



Guide to the David Schmoeller Papers

This finding aid was created by UNLV Special Collections and Archives staff. This copy was published on May 18, 2026. Please contact special.collections@unlv.edu for questions regarding this collection.

Persistent URL for this finding aid: <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1r48b>

© 2026 The Regents of the University of Nevada. All rights reserved.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.

Box 457010

4505 S. Maryland Parkway

Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-7010

special.collections@unlv.edu

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Contents Note	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	5
Names and Subjects	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Schmoeller, David, 1947-
Title:	David Schmoeller Papers
ID:	MS-01222
Date [inclusive]:	approximately 1979 to 2015
Physical Description:	10.27 Cubic Feet (8 boxes)
Physical Description:	8.67 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The David Schmoeller Papers (approximately 1979 to 2019) contain materials related to his time as a University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Film Department professor and award-winning film director. Materials include Spring Flicks Festival and UNLV Short Film archive documentation and film submissions, books related to directing, and course syllabi and handouts. The papers also contain copies of some of his many films including <i>Puppet Master</i> , <i>Little Monsters</i> , <i>Please Kill Mr. Kinski</i> , and <i>Crawlspace</i> , as well as some related promotional material. Also included in the collection are scripts written by Schmoeller, fellow faculty member Sean Clark, and graduate students. The born-digital materials remain unprocessed but are likely short film submissions.

Preferred Citation

David Schmoeller Papers, approximately 1979-2015. MS-01222. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada. <http://n2t.net/ark:/62930/f1r48b>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical Note

David Schmoeller has been an internationally recognized feature film and television writer-director for more than three decades. Born and raised in Texas, Schmoeller began his career

studying theater in Mexico at the Universidad De Las Americas from 1967 to 1968. He returned to Texas and completed a masters in Radio, TV, and Film at the University of Texas, Austin. His thesis film, *The Spider Will Kill You*, was funded by a grant from the Directors Guild of America, and received an Academy Award Student Film Nomination in 1974.

Schmoeller's first feature, *Tourist Trap*, which he wrote and directed in 1978, was selected as one of the 130 landmark horror films of all time in the Jonathon Rigby book, *Studies in Terror: Landmarks of Horror Cinema*. The film has also been cited as the favorite film of the master of modern horror fiction, Stephen King. His writing and directing credits include work on the highly-praised television series *James at 16*, as well as the feature films *The Seduction*, *Crawlspace*, *Ghost Town*, and *Catacombs* and the cult classic *Puppet Master* in 1989. *Puppet Master* subsequently became one of the most successful franchise horror films ever made, producing seven more sequels, the latest in 2003.

In 2019, after two decades of service at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Schmoeller retired as a full professor of film production in the College of Liberal Arts Film Department.

Sources:

David Schmoeller Papers, approximately 1979-2015. MS-01222. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

"David Schmoeller biography," Internet Movie Database website, accessed November 26, 2025. https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0227187/bio/?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents Note

The David Schmoeller Papers (approximately 1979 to 2019) contain materials related to his time as a University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Film Department professor and award-winning film director. Materials include Spring Flicks Festival and UNLV Short Film archive documentation and film submissions, books related to directing, and course syllabi and handouts. The papers also contain copies of some of his many films including *Puppet Master*, *Little Monsters*, *Please Kill Mr. Kinski*, and *Crawlspace*, as well as some related promotional material. Also included in the collection are scripts written by Schmoeller, fellow faculty member Sean Clark, and graduate students. The born-digital materials remain unprocessed but are likely short film submissions.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials are arranged roughly by topic.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Access Note

The digital materials in this collection are unprocessed. Arrangements must be made in advance to access digital files; please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives for additional information. Where use copies do not exist for audiovisual items, production of use copies is required before access will be granted; this may delay research requests. Please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives (special.collections@unlv.edu) for additional information.

Publication Rights

This material is made available to facilitate private study, scholarship, or research. Material in this collection may be protected by copyright, trademark, privacy, publicity rights, or other interests not owned by UNLV. Users are responsible for determining whether permissions are necessary from rights owners for any intended use and for obtaining all required permissions. Please contact UNLV Special Collections and Archives (special.collections@unlv.edu) for additional information.

Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 2025 by Sean Clark; accession number 2025-100.

Appraisal

Acquired by Su Kim Chung, curator, as part of UNLV Special Collections and Archives holdings on university history and faculty members. During processing, Sarah Jones shredded 3.25 linear feet of duplicative material. An additional 6.50 linear feet of out of scope film and digital material was discarded after review by Su Kim Chung and Brett Levner (Film Department).

Processing Note

In 2025, Sarah Jones accessioned, rehoused, and organized the collection into topical groupings. A box-level inventory was created in ArchivesSpace. No processing work has been done on the audiovisual or born-digital material in this collection. Contact Special Collections and Archives (special.collections@unlv.edu) for more information.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- Film festivals
- Short films
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas. College of Fine Arts

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Documents and correspondence related to Schmoeller's UNLV faculty role, including leave applications, tenure and promotion, and committee work, approximately 1999 to 2019	box 01
UNLV teaching material, course syllabi, blank tests and quizzes, student theses/dissertations and resumes sent to Schmoeller, approximately 1999 to 2019	box 02
Audiovisual material related to UNLV and/or David Schmoeller, approximately 1979 to 2019	box 03 box 04 box 07
Spring Flick Festival and UNLV Short Film Archive planning material, documentation, and inventories, approximately 2000 to 2019	box 05
Scripts, call sheets, newsclippings and promotional material, and film-related documents, approximately 1979 to 2019	box 06
Film-related books and certificates awarded to Schmoeller, approximately 1979 to 2019	box 08
Masks, wigs, and hairpieces used for Schmoeller's <i>Tourist Trap</i> , 1979	box 09