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ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
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Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
Title: Southern California Women for Understanding records
creator: Southern California Women for Understanding
Identifier/Call Number: Coll2011-076
Identifier/Call Number: 221
Physical Description: 2.6 Linear Feet 8 boxes.
Date (inclusive): 1975-1998
Abstract: Survey records, meeting minutes, newsletter editorial material, photographs, negatives, correspondence, financial records, event programs, press releases, manuscripts, promotional material, and other material documenting the activities of Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), 1975-1998. Founded in 1976, SCWU was an organization of women “dedicated to creating an atmosphere of understanding of Lesbian issues within both the homosexual and heterosexual communities.” Notably, this collection includes numerous photographs and textual content used in the publication of the SCWU newsletter, as well as a 1988 survey of 1000 lesbian women.

Administrative History
Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) was founded in 1976 to create “an atmosphere of understanding of Lesbian issues within both the homosexual and heterosexual communities.” Betty Berzon, a lesbian board member of the predominantly male Whitman-Radclyffe Foundation, took hold of the idea to form an all women support group in Southern California. Twenty women attended the first meeting in a private home, and ten decided to start a women's group.

At the first meeting of what was to become SCWU, Myra Riddell was elected chair, and the name “Southern California Women for Whitman-Radclyffe” was adopted. However by July 1977, the group decided to break with Whitman-Radclyffe and form an independent organization of women. SCWU incorporated in August 1978, and the organization began forming chapters a year later. In 1979, SCWU held its first Lesbian Rights Award, and Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon were the first honorees. By 1980, the number of members exceeded 500, and an office was opened with a fulltime staff person. In 1984, SCWU established the L. Diane Anderson Trust to support education and research on lesbian issues. Support of community organizations also expanded with the sponsorship of Connexxus Women’s Center/Centro de Mujeres.

Described in 1982 as one of the largest lesbian support organizations in the country, SCWU at its peak had over 1100 members who were predominantly professional, educated women. By the late-1980s, the group was experiencing internal conflicts and its membership began to dwindle.

Source:

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

Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the ONE Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at USC Libraries as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

Acquisition Information
The 1988 lesbian survey results were donated by Bunny MacCulloch to the International Gay & Lesbian Archives on September 19, 1982. The donor and date of acquisition for the remaining materials is unknown.

Preferred Citation
[Box/folder #, or item name] Southern California Women for Understanding Records, Coll2011-076, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Processing Information
Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, December 2012. Revised with additional description to the photographs, January 2016.

Scope and Content
This collection includes administrative records, promotional material, Lesbian Rights Award event records, newsletter editorial records, and survey records from Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), 1975-1998, an organization “dedicated to creating an atmosphere of understanding of Lesbian issues.” The General Administration Series
includes minutes, correspondence, promotional material, manuscripts, and a 1988 survey of 1000 lesbian women conducted by the SCWU research committee. The Newsletter Editorial Material and Photographs Series comprises photographs, editorial copy, clippings, newsletters and other material used in the publication of the SCWU newsletter, including numerous annotated photographs of SCWU members and events.

**Arrangement**

This collection is arranged in the following series:

- Series 1. General administration
- Series 2. Newsletter editorial material and photographs

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Women's rights
- Lesbians -- Services for
- Lesbian activists -- United States
- Lesbian feminism -- Archival resources
- Lesbian rights
- Lesbians -- California -- History
- MacCulloch, Bunny (Nancy Winifred)
- Berzon, Betty
- Strik, Margo

**General administration** Series 1. 65718 1975-1998

**Physical Description:** 0.8 Linear Feet

**Series Description:**

This series comprises survey records, manuscripts, correspondence, programs, promotional material, press releases, notes, and other material documenting the activities of Southern California Women for Understanding, 1975-1998. Notably, this series includes a 1988 survey of 1000 lesbian women conducted by the research committee of SCWU. The final report for this survey was written by Judith M. Saunders, Judith D. Tupac, and Bunny MacCulloch.

