Finding aid of the Morris Kight Papers and Photographs Coll2010-008

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URL: http://one.usc.edu
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
Title: Morris Kight papers and photographs
creator: Kight, Morris
Identifier/Call Number: Coll2010-008
Physical Description: 27.5 Linear Feet13 records boxes, 1 shoe box, 3 flat boxes, 8 clamshell photograph binders
Date (inclusive): circa 1920-2003
Date (bulk): bulk
Abstract: The collection, 1920-2003, consists of photographs, correspondence, clippings, annotated materials, and organizational materials primarily documenting Morris Kight's role as a gay activist in Los Angeles. He was born November 19, 1919 in Procter, Comanche County, Texas, married in 1950 in New Mexico, left his wife in 1955, and relocated to Los Angeles in 1958. Kight dedicated his life to a number of progressive causes including improving race relations, the anti-war movement, and the gay liberation / rights movement.

Separated Materials
Relocated to the ONE Periodical Collection:
This Week in Texas, November 19-25, 1993; December 3-9, 1993

Relocated to the ONE Video Collection:
VHS copy of Steven J. McCarthy's television program DISH with Morris Kight as a guest, call number VV1350.
Early L.A. Gay and Lesbian History- James Furhman Interviews Morris Kight, call number VV2815
Excerpt From West Hollywood City Council Meeting, June 1, 1998; Item Relating to Coors Resolution; West Hollywood CityChannel10, call number VV2814
From Vienna - 1995 New Years Celebration, call number VV2813
Heart to Heart- Two Conversations Between Robert Hales and Morris Kight, Taped: Friday, November 12, 1999, call number VV2812
Heart to Heart- Two Conversations with Morris Kight, call number VV2812
Honoring the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Class of 1999, UCLA's 2nd Annual Lavender Graduation- June 19, 1999, 82 minutes, Call number VV2811
The Life and Times of Morris Kight- Liberator, Call number VV2810
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, 7.30.02, 3:21, Part One, Call number VV2809
1. Morris Kight with Delta Productions, 2. Pat Jordan Talking About Pat Rocco, Call number VV2808
Morris Kight/MMOW, Call number VV2807
Morris KTLA-TV, Call number VV2806
Personal Best with Morris Kight, 3/19/01, TRT 28:30, Call number VV2805
West Hollywood Citychannel 10, Show#47- "Voices of our lives: Morris Kight," Call number VV2804

Relocated to the ONE Banner Collection:
National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, October 11, 1987
Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival 1992
"Morris Says Hello," Pride Parade Banners, (2) circa 1997

Processing Information
Processing this collection has been funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Related Archival Material
ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives:
Lillene H. Fifield Papers, Coll2007-014, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Pat Rocco Papers, Coll2007-006, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Unprocessed Christopher Street West Historical Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Unprocessed Christopher Street West Records, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Unprocessed Crossroads Employment and Job Counseling Services Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Unprocessed Hudson House Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
University of California, Los Angeles:
Morris Kight Papers (Collection 354). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.
University of Connecticut:
Foster Gunnison, Jr. Papers. Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut Libraries.

Biographical Note
Morris Kight the youngest of three children was born in Procter, Comanche County, Texas, on November 19, 1919. His father died when he was 7 years old. His siblings, John Lewis and Mildred, soon left home leaving Kight and his mother to fend for themselves. After graduating from high school in June 1936, he continued onto Texas Christian University. In 1942, he graduated from Texas Christian University. In New Mexico, he married and fathered two daughters. The marriage lasted five years, ending in 1955. Kight relocated to Los Angeles in 1958 where his earliest involvement in the LGBT community can be traced to a donation to ONE, Incorporated, in 1964 and a book review for Tangents Magazine in 1968. According to his many interviews, during this time he continued his work on behalf of minorities, the environment, and for other progressive causes. He became known for the founding of the Dow Action Committee (DAC) in 1967. DAC protested the use of napalm and defoliants in Vietnam and appealed to Dow Chemical to end their production. In the same year he met a "companion," Larry Allen. They were together until Allen's death in 1972.

