents his career as a yo-yo professional, www.mryoyo.com.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents the career of Bob Rule as a professional demonstrator and promoter of yo-yos and spinning tops for Donald F. Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Incorporated, the Union Wadding Company, and his own KIEVE Enterprises. Materials in this collection include photographs, newspaper clippings, scrapbook pages, correspondence, manuals, and other business records. The bulk of this collection consists of photographs and newspaper clippings that document the promotional events and contests he managed between 1960 and 1970. Materials found in this collection would be useful to those interested in the history of toys and recreation in general, as well as the history and promotional strategies of Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Incorporated.

Series 1, Personal Papers, circa 1950s–2002, undated, includes correspondence, biographical narratives, clippings, photographs, and other papers associated with the personal life and professional career of Bob Rule. Photographs in this series are mostly of Rule demonstrating yo-yos and spinning tops, but also present are photographs of Rule posing with specialized cars, his family and friends, and of social events attended by Rule. Correspondence in this series focuses on business matters including his book *Yo-Yo Secrets* and letters from children in response to a promotional event aired on television in 1963 and 1964. The correspondence and photographs are arranged in chronological order when possible.

Series 2, Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Incorporated, circa 1955–1964, undated, include field manuals, trade literature, business cards of Duncan employees, clippings, and photographs. The newspaper clippings in this series are about the business ventures and employees of Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Inc. Photographs are mostly of Duncan top and yo-yo displays in the 1950s and 1960s, but photographs of the Duncan

factory in Luck, Wisconsin, and Duncan employees are also present. Materials in this series are arranged chronologically when possible.

Series 3, Promotional Events and Competitions, circa 1950s–1990s, undated, comprise of photographs, newspaper clippings, correspondence, event itineraries, and other printed material associated with promotional events and yo-yo competitions attended and managed by Bob Rule across the United States and in Canada, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. The itineraries, rules, rosters, and programs associated with various local, regional, and national competitions are present. Many of these materials were originally included in a scrapbook, which was disassembled and scattered throughout the collection prior to the collection coming to the Museum. Materials in this series are arranged chronologically when possible.

Series 4, Other Yo-Yo Professionals, circa 1955–2000, undated, consists of photographs and clippings that document the careers of other yo-yo experts and contest winners. Also included are various group photographs of yo-yo personalities, many include Bob Rule. A minimal number of pages from Rule's personal website (www.mryoyo.com) that detail the materials found in this series are also present. Files are arranged alphabetically by last name and by date within the folder when possible.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into five series.

Series 1, Personal Papers, circa 1950s–2002, undated

Series 2, Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Incorporated, circa 1955–1964, undated

Series 3, Promotional Events and Competitions, circa 1950s–1990s, undated

Series 4, Other Yo-Yo Professionals, circa 1955–2000, undated

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Toy industry
- Toys
- Yo-yos

Types of Materials:

- Articles
- Catalogs
- Clippings
- Correspondence -- 1950-2000
- Photographs -- 20th century

Container Listing

Series 1: Personal Papers, circa 1950s – 2002

Box 1, Folder 1	Letters of thanks or praise to Rule , 1961 - 1970
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters to Rule from children, 1963 - 1964
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1965 - 1977, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence regarding Rule's book, 1971 - 1993
Box 1, Folder 5	Biographical information, undated
Box 1, Folder 6	Press coverage of Rule, 1956 - 2002, undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Photographs of Rule with specialized cars, 1950s
Box 1, Folder 8	Photographs of Rule demonstrating tops, 1950s-1960s
Box 1, Folder 9	Miscellaneous photographs of Rule, his family, friends, and acquaintances, undated Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 10	Photographs of Rule's first wife Kathy, 1963 - 1963
Box 1, Folder 11	Jack Russell's party, 1955 - 1956
Box 1, Folder 12	Papers related to Rule's business ventures; KIEVE Enterprises, Yo-Yo Promotions, and BoLINK Industries, undated
Box 1, Folder 13	Miscellaneous business cards, undated
Box 1, Folder 14	Comic strips and cartoons about yo-yos, undated
Box 1, Folder 15	Articles about yo-yos, circa 1960-1999
Box 2, Folder 1	Trade literature and other miscellaneous printed material,, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Papers related to Hallmark's "Peanuts" yo-yo, 1968, 1968 - 1968
Box 2, Folder 3	Papers related to an exhibit on yo-yos, 1989 - 1990

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Series 2: Duncan Yo-Yo Company, Incorporated, circa 1955–1964

- Box 2, Folder 4 Duncan field manual, 1964 - 1964
- Box 2, Folder 5 Articles about Donald F. Duncan, Incorporated, undated
- Box 2, Folder 6 Trade literature and other miscellaneous printed material, undated
- Box 2, Folder 7 Business cards of Duncan employees, undated
- Box 2, Folder 8 Photographs of Duncan top and yo-yo displays, 1955 - 1964
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 9 Photographs of Duncan factory in Luck, Wisconsin, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)

[Billboard with message, "Welcome to Luck Business District, Yo Yo Capital of the World" : color photoprint.], 1963

1 Item (3.5" x 3.5".)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Photograph taken in Luck, Wisconsin; photographer unidentified.

Unrestricted research use on site by appointment. Photographs must be handled with cotton gloves unless protected by sleeves.

Dye on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0855-0000003.tif--- (AC Scan)

In Box 2, Folder 9.

