Coll2011.014

Finding aid prepared by Marc LaRocque
ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives
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(c)2011
Title: Leroy Aarons Papers
Identifier/Call Number: Coll2011.014
Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 2.6 linear feet. 2 archive boxes, 1 archive carton
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1999-2003
Date (inclusive): 1890-2003
Abstract: Grant documents, financial records, correspondence and e-mail, notes, published reports, organizational membership lists, publicity documents, newspaper and magazine articles, lecture drafts, course syllabi, journalism resources, subject files, floppy disks, images from newspapers and magazines, flyers, survey and content audit forms, and other material, 1890 to 2003, documenting journalist Leroy Aarons' tenure as director of the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's Project for the Study of Sexual Orientation in the News (SOIN) from 1999 to 2003. The collection documents Aarons' central role in developing and implementing the USC/Annenberg School's SOIN project and its three constituent parts: a model journalism course intended to help students "to understand the complex issues around gay men and lesbians as represented in today's media"; a survey of the perceptions of gay and lesbian journalists regarding their news organization's coverage of sexual orientation issues; and a content audit of coverage of gay and lesbian issues in a sample of national newspapers.

Separated Materials
USC/Annenberg materials of a general nature, without relevance to SOIN, have been deaccessioned from the Leroy Aarons papers. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, periodicals with no clear relevance to SOIN or gay and lesbian issues, have also been deaccessioned. Items 2 and 9 may be found in the ONE Archive's periodicals collection.

1. Pamphlet reprint of Los Angeles Times magazine profile of USC president Semple, (9/17/00)
3. The American Lawyer, July, 2001
4. Media Education Foundation, fall 2003 catalog
5. Westways magazine, August 1999
6. Teen People magazine, October 1999
7. Columbia Journalism Review, December 2001

Restricted student work has been pulled from the collection and filed with the collection's accession records.

Biographical note
Leroy Aarons was born in a working class neighborhood of New York, New York in 1933. He graduated from Brown University, then later earned a graduate degree in journalism from Columbia University. Aarons spent 14 years as an editor and journalist with the Washington Post before leaving in 1976 to work with friend and colleague Robert C. Maynard at the Summer Institute for Minority Journalists in Berkeley, California. In 1983 Maynard purchased the Oakland Tribune and invited Aarons to join the staff. The Tribune won a Pulitzer Prize and was recognized as a model of diversity in journalism during Aaron's tenure as executive editor and vice president for news.

In 1989 the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) asked Aarons, known for his commitment to diversity in journalism, to coordinate a confidential survey of gay journalists. The survey was intended to document respondents' perceptions of coverage of gay and lesbian issues in their newspapers, as well as working conditions in their newsrooms. When Aarons reported the survey findings to an audience of peers at the ASNE convention in 1990, he also revealed that he was gay, making him the "first openly gay top-level editor at any mainstream daily newspaper in the country" (obituary of Aarons by Jon Thurber; Los Angeles Times, Nov. 30, 2004). Later in the same year Aarons and several colleagues founded the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association (NLGJA).

After leaving the Tribune in 1990, Aarons undertook a number of writing projects, including researching and writing his acclaimed book Prayers for Bobby. He also co-authored a docu-drama about the release of the Pentagon Papers (1991) with prominent journalist and academic Geoffrey Cowan, later dean of the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism. In 1998, Aarons collaborated with Cowan on a grant from philanthropist Michael Huffington that resulted in the creation of the Program for the Study of Sexual Orientation in the News (SOIN) at the USC Annenberg School. Appointed director in 1999, Aarons facilitated a grant proposal to the Ford Foundation that secured funding for three projects: the development of an undergraduate journalism class intended to "prepare future professionals to bring context and balance
to coverage of gay and lesbian issues”; a reprise of the earlier ASNE survey of gay and lesbian journalists, this time under the auspices of the Annenberg School and the NLGJA; and a content audit of coverage of lesbian and gay issues in six nationally or regionally significant newspapers.

Leroy Aarons remained a part of the SOIN program until his death in 2004.

