
Finding Aid to the Ester F. Bentley Photographs and Papers, circa 1940-2003 Coll2013-017

Loni Shibuyama

Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources.

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

909 West Adams Boulevard

Los Angeles, California 90007

(213) 821-2771

askone@usc.edu

URL: <http://one.usc.edu>

Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Title: Ester F. Bentley photographs and papers

creator: Bentley, Ester F.

Identifier/Call Number: Coll2013-017

Physical Description: 2.5 Linear Feet1 carton, 1 binder box, 2 flat cartons, 1 banner, and 1 map case drawer.

Date (inclusive): circa 1940-2003

Abstract: Photographs, negatives, correspondence, awards, clippings, audiocassettes, a videocassette, buttons, a banner, and memorabilia, circa 1940-2003, from lesbian activist, community organizer and social worker, Ester F. Bentley. The collection documents Bentley's professional career in community organizing in Kentucky and California, often working with disabled children. In particular, this collection also includes hundreds of photographs of Bentley and her friends and family throughout Bentley's life.

Biography

Ester Frances Bentley was born on October 24, 1915, in Louisville, Kentucky. She attended Spalding College where she played basketball and served as President of her senior class. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in education at Spalding College in 1941. She went on to be the first female chemist in paint research for the Jones-Dabney company. During the war years, Bentley served as a director of the USO in programs aiding war workers and their families.

In 1947, she received a fellowship to pursue a Master of Science in social work at the National Catholic School of Social Service at the Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington, D.C. She graduated from the Catholic University of America in 1949. Upon completion of her Master's degree, Bentley became Director of the Kentucky Society for Crippled Children. From there, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked as the field representative for the United Catholic Community Defense Services. Her primary focus was on the western region of the United States. Bentley eventually moved to the west coast where she became Director of Community Planning and Development in San Bernadino, California, and later, Executive Director of the Girl Scout Council in Santa Ana, California. In 1965, Bentley became Editor of the Directory of Health, Welfare, and Recreational Services; and a case worker for the California State Department of Social Welfare at the Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk, California. Between 1966 and 1974, Bentley taught at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her final professional role was as a specialist in the Regional Center of Orange County, serving the developmentally-disabled.

As a lesbian activist, Bentley was a founding member of the Coalition of Older Lesbians (CoOL), and she served as a member of the Senior Program Advisory Committee for the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center. She was also a member of the Uptown Gay & Lesbian Alliance, as well as a long-time advocate for gays and lesbians in the Catholic Church.

Ester Bentley died on January 20, 2004, at the age of 88 in Los Angeles, California.

Source:

Ester F. Bentley Photographs and Papers, Coll2013-017, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

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

Donated to ONE Archives in 2005, donor unknown.

Preferred Citation

[Box/folder #, or item name] Ester F. Bentley Photographs and Papers, Coll2013-017, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Simbree Touchstone and Loni Shibuyama, March 2013.

Scope and Content

The collection comprises photographs, negatives, correspondence, awards, clippings, audiocassettes, a videocassette, buttons, a banner, and memorabilia, circa 1940-2003, from lesbian activist, community organizer and social worker, Ester

F. Bentley. Materials in this collection document Bentley's work in the USO and her professional career spent in community organizations in Kentucky and California, often working with disabled children. Also documented is Bentley's participation in gay and lesbian organizations such as the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center and the Uptown Gay & Lesbian Alliance (UGLA). In particular, this collection includes hundreds of photographs of Bentley and her friends and family throughout Bentley's life.

Separated Materials

The following compact discs have been separated from the collection and cataloged into ONE Archives Audio CD collection:

Reprise Records Presents the Music of the 11th Annual GLAAD Media Awards [2 CDs]

Reprise Records Presents the Music of Outfest 99, Welcome Home, Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival [1 CD]

Arrangement

Materials from Ester Bentley's scrapbook is at the beginning of this collection. The remaining folders/items are arranged alphabetically.

Related Materials

[Ester F. Bentley papers]. UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Catholic gays -- United States

Correspondence

Lesbian activists

Lesbian community -- Los Angeles

Photographs

Bentley, Ester F.

Ester F. Bentley collection

Box 1, Folder 1
Box 1, Folder 2
Box 1, Item 6-9

Scrapbook album 1957-1958, 1982

Address book circa 1970-2000

Audiocassettes circa 1969-2000

Physical Description: 4 audiocassettes.

Scope and Contents

Includes recordings of proceedings at the National Conference for Social Welfare in New York City in 1969; music; and church services and choir performances at St. Dominic Church in Los Angeles.

Box 1, Folder 3
Box 3, Item 1-3
Map-case 8.5

Award plaque and certificates Undated, 2001-2003

[Belts with attached buttons] circa 1970-2003

California State Assembly [achievement recognition certificate presented to] Ester Bentley July 21, 2002

Item BAN141
Box 1, Folder 4
Box 1, Folder 5
Map-case 8.5
Box 2

Coalition of Older Lesbians (CoOL) banner circa 1990-2003

Correspondence and other personal papers circa 1990-2000

Delta Epsilon Sigma documents circa 1980

The Lumen Christi Award Presented to Ester Bentley February 4, 2001

Photographs and negatives circa 1940-2003

Physical Description: 354 photographs: b&w, col. 6 negatives: b&w.

Item VV2786

Videocassette: Women's Night [at the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center], 20th Anniversary 2003

Physical Description: 1 videocassette (VHS).

Box 4, Item 1

[White buttoned jacket with handwritten messages] circa 1970-2003
