Finding Aid to the Women of the West Museum Institutional Archives MSA.39

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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Title: Women of the West Institutional Archives
Identifier/Call Number: MSA.39
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Autry Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 72.55 Linear feet (41 boxes, 2 oversized models)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1991-2001
Date (inclusive): 1986-2001
Abstract: The Women of the West Museum, founded in Boulder, Colorado in 1991, was the first museum in the United States dedicated to the history of women of all cultures in the American West. In 2002, the museum merged with the Autry National Center, creating a physical location for the Women of the West institution. These archives document the Women of the West Museum’s institutional history from 1986-2001, which includes files related to administration, collection development, development and fundraising, exhibits, and finances.
creator: Women of the West Museum.
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.
Use
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Preferred citation
Women of the West Museum Institutional Archives, 1986-2001, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MSA.39; [folder number] [folder title][date].

Series 1: Administrative Files, 1986-1999
Series 2: Collections Development Files, 1988-2001
Series 4: Exhibits Files, 1995-2001

Processing history
Processing and finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Project Archivist, June 1, 2012, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Scope and contents
The institutional archives of the Women of the West Museum span from 1986-2001, and includes materials that document the operations and growth of the Museum. The collection is divided into the following five series:
Series 1: Administrative Records include central communication files, public relations material, and Board of Trustee files. This includes Board of Trustee reports and communications, correspondence, public relations papers, newsletters, and annual letters of solicitation.
Material in Series 2: Collection Development Files, relate to the development of the Museum's object collection and includes items such as oral histories, films, and dissertations.
Series 3: Development Files includes material related to Museum donors and fundraising efforts as well as the development and envisioning of the physical building. Material related to developing the building include museum design research notes, architectural proposals, and museum models.
Series 4: Exhibit Files include research material for proposed exhibits.
Series 5: Financial Records include banking and investments records, files related to monetary contributions and pledges, expense reports, and tax documents.
The collection is predominately made up of paper material. Other formats within the collection also include cassette tapes, video cassette (VHS) tapes, floppy discs, three-dimensional museum models, and photographs.

Administrative history note
Founded in 1991 in Boulder, Colorado, the Women of the West Museum was the first museum in the nation dedicated to the history of women of all cultures in the American West. Committed to education outside traditional museum walls, the Women of the West Museum broke new ground with its innovative use of online exhibitions, community partnerships, women’s history trails, and art-based humanities programs.

In 2002, the Women of the West Museum merged with the Autry National Center, creating a gathering place for programs, exhibitions, collections, research, and education dedicated to diverse women's experiences in the American West. The goal is to gain a new understanding, not simply of what women have done but of why it matters for the West—past, present, and future.

The merger with the Autry reflected a continuation of its original spirit, while providing a physical home in Los Angeles to continue its vision through new exhibitions and programs integrated into an overall vision of the West. Taken from the Autry National website 2012 May 24, http://theautry.org/research/women-of-the-west.

**Acquisition**
Women of the West Museum merged with the Autry Museum of Western Heritage on March 6, 2002.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Autry National Center.
Archives -- Administration
Audio cassettes
Correspondence
Dissertations, Academic
Documentary films
Financial records
Fund raising
Museums -- West (U.S.)
Museums and women
Newsletters
Oral histories
Photographs
Proposals
Videocassettes
Women -- West (U.S.) -- Biography
Women -- West (U.S.) -- History

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**Administrative Files 1986-1999**

Physical Description: 14.0 Linear feet(10 boxes)
Scope and contents
The Administrative Files of the Women of the West Museum Institutional Archives span 1986-1999 and include annual letters of solicitation, Board of Trustees reports and communications, correspondence, newsletters, and public relations papers.

**Collections Development Files 1988-2001**

Physical Description: 1.5 Linear feet(1 box)
Scope and contents
This series includes recorded oral histories on cassette tape, transcriptions of oral histories, films, and dissertations acquired by the Women of the West Museum between 1988 and 2001.
Development Files 1991-2001

Physical Description: 48.65 Linear feet (21 boxes, 2 large models)

Scope and contents
The Development Files of the Women of the West Museum Institutional Archives include donor records, fundraising documents, and museum design research. Development records associated with the proposed museum design include proposals from architects and architectural firms, and museum models constructed of wood or foam board. This series also includes presentation boards for exterior and interior construction materials.

Exhibit Files 1995-2001

Physical Description: 5.6 Linear feet (4 boxes)

Scope and contents
The Exhibit Files consist of research material gathered from 1995-2001 for proposed physical and online Women of the West exhibits.


Physical Description: 2.8 Linear feet (2 boxes)

Scope and contents
This series includes documents from 1991-1996 such as banking and investments records, files related to monetary contributions and pledges, expense reports, and tax documents.