Topic: Billboards -- 1960-1970
 Yo-yos

Place: Luck (Wis.)
 Wisconsin

Genre/
Form: Photographs -- 1960-1970 -- Color photoprints

- Box 2, Folder 10 Photograph of Duncan employee Ben Robinson, factory representative , 1962 - 1962

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Series 3: Promotional Events and Competitions, circa 1950s–1990s

- Box 2, Folder 11 Photographs of yo-yo contests and contestants, circa 1950s
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 12 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings about yo-yos and yo-yo events, circa 1950s-1960s
- Box 2, Folder 13 Television appearances by Rule and others, circa 1955-1963
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 2, Folder 14 Promotional trip to Orlando, Florida, 1961 - 1961
- Box 2, Folder 15 Promotional trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1961 - 1961
- Box 2, Folder 16 National Duncan Yo-Yo Return Top Championships, Disneyland, Anaheim, California, 1962 - 1962
- Box 2, Folder 17 Promotional trips to Memphis, Tennessee, 1961 - 1962
- Box 2, Folder 18 Promotional trips to Jonesboro, Arkansas, 1961 - 1962
- Box 2, Folder 19 Promotional trip to Orlando, Florida, 1962 - 1962
- Box 2, Folder 20 Promotional trip to San Diego, California, 1962 - 1962
- Box 2, Folder 21 Promotional trip to Louisville, Kentucky , 1962 - 1962
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 1 San Antonio, Texas, contest and contest winner, Jimmy Lukacs, 1962 - 1963
[Image\(s\)](#)
- Box 3, Folder 2 Promotional trip to Atlanta, Georgia, 1963 - 1963
- Box 3, Folder 3 Promotional trip to Calgary, 1963 - 1963
- Box 3, Folder 4 Promotional trip to San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1963 - 1963
- Box 3, Folder 5 Promotional trip to Kansas City, Missouri, 1963 - 1963
- Box 3, Folder 6 Television appearance on The Popeye Club, Atlanta, Georgia, 1962 - 1963
- Box 3, Folder 7 Promotional trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1964 - 1964

- Box 3, Folder 8 Duncan International Finals, Disneyland, Anaheim, California, 1964 - 1964

- Box 3, Folder 9 Yo-Yo promotional event, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1964 - 1964
[Image\(s\)](#)

- Box 3, Folder 10 Rule's visit to Union Wadding Company, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, circa 1970

- Box 3, Folder 11 Yo-yo demonstration in Atlanta, Georgia, circa 1970s

- Box 3, Folder 12 Gorham appearance, New York, New York, circa 1970-1973

- Box 3, Folder 13 Fortunoff's, Westbury, New York, 1971 - 1971

- Box 3, Folder 14 Television appearance on A.M. New York, 1971 - 1971

- Box 3, Folder 15 Hockey game appearance, Norfolk, Virginia, 1972 - 1972

- Box 3, Folder 16 Indianapolis 500, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1973 - 1973

- Box 3, Folder 17 International Juggler's Association Convention, 1990, 1990 - 1990

- Box 3, Folder 18 Carl Goldberg show , circa 1990s

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Series 4: Other Yo-Yo Professionals, circa 1955–2000

Box 4, Folder 1	Barney Akers, 1962 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 2	Bill Anderson, undated
Box 4, Folder 2	Fortiunato Annunciacion, undated
Box 4, Folder 3	Bob Baab, undated
Box 4, Folder 3	Dale Bassett, 1973 - 1973
Box 4, Folder 4	Carl Bates, 1961 - 1963
Box 4, Folder 5	Skeeter Beebe, 1965 - 1965
Box 4, Folder 6	Bill Cafe, 1965 - 1965
Box 4, Folder 7	Charlie Carrano, about 1961-1963
Box 4, Folder 8	Donn Davison, 1962 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 9	Dave Emerson, undated
Box 4, Folder 10	Ken Filary, 1962 - 1962
Box 4, Folder 11	Doyle Harper, undated
Box 4, Folder 12	Harry Kelly, undated
Box 4, Folder 13	Tim Kelly , 1963 - 1963, 1963 - 1963
Box 4, Folder 13	Quentin Kelly, undated
Box 4, Folder 14	Ron King, 1963 - 1963
Box 4, Folder 15	Forest Larson, 1964 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 16	Valerie Oliver Larson, 1964 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 17	Wayne Lundberg, undated
Box 4, Folder 18	Bud Lutz, 1963 - 2000

Box 4, Folder 19	Danny Maris, undated
Box 4, Folder 19	Alfredo Mendoza, undated
Box 4, Folder 20	Fred Mills, undated
Box 4, Folder 21	Donald Noris, 1956 - 1956
Box 4, Folder 22	Dale Oliver, 1961 - 1961
Box 4, Folder 23	Bob Rola, undated
Box 4, Folder 24	Chuck Sears, undated
Box 4, Folder 25	George Somera, undated
Box 4, Folder 25	Gus Somera
Box 4, Folder 26	Pete Span, 1962 - 1962
Box 4, Folder 27	Don Winters, 1962 - 1963
Box 4, Folder 28	Joe Young, undated
Box 4, Folder 28	Frank Young, 1957 - 1957
Box 4, Folder 29	Group photographs and photographs of unknown yo-yo demonstrators , 1955 - 1962

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