Finding Aid to Robert Spira Correspondence, 1960-1981

Collection number: BANC MSS 84/62 c

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Robert Spira Correspondence
Date (inclusive): 1960-1981
Collection Number: BANC MSS 84/62 c
Creator: Spira, Robert Samuel, 1927-
Extent: 1 carton1.2 linear feet
Repository: The Bancroft Library.
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Abstract: Consists of personal, academic and professional correspondence of Robert Spira during his time as associate professor of Mathematics at Michigan State University and assistant professor of Mathematics at the University of Tennessee.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English

Physical Location: Many of the Bancroft Library collections are stored offsite and advance notice may be required for use. For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the library’s online catalog

Access Information
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Robert Spira Correspondence, BANC MSS 84/62 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog
Spira, Robert
Mathematicians -- California -- Berkeley
Michigan State University. Dept. of Mathematics -- Faculty.
University of California, Berkeley. Dept. of Mathematics -- Students.
University of California, Berkeley. Dept. of Mathematics.
Faculty papers

The Robert Spira correspondence was given to the Bancroft Library by Dr. Robert Spira on December 7, 1983.
No additions are expected.

Arrangement
Arranged to the folder level.

Biography/Organization History
Correspondence of Robert S. Spira, University of California, Berkeley. Dept of Mathematics Ph.D 1962. Associate Professor
Department of Mathematics at Michigan State University 1967 and Assistant Professor Department of Mathematics,

Robert Samuel Spira was born on Dec. 12, 1927 in Detroit, MI. He earned a BA (1957) and a PhD (1962) in Mathematics
from UC Berkeley, having written a dissertation titled, “Sums of Two Squares and Brahmagupta’s Formula” under the
instruction of Prof. Derrick Henry Lehmer. While at Berkeley, he met Robert E. Bowen, a peer in the mathematics field who
would also be a friend to Spira until Bowen’s death in 1978.

Spira taught mathematics as assistant professor at Duke University (1962-1964), University of Tennessee at Knoxville
(1964-1967) and associate professor at Michigan State University, East Lansing (1967-1982).

While the bulk of the Robert S. Spira Correspondence provides letters on various mathematical formulas and theories, the
collection also reveals Spira’s interest in politics and the medical field with a special focus on forms of contraception. His
interest in theater would result in the publication of several plays and a position as Artistic Director at the Quartz Theater in
Ashland, Oregon. He also wrote a translation of The Book of Matthew as well as two books on Western Religion.

Scope and Content Note
Consists of personal, academic and professional correspondence of Robert Spira during his time as associate professor of
Mathematics at Michigan State University (1964) and assistant professor of Mathematics at the University of Tennessee

The letters date from 1960-1981 and contain Robert Spira’s correspondence with students, faculty and peers as well as
letters to the editor written by Spira. Most items are typed and dated, especially those which are of an official or formal
nature.

Collection arrived in rough chronological order, except in cases in which there was heavy correspondence with Spira’s
friends and/or colleagues. The first five folders contain the letters to these colleagues in alphabetical order: Berndt, Bruce
C.; Bowen, Robert E.; Cohen, Eckford; Fisk, Stephen and Schoenfeld, Lowell.


Subseries 1.1: Primary Correspondents 1961-1978

Arrangement
Alphabetical

<p>| carton 1, folder 1          | Correspondence with Bruce C. Berndt 1967 1970-1975 |
| carton 1, folder 2          | Correspondence with Robert Edward Bowen 1961-1970 1978 |
| carton 1, folder 3          | Correspondence with Eckford Cohen 1967-1971 1973-1974 |
| carton 1, folder 4          | Correspondence with Stephen Fisk 1964-1969 1972 |</p>
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<td>Correspondence with Lowell Schoenfeld 1965-1970 1972</td>
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<td>Carton 1, Folder 6</td>
<td>Correspondence 1960-1963 1970-1975</td>
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<td>Carton 1, Folder 7</td>
<td>Correspondence 1964-1965</td>
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<td>Carton 1, Folder 8</td>
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