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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Eugene (Gene) Glasco Ramey (1913-1984), the seventh child of Curry and Sarah Annie (Glasco) Ramey, was born April 4, 1913, in Austin, Texas. He inherited his musical talent from various family members: his grandfather Jack was an old-style violinist, his father played banjo, his mother played organ, and his brother Joseph was a member of the Capitol City Quartet. Ramey's first instrument was a set of temple blocks which he played at the age of eight. He learned the ukulele two years later. In his Anderson High School years, he played trumpet and baritone horn, performing with Sammy's LaPalm Orchestra in Austin for nearly three years.

On August 18, 1932, Ramey moved to Kansas City in order to attend Western University and study electrical engineering. During these years, he began playing the double bass and took lessons informally from Walter Page. He attended jam sessions of the Count Basie and Duke Ellington bands during his leisure time. He graduated from college in 1935. In 1938, Ramey became the bassist of the Jay McShann Band and started his life-long professional relationship with McShann. When McShann joined the army in 1943, Ramey left for New York where he freelanced with many important musicians including Eddie Davis, Miles Davis, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Lester Young and Charlie Parker (to whom he was a teacher and close friend). For a while, he worked full-time at the Chase Manhattan Bank as a safe deposit box attendant.

Ramey frequently toured America and Europe. Although he never issued a solo record, his performances can be found in numerous recordings that featured him as sideman. His solid bass line won acclaim from many bandleaders and soloists. His success was honored especially in his hometown of Austin (where he returned in 1976). June 19, 1983 was designated "Gene Ramey Day" in Austin, and in 1984 he was appointed Admiral in the Texas Navy because of his contributions to jazz and his education of the younger generations.

Ramey died December 8, 1984.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Eugene G. Ramey, Sr. Collection was gifted to the Miller Nichols Library at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1991 by his son Eugene G. Ramey, Jr. The manuscript collection is housed in the Dr. Kenneth J. LaBudde Department of Special Collections and contains material related to the life and career of Ramey: correspondence, performance contracts, royalty statements, programs, membership and business cards, news clippings and articles (including by Ramey), address and appointment books, awards and certificates, and other personal and miscellaneous documents. Also included are the “captain’s hat” worn by Count Basie in the documentary film *Last Of The Blue Devils*; and a photograph collection, which contains early images of Ramey, his family and friends, as well as rare shots of Ramey and other jazz musicians.

## **SERIES NOTES**

### **SERIES I: PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Series I is located in boxes 1-5 and oversized box 8, and consists of 327 images (325 photos and two paintings by California artist Joyce Lieberman). Most are publicity, performance and event photos, including rare and candid shots of jazz musicians. Also included are early images of Ramey, family and friends.

### **SERIES II: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Series II is located in box 6, folders 1-3. It consists of biographical information about Ramey (folder 1); his son, Eugene Ramey Jr. (folder 2); and his daughter, Doris A. Jefferson.

### **SERIES III: CORRESPONDENCE**

Series III is located in box 6, folders 4-6, and is divided into business and personal correspondence.

### **SERIES IV: PROFESSIONAL MATERIAL**

Series IV is located in box 6, folders 7-11, and consists of material related to Ramey’s professional life. Included are contracts, financial statements such as royalties, concert programs, travel/tour documents and miscellaneous business and membership cards.

### **SERIES V: NEWS CLIPPINGS**

Series V is located in box 6, folders 12 and 13. Folder 12 consists of material featuring Ramey, while folder 13 consists of material that feature other artists but mention Ramey in the article.

### **SERIES VI: MISCELLANEOUS**

Series VI is located in box 7, folders 1-2. Folder 1 holds miscellaneous documents such as a driver’s license, notary public certificate, car registration, etc. Folder 2 includes address and appointment books, funeral programs, article authored by Ramey, postcards, etc.

### **SERIES VII: AWARDS**

Series VII is located in box 7, folders 3-5, and box 8, folders 1 and 2. Included are the City of

Austin Black Arts Alliance Outstanding Musical Achievement Award; Gene Ramey Day Proclamation; National Association of Jazz Educators Lifetime Achievement Award; Crispus Attucks Lodge Certificates; and other miscellaneous awards and certificates.

**SERIES VIII: COUNT BASIE'S HAT**

Series VIII is located in box 9. It contains the "captain's hat" worn by Count Basie in the documentary film *Last of the Blue Devils*.

## CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I: PHOTOGRAPHS

An inventory of the photograph collection is accessible through an in-house database. Contact sheets are available for viewing to walk-in patrons or can be accessed online through the following web page: <https://library.umkc.edu/archival-collections/ramey>. Contact Special Collections with specific questions or for more information.

### SERIES II: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
6	1	Eugene G. Ramey Sr.: Birth certificate (April 4, 1913); Interview with Nathan Pearson, Austin, TX, Jan. 9, 1977; Ramey article by Doug Ramsey in <i>Texas Monthly</i> , May 1981.
	2	Eugene G. Ramey Jr.: Report Card; Immunization Certificate; Junior High School Certificate; Funeral Program; Kansas City Star Article.
	3	Doris A. Jefferson (Ramey): Funeral Program; Funeral Book; Death Certificate; Obituary.

### SERIES III: CORRESPONDENCE

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
6	4	Business
	5	Personal-dated
	6	Personal-undated

### SERIES IV: PROFESSIONAL MATERIAL

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
6	7	Contracts
	8	Financial Statements
	9	Programs/Promotional
	10	Travel/Tour Documents
	11	Miscellaneous business/membership cards

### SERIES V: NEWS CLIPPINGS

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
6	12	Clippings featuring Gene Ramey
	13	Clippings mentioning Gene Ramey

### SERIES VI: MISCELLANEOUS

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
7	1	Documents, i.e., Driver's License; Notary Public certificate; car

**Box Folder Description**

registration; etc.  
2 Miscellaneous items; address and appointment books; funeral programs;  
Article by Ramey: "My Memories of Bird Parker." *Melody Maker*,  
May 28, 1955, pg. 5 and 10; postcards; etc.

**SERIES VII: AWARDS**

**Box Folder Description**

7 3 City of Austin Black Arts Alliance Outstanding Musical Achievement  
Award, June 19, 1983  
4 Gene Ramey Day Proclamation, June 16, 1983  
5 Miscellaneous certificates and awards  
8 1 National Association of Jazz Educators Lifetime Achievement Award,  
January 1985  
2 Crispus Attucks Lodge Certificates

**SERIES VIII: COUNT BASIE'S HAT**

**Box Folder Description**

9 N/A "Captain's hat" worn by Count Basie in the documentary film *Last of the  
Blue Devils*.