In December 1969, Kight collaborated with others to found the Los Angeles chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Gay political activism had more widely adopted the direct-action approach Kight had appreciated in other progressive non-violent organizations. The first and successful target GLF protests was Barneys Beanery's "Fagots [sic] Stay Out!" signs.

Later, Don Jackson, a GLF member, proposed the surreptitious take-over of the sparsely populated Alpine County by gays and lesbians. His plan was to have hundreds of gays and lesbians relocate to and register to vote in Alpine County over a period time. While Jackson believed in the feasibility of the plan, Don Kilhefner and Kight realized the publicity potential of the mission. Kilhefner and Kight organized and held press conferences on the plan to re-locate hundreds of gays and lesbians to a new "gay Mecca." The announcements received national media attention, and the Alpine County Board of Supervisors was soon requesting advice from officials in then Governor Reagan’s office of legal affairs. Less than a year after the original proposal was made public the GLF abandon the mission.

Kight continued to prove his abilities to organize and promote LGBT causes. He went on to contribute to the founding of Christopher Street West (1970), the sponsor of the Los Angeles Pride parades; L.A. Gay Community Services Center (1971), currently known as the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center; Van Ness Recovery House (1973), a center for substance abuse recovery; National New Orleans Memorial Fund (1973), to aid the survivors of the Upstairs Lounge fire; First Tuesday (1975), a collaborative space for LGBT organizations; Stonewall Democratic Club (1975); Gay and Lesbian Caucus/California Democratic Party (1977); Orange County Against the Briggs Initiative (1978); Moscone - Milk Memorial Committee (1978); Asian / Pacific Lesbians and Gays (1980); Aid for AIDS (1982); Gay and Lesbian Olympics Visitors Hospitality Committee (1983); and Old / Older / Senior / Elder Lesbian / Gay Advocates (1992). Kight also promoted LGBT causes such as the boycott of CBS, Coors Beer, and the motion picture Cruising. He sought recognition of LGBT rights as human rights, the formation of a Los Angeles police review board, and the reform of United States immigration laws. He served on a number of tasks forces and commissions including the Governor’s Task Force on Civil Rights, Lieutenant Governor’s Commission for ONE California, and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. Along with all of this he campaigned for a long list of social justice issue, and yet he would still be available to plead for such causes as the continued funding of Gay Student Union by the UCLA student council.
Beyond his time and experience, Kight contributed his art collection to the community. This tangible legacy grew from his love of art and his own showcase, his residence on McCadden Place. As his collection became more prominent, an increasing number of quality works were donated to the collection. While the collection was located at McCadden Place, it was curated by David T. Spencer (David Schwinkendorf), Kight and his partner, Roy Zukeran. After Spencer's death and because of Kight's failing health, Miguel Angel Reyes and Ron Anderegg became the collection's curators. The collection was exhibited at a variety of events from 1985-1995 and later went into storage, before its donation to ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

Kight died on January 19, 2003, survived by Roy Zukeran, his "companion" of twenty-five years.


Scope and Contents
The Kight papers consists primarily of fliers, correspondence, and other records that document his involvement in a number of LGBT, progressive, and political organizations in Los Angeles. While Kight exchanged letters with several lesbian and gay leaders his longest running correspondence of a dozen letters, 1972-1983 was with Marty Manford of the Gay Activist Alliance of New York. The other records include awards, proclamations, resolutions, plaques, and trophies documenting the community’s recognition of his contribution to LGBT causes. The clippings Kight collected provide a rich source of information concerning his public involvement in the movement. His notes and annotated documents provide insight into the mundane tasks of organizing and his personal views of people and events. The notes include various lists, such as incoming and outgoing calls, along with speaking and event planning outlines. Kight issued statements and press releases to inform the media and the public of his position on community events and plans, along with notices of events he was planning. He often hosted events at his residence on McCadden Place, this allowed him to show and grow his art collection. The growth and exhibitions of his art collection are recorded in the McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Series.

