
**Finding aid of the Leroy Aarons papers, 1890-2003, bulk 1999-2003
Coll2011.014**

Finding aid prepared by Marc LaRocque
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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, 1999-2001

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)
2. *Lambda Report*, vol. II/3, 7/1994
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
8. *Time/Princeton Review - College Guide 2000*, Nov. 1999
9. *The Advocate* - October 23, 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 Aarons' 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 news 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

SOIN Project and Administration Series 1. Bulk, 1999-2002 1993-2003**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
Box 1, Folder 2
Box 1, Folder 3
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 5-6

Huffington grant; Ford Foundation research Bulk, 1998-1999 1998-1999**Ford Foundation grant proposal; award letter 1999-2000****Ford Foundation grant modifications 2000****Grant proposals and awards 2000-2003****USC Financial accounting 1999-2000****Physical Description:** [2 folders]

Box 1, Folder 7
Box 1, Folder 8

USC Information services - statement of account 2000-2001**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
Box 1, Folder 10
Box 1, Folder 11
Box 1, Folder 12

General correspondence 1999-2003**Notes: agenda and budget for SOIN project(s) circa 1999****Project timelines 1999-2000****USC/Annenberg School - assorted items 1999-2003****Journalism 499 Series 2. Bulk, 1999-2000 1890-2003****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.

Course design Subseries 2.1. Bulk, 1999-2000 1890-2003**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
Box 1, Folder 14
Box 1, Folder 15
Box 1, Folder 16
Box 1, Folder 17
Box 1, Folder 18
Box 1, Folder 19
Box 1, Folder 20

Journalism 499 - course development notebook 1999**Aarons - notes 1999-2002****Two articles regarding media prejudice toward gays and lesbians 1998****Source material - Max Lerner (*New York Post*) circa 1950****Lecture source material 1950-1998****"Books to get" - booklist 1999****Related syllabi and bibliographic resources 1989, 1999****Journalism resources - National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Stylebook 1997**

Box 1, Folder 21
Box 1, Folder 22
Box 1, Folder 23
Box 1,
Folder 24-26

Gay and lesbian chronologies and timelines 1999**Notes for course development and description 1999****Notes on lecture development and source material 1999****Lecture development, weeks 1-5 1999**

Physical Description: [3 folders]

Box 1, Folder 27
Box 1, Folder 28
Box 1,
Folder 29-32

"September lectures" 1999**Course syllabus 1999****Lecture and source material, weeks 1-4 1999**

Physical Description: [4 folders]

Box 1, Folder 33
Box 1, Folder 34
Box 1, Folder 35

Images for overhead transparencies 1890-1945**Article copies for course reader 1964-1999****Course reader 1964-1999**

General Physical Description note: [spiral bound reader]

Box 1, Folder 36
Box 1, Folder 37
Box 1, Folder 38
Box 1, Folder 39
Box 1, Folder 40
Box 1, Folder 41
Box 1, Folder 42
Box 1, Folder 43
Box 1, Folder 44
Box 1, Folder 45
Box 1, Folder 46
Box 1, Folder 47
Box 1, Folder 48
Box 1, Folder 49
Box 1, Folder 50

Gay and lesbian web resources circa 1999**Guest lecturers 1999****Guest lecturers/panel discussion 1999****NLGJA plenary panel, "Hollywood's Gay Explosion" - notes and program 1998****Guest lecturer - Phil Wilson 1999****Journalism 599 - graduate seminar syllabus 2000****Journalism 499 - syllabus (with Vicki Torres) 2000****Course remarks and administrative items (with Vicki Torres) 2000****Journalism 499 - introductory remarks (Aarons and Torres) 2000****'00 Press - analysis of gay coverage 2000****Notes and material regarding AIDS, gay African-Americans 2000****Journalism 468, syllabus and course evaluation; Journalism 499, flyer 2001, 2002****USC/Annenberg diversity committee - teaching resources 2001-2002****Journalism resources - ethics, employment 2002****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
Box 1, Folder 52
Box 1, Folder 53
Box 1, Folder 54
Box 1, Folder 55
Box 1, Folder 56
Box 1, Folder 57

Box 1, Folder 58
Box 1, Folder 59
Box 1, Folder 60
Box 1, Folder 61
Box 1, Folder 62
Box 1, Folder 63
Box 1, Folder 64
Box 1, Folder 65
Box 1, Folder 66
Box 1, Folder 67

Box 1, Folder 68
Box 1, Folder 69
Box 1, Folder 70
Box 1, Folder 71
Box 1, Folder 72
Box 1, Folder 73
Box 1, Folder 74
Box 1, Folder 75

AIDS '99 1999**AIDS - Kaiser Foundation/Wall Street Journal* 1997-1998****AIDS* 1997-1998****Christian Right 1998-1999****Church 1992-2000****Gays/lesbians and corporate America* 1991-2000****Daily Trojan (USC student newspaper) - Lesbian and gay themed articles* 1997-1999****'00 Elections 2000****Gays/entertainment 1995-2003****Politics, journalism, Hollywood* 1992-1999****Hate Crime 1996-1999****African American HIV Training Institute (USC)* 1999-2000****Huffington 1998****'00 Lifestyle (football captain) 1999-2000****'00 Marriage 1999-2000****'00 gays in military 2000****NewsWatch (San Francisco State University) - articles regarding gays and lesbians/journalism* 1997, 1998****Religion* 1998-2002****Delia M. Rios* 1993-1998****Rolling Stone article and related material* 2003****Schools* 1997, 2001****Shepard 2 1998****Suicide 1994-1997****Miscellaneous 1999-2000****Assorted articles* 1996-2002****New Millenium Survey Series 3. Bulk, 1999-2000 1990-2000**

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
Box 2, Folder 2

"Alternatives: Gays and lesbians in the newsroom" - ASNE report 1990**"Another Perspective: A Report on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Electronic Journalism" 1995**

Box 2, Folder 3	"Journalism and Mass Communication Accreditation, 1999-2000" 1999-2000 General note Publication of the Accrediting Council on Educaton in Journalism and Mass Communication
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 Millenium Survey and newspaper content audit 1999
Box 2, Folder 7-8	New Millenium drafts, with commentary 1999
Box 2, Folder 9	New Millenium 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 General Physical Description note: [text, transparencies, 3 floppy disks]
Box 2, Folder 12	"Lesbians and Gays in the Newsroom: 10 Years Later" 2000 Newspaper Content Audit Series 4. Bulk, 1999-2000 1998-2000 Physical Description: 1.27 linear feet. Scope and Contents note The Newspaper Content Audit series comprises notes, correspondence, methodology models, photocopied articles, and article and image coding sheets connected to an audit of coverage of gay and lesbian issues in six American newspapers during one month, October 1999. In each of the newspapers, every article with a focus on same-sex sexual orientation issues was photocopied, then paired with a 16 page article and image coding sheet. The coding sheet recorded the analysis of each article according to a set of quantitative and qualitative criteria. An index for articles audited in each newspaper appears at the beginning of each new section. Arrangement note The first three folders in this series are concerned with design and methodology of the newspaper content audit. The remaining folders involve the audit of the six newspapers. The articles and attached code sheets for each newspaper are arranged in ascending chronological order.
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

The New York Times 1999-2000

Physical Description: [14 folders]