**Arrangement**

This series is arranged alphabetically.

- Box 1, Folder 1: Beach Cities chapter records 55844 1985-1987
- Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence 55845 1980-1982
- Box 1, Folder 3: Lesbian Rights Award Dinner 55847 1979-1994
- Box 1, Folder 4: Lesbian Rights Award Dinner programs 55848 1981-1988
- Box 1, Folder 5: "Lesbian Safer Sex" pamphlet 55849 1993
- Box 2, Folder 1-7: Lesbian survey 65719 1981-1988
  - Physical Description: [7 folders]
- Box 1, Folder 6: Press releases 55850 1980-1990
- Box 1, Folder 7-8: Publicity flyers, mailers, and brochures 55852 1975-1998
  - Physical Description: [2 folders]
- Box 1, Folder 9: Skits from "Welcome to Our World, A Lesbian Odyssey" 55855 1985
Newsletter editorial material and photographs Series 2.65720 1978-1998

Physical Description: 1.75 Linear Feet

Series Description
This series comprises photographs, negatives, editorial copy, correspondence, notes, newsletters, financial records, illustrations, clippings, schedules and other material used in the administration and production of the SCWU newsletter, circa 1978-1996. Included are numerous annotated photographs of SCWU members and events. The bulk of material in this series was primarily created or collected by SCWU chair, Margo Strik.

Arrangement
This series is arranged alphabetically.

Box 3, Folder 1-2
Administration 55860 1985-1990
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 3, Folder 3
Board of Directors correspondence 55861 1988-1990
Box 3, Folder 4
Editor bids for desktop publishing 55862 1989-1991
Box 3, Folder 5-8
Copy and resource information 55863 1994-1996
Physical Description: [4 folders]

Box 3, Folder 9
Graphics 55865 1990-1995
Box 3, Folder 10
Name the newsletter contest 55866 1988-1989
Box 3, Folder 11-12
Box 3, Folder 13-17
Notes for photographs circa 1985-1995
Box 3, Folder 18
Photograph releases 1987-1989
Box 4
Photographs and negatives 55867 1978-1985
Scope and Contents
This box comprises photographs and negatives for images used in the SCWU newsletter. It includes photographs of SCWU Boards of Directors, John Briggs, Gayle Wilson, Frank Ker, Myra Riddell, Ivy Bottini, Phyllis Lyon, Del Martin, Joyce Gonzalez, Sharon McDonald, Sharon Tobin, Jan Stone, Holly Near, Louise Beecham, Judi Doyle, Bunny MacCulloch, Margie Mullen, Dianne Anderson, Dee Brueske, Bev Kozlow, Susan Kuhner, Pat Berly, Susan McGreivy, Roberta Bennett, Dianne Abbitt, Jean Conger, Eloise Klein Healy, Lauren Jardine, Dina Bachelor, Carol Schmidt, and groups of unidentified individuals. Photographs also include images taken at events such as the International Women's Festival, gay and lesbian pride parades, fundraising events, and the Lesbian Rights Awards Dinners.