The McCadden residence provided a meeting space for many of the organizations, including those that Kight contributed to founding, such as First Tuesday and the Stonewall Democratic Club. The collection contains documents from many of the organizations and causes he led or contributed to their efforts. His role as a Commissioner, 1980-2002, on the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations is the best documented. His photographs primarily document his later life from the 1990s until the year before his death in 2003.

Arrangement Note
Files are arranged in the following series:

Series 2. Correspondence, 1964-2001

Access
The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights
Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner of the material. Note that permission to publish does not constitute copyright clearance. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials from the copyright holder(s).

Preferred Citation
Box #, folder #, Morris Kight Papers and Photographs, Coll2010-008, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Gay liberation movement -- California -- Los Angeles
Gay pride parades -- California -- Los Angeles
Gay rights -- California
Gay rights -- United States -- History -- 20th century
Photographs
Correspondence
Gay activists -- California -- Los Angeles
Christopher Street West Association
Kight, Morris

Biographical Documents 1962-2003

Physical Description: [18 folders + 4 records boxes, 1 shoe box, 2 flat boxes]

Scope and Content

The Biographical Series contains files related to the life and time of Morris Kight. The Biographical Documents file consists of miscellaneous personal records. Documents related to his speaking engagements, events, endorsements, and honors are contained in the Fliers and Programs files. The “Dissidents” folder documents the unauthorized forwarding of Kight's mail to Clifton, New Jersey. Concerned about the preservation of his legacy, Kight copied clippings, fliers and other documents and mailed them to a number of gay and lesbian archives across the country, this became known as “The Project.” The Texas Christian University file documents his school visit and speaking engagement.

Box 1, Folder 1

Awards, Proclamations, and Resolutions 1971-2003

Box 11, Folder 2

Awards, Proclamations, and Resolutions (oversized) 1979-2003

Box 1, Folder 2-3

Biographical Documents 1972-2003

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 11, Folder 1

Biographical Documents (oversized) 2003

Box 10

Business Cards Collected circa 1975-2000 bulk

Box 9, Folder 12-22

Clippings 1962-2003, undated

Physical Description: [11 folders]

Box 18

Clippings (oversized) 1963

Note

Citizen-News Front page articles on “Sexual Deviants” in Hollywood February 04, 1963-February 14, 1963 and a Heard Examier image of “Seven Men booked on charge of impersonating women at nightclub.”

Box 11, Folder 3

Clippings (oversized) 1978-2003 bulk

Box 1, Folder 23

“Dissidents” L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (LAGLCSC) 1975-1984

Box 1, Folder 4

Documentary and Film 1997-1999

Box 1, Folder 5

Family 1962-1997

Box 1, Folder 6

Fliers circa 1972-1999

Box 1, Folder 7

Interview Typescripts 1974-2001
Box 13-18

**Plaques and Trophies 1979-2002**

Plaques and Trophies


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Box 1, Folder 8-9
Box 1, Folder 10-13

**Programs 1975-2000**

"The Project" 1995-2003

Physical Description: [4 folders]
Notes and Annotated Documents circa 1975-2000

Physical Description: [30 folders]

Scope and Contents
The Notes and Annotated Documents Series includes samples of his lists, notes, and outlines. The series also includes his typescript annotations concerning various notes, lists, ephemera, and realia. In the interest of preserving his legacy he sent the archives a number of "Memorandums for: Archives." Kight's annotations and memorandums documents his reflections on events and people.

Arrangement Note
The notes folders are arranged by title and then chronologically. The Annotated documents and Memorandums are arranged by the date of the annotation.

