Finding Aid to the International Gay Rodeo Association Institutional Archives, 1982-2009 MSA.26

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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**Title:** International Gay Rodeo Association Institutional Archives

**Identifier/Call Number:** MSA.26

**Contributing Institution:** Autry National Center, Autry Library

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 59.0 Linear feet (96 document boxes; 1 oversized portfolio; 130 rolls of posters)

**Date (inclusive):** 1982-2009

**Abstract:** The International Gay Rodeo Association Institutional Archives consist of administrative records, memorabilia, posters, publications and clothing from 1982-2009. Most of the materials are regarding the planning, production, and reviews of regional chapter rodeos as well as the final rodeo for the International Gay Rodeo Association.

**creator:** International Gay Rodeo Association.

**creator:** Ragsdale, Phil

- **Series 1:** Administrative files, 1982-2009
- **Series 2:** Clothing, memorabilia, and other materials, 1982-2009
- **Series 3:** Posters, 1983-2005

**Processing History**

Original inventory completed by Stephanie Kowalick. Historical research and some processing performed by Cody White. Additional processing and cataloging was performed by Holly Rose Larson, Project Archivist, funded by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in 2011.

**Scope and Contents**

The collection consists of administrative records and documents that relate to the operations and functions of the International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA), especially rodeos produced by the different associations under IGRA. Administrative records include correspondence, financial records, meeting notes, by-laws and handbooks, press clippings, photographs, and event planning files.

Also included in the IGRA Institutional Archives are rodeo materials consisting of publications, ephemera, promotional material, and memorabilia such as posters, programs, and clothing. There are also awards given and received by IGRA, including an IGRA belt buckle which is located in Box 92.

**Administrative History note**

The International Gay Rodeo Association (IGRA), an umbrella organization which currently encompasses 27 member associations with 34 chapters, was officially formed in 1985 but had its genesis ten years earlier. The first gay rodeo was organized by Phil Ragsdale in 1976 under the banner of the Comstock Gay Rodeo Association and was held in Reno, Nevada. Conceived a year earlier, in 1975, Ragsdale encountered initial local resistance to the idea, despite a charitable aspect that carries on through today. The ensuing National Reno Gay Rodeos, as they were called, grew in popularity. Not only featuring the traditional amateur rodeo fare of horsemanship and bull riding, the National Reno Gay Rodeo also hosted entry level events as well as a country western dance competition and a royalty pageant, all of which are still carried on today at the many IGRA member association rodeos.

In the early 1980s, other states began to form associations and while still traveling to Reno to compete, made plans to host their own rodeos. By 1984, which would be the last year for the National Reno Gay Rodeo due to internal issues, newly formed associations in Colorado and Texas had put on their own rodeos and within only two years after the formal incorporation of IGRA in 1985, groups in California, Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and New Mexico had all started rodeos in their respective states. While the number of sanctioned rodeos has fluctuated throughout the years, it reached a peak in 1995 with 22 events spanning the United States and Canada. The IGRA rodeo year goes from November through October, culminating in the World Gay Rodeo Finals, which up until 2009 was named the IGRA Finals Rodeo. Charitable giving has been a part of gay rodeos since the beginning, with the Muscular Dystrophy Association being the first major beneficiary. As the AIDS epidemic spread across the United States, AIDS foundations became an increasingly larger beneficiary of the rodeo’s fundraising efforts.

IGRA is responsible for establishing and enforcing the standardized rodeo rules for sanctioned events and the certification of rodeo officials. IGRA holds an annual convention, convened in various cities, as well as the annual IGRA University Academy of Rodeo Arts, designed to train members in organizational management as well as rodeo operation. IGRA is directly run by a president who is assisted by a vice president, a treasurer, and a secretary, all of whom are elected to one year terms. This executive board is also augmented by an administrative assistant and public relations spokesperson. Member associations are represented through the Board of Trustees and Board of Directors.

**Acquisition**

**Access**
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application or contact library staff at rroom@theautry.org. An item-level inventory is available from library staff.

**Preferred citation**
*International Gay Rodeo Association Institutional Archives, 1982-2009, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MSA.26; [folder number] [folder title][date].*

**Other finding aids**
Folder list available.

**Related Archival Materials**
Collections 93.31, 94.79, and 2010.12, Autry National Center, Los Angeles.

**Use**
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**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
belt buckles
By-laws
Clippings.
Clothing and dress.
Correspondence
Gay rodeos -- Arizona.
Gay rodeos -- California.
Gay rodeos -- Canada.
Gay rodeos -- Colorado.
Gay rodeos -- Kansas.
Gay rodeos -- Missouri.
Gay rodeos -- Nevada -- Reno.
Gay rodeos -- New Mexico.
Gay rodeos -- Oklahoma.
Gay rodeos -- Texas.
Gay rodeos.
Handbooks, manuals, etc.
Photographs.
Posters.
Programs.
Receipts (financial records)
Reno (Nev.) -- History
Rodeos.
Administrative files, Series I: 1982-2009

Scope and contents
The Administrative files of the International Gay Rodeo Association include the correspondence, meeting minutes, financial records, promotional materials, and publications created in the administration of the Association. These files include the minutes and reports of the following committees: Animal Issues and Concerns, Arena Directors, Audit, Board of Directors, Community Outreach, Computer Expansion Study, Dance Competition, Fundraising, Health and Safety, International Dance Rules, Judges, Media Relations, Membership and Credentials, Rodeo Growth, Royalty, and Sponsorship.

Arrangement
Administrative files are loosely arranged, chronologically and then by the following types:
Meeting notes
Correspondence
Official documents
Rodeo event and promotional material
Publications

Clothing, memorabilia, and other materials, Series 2: 1982-2009
Scope and contents
This series predominately consists of commemorative t-shirts from regional and national gay rodeos. Memorabilia includes badges, bandanas, and patches. Other material in this series includes rodeo programs, local newsletters and magazines, and IGRA Rodeo Rules handbooks. There is one IGRA award belt buckle in Box 92.

Posters, Series 3: 1983-2005
Scope and contents
Posters are from regional and national gay rodeo events.