Box 5
Photographs and negatives 1985-1987
Scope and Contents
This box comprises photographs and negatives for images used in the SCWU newsletter. It includes photographs of SCWU board members, Judi Doyle, Nancy Palmer, Myra Riddell, Keri Butcher, Jean Conger, Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, Vanessa Romain, Flo Pickett, June Mazer, Pat Berly, Irene Robertson, Pat Denslow, Betty Berzon, Margo Strik, Linda Elliot, Deby Justus, Lyn Zorbas, Barbara Muirbead, Darry Maticia, Kay Hulett, Shirley Fargen, Judy Tupac, Sass Nielsen, Lynn Rabin, Marianne Franco, Susen Marie Ladd, Elsa Swan, Lori Gilmore, Marilyn Anthony, Terry Coblentz, Jean Welch, Penny Hawkins, June Palmer, Steffi Dreber, Lori Huber, Nicki Toomey, Melinda McLain, Jenny O'Donnell, Rose Marcario, Teresa Carroll, and group photos of unidentified individuals. Photographs also include images taken at events such as SCWU meetings, gay and lesbian pride parades, social events, fundraising events, and the Lesbian Rights Awards Dinners.
Box 6  **Photographs and negatives 1988-1991**  
Scope and Contents  
This box comprises photographs and negatives for images used in the SCWU newsletter. It includes images of Lorraine Silver, Sue Powers, Rosalie Ann Michalski, Mary V. Buck, Susan M. Kuhner, Penny Hawkins, Kathy Holguin, Darlene Weege, Phyllis Hanniver, Ret, Katherine Forrest, Ann Bradley, Myra Riddell, Lori Gilmore, Katherine Hamilton, Virginia Uribe, Bunny MacCulloch, Michelle Quintana, Diane Germaine, Petra Kaun, Jean Conger, Midge Costanza, Ivy Bottini, Robin Tyler, Renee Hicks, Jelsa Palao, Margo Strik, Judi Doyle, Marsha Forest, Karen Thompson, and other unidentified individuals.

Box 7  **Photographs and negatives 1991-1993**  
Scope and Contents  
This box comprises photographs and negatives for images used in the SCWU newsletter. It includes images of Edie Brown, Penny Hawkins, Kathy Wells, Myra Riddell, Kathleen Galbraith, Janice Herdey, Sonda Anderson, Barbara Muirhead, Barbara Gardner, Linda Skye, Cathy Pino, Lynne Watson, Dorothy Thorne, Sandy Childs, Sue Perry, Bev Taylor, Linda Compher, Davia Herrera, Shari Huff, Marianne Franco, Deb Cardinale, Lyn Zorbas, Kathy Wells, Chris Roderick, Roberta Achtenberg, Dianne Feinstein, Marsha Forest, Edie Brown, Mary Morgan, George Garrett-Norris, Diana Olson, Cathy Pino, Arlene Jean, Judie Soby, Judy Dahl, Bev Taylor, Barbara Paton, Lore Oehmichen, Claudia Brink, Degania Golove, Pat Nordell, and other unidentified individuals.

Box 8  **Photographs and negatives circa 1986-1998**  
Scope and Contents  
This box comprises photographs and negatives for images used in the SCWU newsletter, as well as photographs not used in the SCWU newsletter but have SCWU members or events. It includes photographs of Simone Best, Julia Moore, Edie Brown, Glenda Snyder, Laurie McBride, Ivy Bottini, Beth Dewson, Dusty Pruitt, Margarethe Cammermeyer, Dusty Pruitt, Mary Newcombe, Marsha Fuerst, Laurie Bennett, Sharren Wells, Mary Ann Tardiff, Lynne Watson, Johnnie Phelps, Grace Bukowski, Barbara Gardner, Myra Riddell, Bev Taylor, Arlene Jean, Diana Evans, Ret Coller, Sonda Anderson, Mary DuCusin, Sue Williams, Lila Abeles, Dorothy Thorne, Cathy Pino, Pat Kruger, Pat Nordell, Sandy Eastman, Laura Har Darshan, Jonnie Owens, JoAnn Loulan, Robin Tyler, Marie Cartier, Judy Abdo, Neil Demers-Grey, Joe Rund, Ron Cayou, Lynne Watson, Libby Cowan, Martha Kazlo, Brenda Vosbein, Kathy Holguin, Linda Hidy, Jane Blanchard, and other unidentified individuals. The photographs not published in the SCWU newsletter include images of SCWU contingent in gay pride parades and festivals, Women with AIDS, Cathy Pino, a ski trip, Bev Kozlows, Ivy Bottini, Myra Riddell, Sue Williams, Bev Taylor, Paula Barnette, Mary DuCusin, Paula Gunn Allen, Margie Adam, and unidentified individuals.