Box 8, Folder 3-5
Notes circa 1975-2000
Physical Description: [3 folders]

Box 11
Box 8, Folder 6-21
Annotated Ephemera and Realia circa 1975-1990 bulk
Annotated Notes 1972-1984, undated
Physical Description: [16 folders]

Box 9, Folder 1-2
Annotated Notes 1985-1998
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 9, Folder 3
Annotated Receipts 1970-1985
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 9, Folder 4-11
Memorandum for Archives 1974-1985, undated
Physical Description: [8 folders]

McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Records 1977-2000
Physical Description: [20 folders]

Scope and Content
The McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Series documents the growth of Kight's art collection. Fliers and invitations make up the bulk of the files concerning various events and exhibits of the collection. The series also includes records such as collection catalogs, inventories, and exhibit information. The Donald William Saban photographs of McCadden Place are located in the photograph series. The North Martel Avenue files consist of the legal records concerning Kight's residence at the property.

Box 7, Folder 4-5
McCadden Place Events 1977-1987
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 7, Folder 6-7
1447 North Martel Avenue 1993-1995
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 7, Folder 8-12
McCadden Place Collection 1984-2000
Physical Description: [5 folders]

Box 12
McCadden Place Collection Signs (oversized) circa 1990
Physical Description: [6 items]

Box 7, Folder 13
Pink Triangle 1983-1985

Box 7, Folder 14
McCadden Place Collection Catalog 1984

Box 7, Folder 15-19
McCadden Place Collection Inventory 1992-1993
Physical Description: [5 folders]