Sources:

Leroy Aarons Papers, Coll2011-014, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California. (Box 1, folder 8)

Scope and content

The Leroy Aarons papers comprise grant documents, financial records, correspondence and e-mail, notes, published reports, organizational membership lists, publicity documents, survey and content audit forms, clipped and copied articles, lecture drafts, course syllabi, journalism teaching resources, subject files, 3.5 inch floppy disks, and other material, 1890 to 2003, documenting journalist Leroy Aarons’ tenure as director of the University of Southern California Annenberg Journalism School’s Project for the Study of Sexual Orientation in the News (SOIN), from 1999-2003. Aarons played a central role in developing and implementing the USC/Annenberg School SOIN project and its three constituent parts: an undergraduate course, Journalism 499, intended to help students “to understand the complex issues around gay men and lesbians as represented in today’s media”; the “New Millenium Survey” of the perceptions of gay and lesbian journalists regarding their organization’s coverage of sexual orientation issues; and a newspaper content audit of coverage of gay and lesbian issues appearing in a sample of national newspapers.

The collection is divided into four series:

(1) The SOIN Project and Administration series comprises documents pertaining to funding, financial accounting, publicity, and project agendas for SOIN.

(2) The Journalism 499 series documents Leroy Aarons' development of an undergraduate journalism course intended to develop an historically informed, analytical approach to the news media's treatment of gay and lesbian issues.

(3) The New Millenium Survey series documents the context and implementation of a survey exploring the attitudes and experience of gays and lesbians employed in the journalism profession, a follow-up to two earlier studies.

(4) The Newspaper content audit series comprises documents connected to a quantitative and qualitative audit of coverage of gay and lesbian issues appearing in six urban newspapers during the month of October 1999.

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).

Processing Information

Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Processed by Marc LaRocque, July 2011.

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Leroy Aarons papers, Coll2011.014, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Acquisition Information

Donated on June 8, 2010 by USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Aarons, Leroy
Gay activists--United States--California
Gay journalists
Gays in higher education
Journalism
Mass media and gays--United States

Physical Description: 0.15 linear foot

Scope and Contents note
This series consists of grant proposals, grant related documents, financial accounting records, project publicity, biographical material, notes, correspondence, timelines, and assorted USC/Annenberg School items that document the funding and development of the USC/Annenberg School of Journalism "Project for the Study of Sexual Orientation in the News" (SOIN). The bulk of the series documents aspects of the conceptualization and early development of SOIN's three constituent projects, first in a grant proposal directed to the Ford Foundation, then in notes and correspondence subsequent to the grant award. Also notable is biographical material on Leroy Aarons, as well as three columns Aarons wrote in the mid-1990s for Alternatives, the newsletter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

Arrangement note
This series is arranged sequentially, proceeding from (1) solicitation of project funds, to (2) financial accounting of project funds and expenses, to (3) publicity and general correspondence, and (4) project overviews, agendas, and timelines.

Box 1, Folder 1  Huffington grant; Ford Foundation research Bulk, 1998-1999 1998-1999
Box 1, Folder 2  Ford Foundation grant proposal; award letter 1999-2000
Box 1, Folder 3  Ford Foundation grant modifications 2000
Box 1, Folder 4  Grant proposals and awards 2000-2003
Box 1, Folder 5-6  USC Financial accounting 1999-2000

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 1, Folder 7  USC Information services - statement of account 2000-2001
Box 1, Folder 8  SOIN/Leroy Aarons publicity 1999

Scope and Contents note
Includes biographical information on Leroy Aarons, as well as three photocopied articles Aarons wrote as president of the National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association for its newsletter, Alternatives, during the mid-1990s. The three issues of Alternatives have been retained in ONE's periodical collection.

Box 1, Folder 9  General correspondence 1999-2003
Box 1, Folder 10  Notes: agenda and budget for SOIN project(s) circa 1999
Box 1, Folder 11  Project timelines 1999-2000
Box 1, Folder 12  USC/Annenberg School - assorted items 1999-2003


Physical Description: 0.85 linear foot

Scope and Contents note
This series comprises notes, academic papers, syllabi, lecture drafts, copied and clipped articles, copied graphic images, timelines, e-mail, student work, teaching resource material, project/topic files, and other items documenting Leroy Aarons' development of journalism 499, a USC Annenberg School of Journalism undergraduate course. The class was intended to serve as a model for preparing students to “understand the complex issues around gay men and lesbians as represented in today's media.” The bulk of the series comprises Aaron's course development notes and lecture drafts, as well as subject files. Also documented are a later adaptation of the course by instructor Laura Castenada, and general Annenberg School resources for teaching ethics and diversity.

