L1990.01 The Jess Jessop Papers

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2019
Descriptive Summary
Title: L1990.01 The Jess Jessop Papers
Dates: 1939-1990
Collection Number: L1990.01
Creator/Collector: Robert "Jess" Hall Jessop
Extent: 4 linear feet
Repository: Lambda Archives of San Diego
San Diego, California 92116
Abstract: In October of 1972, Jessop founded and co-chaired the planning committee for The Gay Center for Social Services. From 1973-1974 Jessop served as the first Executive Director of The Center, during which he held the first press conference for gay issues in San Diego and organized a protest by the gay community of San Diego against civil rights abuses by the May Company. Jessop additionally served as a member of The Center's Board of Directors, the Grand Martial of the San Diego Pride Parade in 1977, a State Senate District Manager in 1978, and a spokesperson for the Gay alliance for Equal Rights in 1979. Jessop additionally participated in the first March on Washington in 1979.
Language of Material: English
Access
Open for research
Preferred Citation
L1990.01 The Jess Jessop Papers. Lambda Archives of San Diego
Biography/Administrative History
Robert Hall "Jess" Jessop was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1939. Throughout his lifetime, he maintained a very close relationship with his mother Ida and his sister Gail. When Jessop was in the U.S. Navy he served in the Vietnam War (1961-67) with the Navy Hospital Corps as well as the Marine Corps and was nominated for the Navy's Silver Star for heroism. After his time in the Navy, Jessop moved to San Diego, California in 1969 to attend San Diego State College (now University), where he joined the school's chapter of the Gay Liberation front in 1970. Jessop served as the chapter's President and Vice-President. In October of 1972, Jessop founded and co-chaired the planning committee for The Gay Center for Social Services. From 1973-1974 Jessop served as the first Executive Director of The Center, during which he held the first press conference for gay issues in San Diego and organized a protest by the gay community of San Diego against civil rights abuses by the May Company. Jessop additionally served as a member of The Center's Board of Directors, the Grand Martial of the San Diego Pride Parade in 1977, a State Senate District Manager in 1978, and a spokesperson for the Gay alliance for Equal Rights in 1979. Jessop additionally participated in the first March on Washington in 1979. Jessop returned to San Diego State to pursue a bachelor's degree in Nursing from 1980-1985. From 1985-87, Jessop also volunteered for the San Diego AIDS Project, participated in San Diego Walks for Life, and participated in the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and was arrested on the steps of the Supreme Court for his participation. A short few days before he traveled to Washington, D.C. for the 1987 March on Washington, Jessop was diagnosed with AIDS. In December of 1987, Jessop organized a planning committee for the Lesbian and Gay Archives of San Diego, now known as the Lambda Archives. Jessop believed that it was of great importance to preserve the history of San Diego's Gay and Lesbian community. In 1988 Jessop was again arrested in Rockville, Maryland at the FDA office during a protest to bring nation-wide attention to government indifference to the AIDS crisis. Jessop "transitioned" to the next life in February 1990 and asked that his memorial donations be sent to the Lesbian and Gay Archives of San Diego.
Scope and Content of Collection
This collection consists of materials relating to activist, co-founder of The Gay Center for Social Services, and founder of the Lesbian and Gay Archives of San Diego Jess Jessop. Materials include personal letters. Dates of the documents range from his birth in 1939 to his death in 1990. This collection includes his birth certificate, grade school and high school report cards and transcripts, letters to and from family members, Navy service documents, San Diego State documents, documents relating to his activism, documents relating to his health, AIDS activism, ephemera, and documents relating to The Center. Correspondence includes many letters to his mother Ida and his sister Gail. Other materials include newspaper clippings, framed photographs, flyers, his AIDS quilt, and some of his ashes.
Indexing Terms
AIDS
Gay Center for Social Services
Lambda Archives