Box 7, Folder 20
Donations to Collection 1993-1998

Box 7, Folder 21
Text for Exhibit Captions / Labels circa 1993
<p>| Box 8, Folder 1 | Exhibit Captions / Labels circa 1990 |
| Box 8, Folder 2 | Finding aid of the Morris Kight Papers and Photographs |
| Box 8, Folder 2 | Organization, Event, and Subject Files 1971-2001 bulk |
| | Physical Description: [64 folders] |
| | Arrangement Note |
| | The first four folders contain Kight's press release and memorandums on variety of topics printed on his letter head. The remainder of the series is arranged alphabetically by the name of the organization, event, or topic. Only the First Tuesday and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations folders are arranged at the item level. |
| | Scope and Content |
| | The Organizations, Events, and Topics Series consists primarily of fliers along with agendas, meeting notes, and correspondence. The best documented organizations include Aid for AIDS; First Tuesday, a moving collaborative space to coordinate Los Angeles lesbian and gay events; and the Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations. The series also contains topical files for the Human Right Coalition and Police Commission / Review Board files, which document a number of precursor organizations. The California and Los Angeles and the Progressive Organizations files consist of scarcely documented organizations. The final topical file, Radio and Television, documents the media's stereotypical portrayal of gays and lesbians and the communities reaction to the Marcus Welby episode, &quot;Outrage&quot; (1974, ABC); America's Secret Shame (1977, KHJ); Gay Power, Gay Politics (1980, CBS) and other broadcasts. Aside from Morris Kight Press Releases &amp; Memorandums files, the remaining folders document events and organizations. |
| Box 4, Folder 3-6 | Morris Kight Press Releases &amp; Memorandums 1976-1999 |
| | Physical Description: [4 folders] |
| Box 4, Folder 7-10 | Aid for AIDS 1982-1998 |
| | Physical Description: [4 folders] |
| Box 4, Folder 11 | Asian / Pacific Lesbian &amp; Gay Organization 1980-1981 |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | Black and White Men Together 1985 |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | California and Los Angeles Organizations 1978-1985 |
| Box 4, Folder 14-17 | California Democratic Committee (CDC) 1976-1982 |
| | Physical Description: [4 folders] |
| Box 4, Folder 18-19 | Christopher Street West (CSW) 1976-1998 |
| | Physical Description: [2 folders] |
| Box 5, Folder 1 | Christopher Street West (CSW) 1976-1998 |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Coors Beer Boycott 1978-1998 |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | Cruising and Windows, motion pictures 1980 |
| Box 5, Folder 4-5 | First Tuesday 1976-1987 |
| | Physical Description: [2 folders] |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | Friends of Morris Kight 1994-1997 |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | Gay and Lesbian Olympics Visitors Hospitality Committee 1983-1984 |
| Box 5, Folder 9 | Governor's Task Force on Civil Rights 1980-1982 |
| Box 5, Folder 10 | Hollywood Redevelopment Project 1977-1985 |
| Box 5, Folder 11 | Human Rights Coalition 1977-1982 |
| | General |
| | Includes California Human Rights Advocates and Coalition for Human Rights documents |
| Box 5, Folder 12 | Humanist Association 1993-1998 |
| Box 5, Folder 13 | Jobs with Peace Initiative 1983-1984 |
| Box 6, Folder 7 | L.A. Gay Community Services Center 1996 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| Box 5, Folder 14-21 | Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations 1975-1984  
  Physical Description: [8 folders] |
| Box 6, Folder 1-6 | Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations 1984-2002  
  Physical Description: [6 folders] |
| Box 12 | Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations poster (oversized) 1994 |
| Box 6, Folder 8 | Lieutenant Governor Commission for ONE California 1999-2001 |
| Box 6, Folder 9 | March on Sacramento 1979-1981 |
| Box 6, Folder 10 | March on Washington, D.C. 1978-1993 |
| Box 6, Folder 11 | Moscone - Milk Memorial Committee, Los Angeles 1978 |
| Box 6, Folder 12 | National New Orleans Memorial Fund (UpStairs Lounge Fire) 1973-1976 |
| Box 6, Folder 13-14 | No on Briggs Initiative Committee (Proposition 6) 1977-1979  
  Physical Description: [2 folders] |
| Box 6, Folder 15 | Old / Older / Senior / Elder Lesbian / Gay Advocates 1992-1996 |
| Box 6, Folder 16 | Police Commission / Review Board 1975-1998 |
| Box 6, Folder 17-18 | Progressive Organizations (non-LGBT) 1971-2001 |
| Box 6, Folder 19 | Radio and Television 1972-1984 |
| Box 6, Folder 20 | Stonewall 25 Organizing Committee 1992-1994 |
| Box 6, Folder 21-23 | Stonewall Democratic Club Los Angeles (SDC) 1975-1999 bulk  
  Physical Description: [3 folders] |
| Box 7, Folder 1-2 | War Resisters International / League 1974-2002  
  Physical Description: [2 folders] |
| Box 7, Folder 3 | We Are Everywhere 1978-1984  
  Photographs circa 1920-2002 bulk  
  Physical Description: [8 clamshell box-binders]  
  Arrangement Note  
  The photographs are arranged in series of images from the same roll when possible; they are not arranged within the binders chronologically or by event in the binder.  
  Scope and Content  
  The Photograph Series contains photographs Kight annotated, images he received in correspondence, and photographs of himself and others at various events. The photographs of events document award presentation ceremonies, birthdays, pride parades, speaking engagements, and the Matthew Shepard memorial in West Hollywood. There are a couple of early photographs of Kight and his siblings, along with photographs of his brother, John Lewis Kight, later in life. The series also includes Donald William Saban's photographs of the interior and exterior of McCadden Place. The Other People and Places photographs contain images of friends collected or given to Kight, along with building exteriors. The exteriors include his residence at McCadden Place and 909 West Adams Boulevard, before ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives relocated to the property. Later in life Kight posed for a number of photograph portraits, along with these images are a small number of press photographs of Kight at various events. |
| box-binder 19 | Annotated Photographs 1976-1989 |
| box-binder 19 | Correspondence with Photographs 1971-2002 |
| box-binder 20-22 | Event Photographs 1977-2002 bulk |
| box-binder 20 | Family Photographs circa 1920-2000 |
| box-binder 23 | McCadden Place by Donald William Saban 1984 |
| box-binder 24 | Other People and Places 1974-circa 1995 |
| box-binder 26 | Pride Parades Photographs 1982-1999 bulk |