Arrangement note
The Journalism 499 series is divided into two subseries: (2.1) Course design; and (2.2) Subject files.

Scope and Contents note
The bulk of the subseries comprises notes, primary and secondary source material, lecture drafts, notes concerning guest lecturers, and other items documenting Aaron's development of Journalism 499, "Sexual Orientation Issues in the News," in 1999. Several folders document a second version of the course Aarons taught in the fall semester of 2000 with co-instructor Vicki Torres. There is also a syllabus for a related graduate seminar, a syllabus for a later version of the course taught by associate professor Laura Castenada, and three folders focusing primarily on teaching diversity and ethics.

Arrangement note
The files are arranged in chronological order, beginning with Aarons' notes on course conceptualization and design, and ending with resources for teaching diversity and ethics assembled by the Annenberg School diversity committee.

Box 1, Folder 13
Journalism 499 - course development notebook 1999

Box 1, Folder 14
Aarons - notes 1999-2002

Box 1, Folder 15
Two articles regarding media prejudice toward gays and lesbians 1998

Box 1, Folder 16
Source material - Max Lerner (New York Post) circa 1950

Box 1, Folder 17
Lecture source material 1950-1998

Box 1, Folder 18
"Books to get" - booklist 1999

Box 1, Folder 19
Related syllabi and bibliographic resources 1989, 1999

Box 1, Folder 20
Journalism resources - National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Stylebook 1997

Box 1, Folder 21
Gay and lesbian chronologies and timelines 1999

Box 1, Folder 22
Notes for course development and description 1999

Box 1, Folder 23
Notes on lecture development and source material 1999

Box 1, Folder 24-26
Lecture development, weeks 1-5 1999

Box 1, Folder 27
"September lectures" 1999

Box 1, Folder 28
Course syllabus 1999

Box 1, Folder 29-32
Lecture and source material, weeks 1-4 1999

Box 1, Folder 33
Images for overhead transparencies 1890-1945

Box 1, Folder 34
Article copies for course reader 1964-1999

Box 1, Folder 35
Course reader 1964-1999

Box 1, Folder 36
Gay and lesbian web resources circa 1999

Box 1, Folder 37
Guest lecturers 1999

Box 1, Folder 38
Guest lecturers/panel discussion 1999

Box 1, Folder 39
NLGJA plenary panel, "Hollywood's Gay Explosion" - notes and program 1998

Box 1, Folder 40
Guest lecturer - Phil Wilson 1999

Box 1, Folder 41
Journalism 599 - graduate seminar syllabus 2000

Box 1, Folder 42
Journalism 499 - syllabus (with Vicki Torres) 2000

Box 1, Folder 43
Course remarks and administrative items (with Vicki Torres) 2000

Box 1, Folder 44
Journalism 499 - introductory remarks (Aarons and Torres) 2000

Box 1, Folder 45
'00 Press - analysis of gay coverage 2000

Box 1, Folder 46
Notes and material regarding AIDS, gay African-Americans 2000

Box 1, Folder 47
Journalism 468, syllabus and course evaluation; Journalism 499, flyer 2001, 2002

Box 1, Folder 48
USC/Annenberg diversity committee - teaching resources 2001-2002

Box 1, Folder 49
Journalism resources - ethics, employment 2002

Box 1, Folder 50
Latinos and news media 1998-2003
Subject files Subseries 2.2. 1992-2003

Scope and Contents note
This subseries comprises topical folders containing photocopies and clippings of articles, newsletters, pamphlets and other items collected and organized by Aarons as reference material for teaching. Asterisked folders contain assorted material titled by the archivist.

Arrangement note
The files in this subseries are arranged alphabetically by topic.

Box 1, Folder 51
AIDS '99 1999

Box 1, Folder 52

Box 1, Folder 53
AIDS* 1997-1998

Box 1, Folder 54
Christian Right 1998-1999

Box 1, Folder 55
Church 1992-2000

Box 1, Folder 56
Gays/lesbians and corporate America* 1991-2000

Box 1, Folder 57
Daily Trojan (USC student newspaper) - Lesbian and gay themed articles* 1997-1999

Box 1, Folder 58
'00 Elections 2000

Box 1, Folder 59
Gays/entertainment 1995-2003

Box 1, Folder 60

Box 1, Folder 61
Hate Crime 1996-1999

Box 1, Folder 62
African American HIV Training Institute (USC)* 1999-2000

Box 1, Folder 63
Huffington 1998

Box 1, Folder 64
'00 Lifestyle (football captain) 1999-2000

Box 1, Folder 65
'00 Marriage 1999-2000

Box 1, Folder 66
'00 gays in military 2000

Box 1, Folder 67
NewsWatch (San Francisco State University) - articles regarding gays and lesbians/journalism* 1997, 1998

Box 1, Folder 68
Religion* 1998-2002

Box 1, Folder 69
Delia M. Rios* 1993-1998

Box 1, Folder 70
Rolling Stone article and related material* 2003

Box 1, Folder 71
Schools* 1997, 2001

Box 1, Folder 72
Shepard 2 1998

Box 1, Folder 73
Suicide 1994-1997

Box 1, Folder 74
Miscellaneous 1999-2000

Box 1, Folder 75
Assorted articles* 1996-2002


Physical Description: 0.15 linear foot

Scope and Contents note
This series comprises published reports, organizational membership and organization lists, correspondence, survey drafts, a powerpoint presentation, and publicity for the "New Millenium Survey." The survey was intended to assess gay and lesbian journalists' perceptions of coverage of sexual orientation issues by the news organizations they worked for. The series documents the planning and implementation of the 2000 survey, which was intended to build on a survey of gay and lesbian print journalists (also directed by Aarons) conducted in 1990 by the National Association of Newspaper Editors (ASNE). A report from the earlier survey, as well as a report on a 1995 survey of gay and lesbian journalists working in electronic media, are included in the series.

Arrangement note
Files in this series are arranged chronologically, beginning with the American Society of Newspaper Editors survey publication of 1990, proceeding through development of the 2000 survey, and ending with the published survey report (2000).

Box 2, Folder 1
"Alternatives: Gays and lesbians in the newsroom" - ASNE report 1990

Box 2, Folder 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 3</th>
<th>&quot;Journalism and Mass Communication Accreditation, 1999-2000&quot; 1999-2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box 2, Folder 4 | National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association - membership lists 1999         |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Broadcast Media companies 1999                                                   |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Advisory committee correspondence regarding New Millennium Survey and newspaper  |
|                | content audit 1999                                                               |

| Box 2, Folder 7-8 | New Millennium drafts, with commentary 1999                                      |
| Box 2, Folder 9  | New Millennium Survey: final draft and announcement 2000                         |
| Box 2, Folder 10 | Millenium survey results; draft of survey release publicity 2000                 |
| Box 2, Folder 11 | Outline of comments for PowerPoint - survey results presentation 2000           |

| Box 2, Folder 12 | "Lesbians and Gays in the Newsroom: 10 Years Later" 2000                      |
|                | Physical Description: 1.27 linear feet.                                       |

| Box 2, Folder 13 | Study design 2000                                                             |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | Methodology 1998-2000                                                         |
| Box 2, Folder 15 | Code sheet drafts 2000                                                        |
| Box 2, Folder 16-23 | San Antonio Express News 1999-2000                                            |
|                | Physical Description: [8 folders]                                             |

| Box 2, Folder 24-25 | The Saint-Louis Post-Dispatch 1999-2000                                      |
|                    | Physical Description: [2 folders]                                            |

| Box 3, Folder 1-4 | The Saint-Louis Post-Dispatch 1999-2000                                      |
|                    | Physical Description: [4 folders]                                            |

| Box 3, Folder 5-11 | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 1999-2000                                   |
|                    | Physical Description: [7 folders]                                            |

| Box 3, Folder 12-19 | The Los Angeles Times 1999-2000                                              |
|                    | Physical Description: [8 folders]                                            |

| Box 3, Folder 20-24 | The News Journal (Wilmington, Delaware)                                      |
|                    | Physical Description: [5 folders]                                            |
Box 3, Folder 25-38


Physical Description: [14 folders]