
Guide to the Harvey and Connie Lapin Collection

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Contributing Institution: Special Collections & Archives

Title: Harvey and Connie Lapin Collection

Creator: Lapin, Harvey and Connie

Identifier/Call Number: SC.HCL

Extent: 10.58 linear feet

Extent: 13.3 Gigabytes

Date (inclusive): 1969-2006

Abstract: Harvey and Connie Lapin's son Shawn was diagnosed with severe autism as a child. In the 1970s, they became activists in advocating for autistic children and adults, and Shawn became national poster child for the National Society for Autistic Children shortly after. The *Harvey and Connie Lapin Collection* documents the couple's advocacy work with various agencies beginning in 1971 and continuing through the 2000s. The collection consists primarily of manuscript materials, scrapbooks, audio visual materials, and photographs.

Language of Material: English, Spanish; Castilian

Family History:

Harvey and Connie Lapin, residents of Northridge California, have three children, including an autistic son, Shawn Lapin. Shawn became the national poster child for the National Society for Autistic Children in 1973, at age 5. Over several decades they have founded or worked with various organizations promoting awareness and advocacy for the people and families affected by autism.

Harvey Lapin, a dentist, began serving on the Board of Directors of the Autism Society of Los Angeles (ASLA) in 1971. He became President of the Autism Society of America (formerly known as the National Society for Autistic Children) in 1976, and visited the White House for President Carter's signing of the Mental Health Proclamation. Lapin was the founder and organizer of the Save Autistic Children Telethon from 1977-1984. He served as President of the Board of Directors for ASLA from 1989-1992. He was one of the major founding fathers of Jay Nolan Community Services, and was elected President of its Board of Directors from 1990-1992. Dr. Lapin has been an active member of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, along with the American, California, and San Fernando Valley Dental Societies. He has promoted disability awareness in lectures and publications that have included appearances on national television and lectures at international conferences, and has authored and published several articles. His special interest lies in providing entrepreneurial advancement for adults with autism. In 2013 he initiated passage of California's first self-determination law for the developmentally disabled, the first of its kind in the country (SB 468.)

Connie Lapin, a speech pathologist, has been a member of the Board of Directors of ASLA since 1971. She has served as Chairperson of the ASLA's Legislative Committee during her entire tenure. Additionally, she was past Chairperson of the Honig Advisory Committee on Special Education; Chairperson of the Stallone Fund for Autism Research; Secretary and Board member of the North Los Angeles County Regional Center for Developmental Disabilities; Chairperson for Protection and Advocacy; a member of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps; and a member of the National Advisory Board of Research and Training Center of Non-aversive Behavior Management for the University of Oregon.

Since 1971, Connie Lapin has been an international lecturer and advocate for persons with developmental disabilities, testifying and lecturing before government bodies, colleges, and conferences. She has provided consultation to, and appeared on, numerous national and television shows. She was honored at the White House by President Ronald Reagan on the 10th anniversary of the passage of the right to education (PL 94-142), and has received awards from the National Society for Autistic Children, the North Los Angeles County Regional Center, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, the National Society for Autistic Children & Adults, and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

During the Lapin's tenure with the ASLA, the organization joined five other groups in filing a lawsuit that would challenge California's conscious and chronic underfunding of its community care system in favor of institutions. The lawsuit was filed under federal anti-discrimination laws and Title XIX of the Federal Social Security Act.

Scope and Contents

The *Harvey and Connie Lapin Collection* primarily documents the couple's promotion of autism awareness. The collection reflects the Lapin's advocacy of persons with autism through their involvement in various organizations, participation in legal action attempting to improve conditions for those with autism, and various fundraising endeavors, especially in California, and dates from 1969-2006. The collection consists of five series: **Sanchez v. Johnson** (1997-2005), **Activism** (1969-2006), **Photographic Material** (1977-1999), **Scrapbooks** (1977-1987), and **Audio Visual Material** (1977-1996). Series I, **Sanchez v. Johnson**, documents a legal case that the Autism Society of Los Angeles (ASLA) filed with five other organizations and six individual plaintiffs against the Department of Disability Services in California. It consists of legal documents of various types such as motions, judgments, and testimony, and also includes correspondence between all

parties involved such as the plaintiff's attorneys from the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia to the Lapins, and correspondence between the Lapins, ASLA and their supporters. Press materials regarding the status of the case and its outcome are also included. The series dates from 1997- 2005, and is filed alphabetically.

Series II, **Activism**, documents the history of ASLA and includes general information regarding Autism itself. It includes newsletters from the organization, articles from newspapers and magazines regarding Autism, and promotional materials from the ASLA. This series dates from 1969-2006, and is filed alphabetically.

Series III, **Photographic Material**, contains a variety of photographic prints, negatives, and transparencies from various events and activities the Lapins and ASLA were involved in. ASLA auctions, fashion shows, and telethons are included, as well as jogathons, picnics, and conferences. This series dates from 1977-1999, and is filed alphabetically.

Series IV, **Scrapbooks**, consists of eight scrapbooks containing memorabilia from the Lapin's involvement in various organizations and events that they have been associated with, and are made up of clippings and other materials that relate to autism and activism. Subjects include telethons, jogathons, fashion shows, and the Jay Nolan Center. The series dates from 1977-1987, and is organized chronologically.

Series V, **Audio Visual Material**, consists of recordings of telethons that Harvey Lapin organized and public service announcements regarding autism. Members of ASLA are featured in the short film, "Bobby." "Autism in the Classroom" features the Autism Society of America's 1985 Teacher of the Year. Some of the public service announcements were produced by ASLA and have narration by Sylvester Stallone, father of an autistic son. The series dates from 1977-1996 and is arranged alphabetically by title.

Arrangement of Materials:

Series I: Sanchez v. Johnson, 1997-2005

Series II: Activism, 1969-2005

Series III: Photographic Material, 1977-1999

Series IV: Scrapbooks, 1977-1987

Series V: Audio Visual Material, 1977-1996

Conditions Governing Access:

The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use:

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Harvey and Connie Lapin, 01/06/2013.

For information about citing items in this collection consult the appropriate style manual, or see the [Citing Archival Materials](#) guide.

Processing Information:

Sylvia Fischer (Intern), 2014

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Documents

Photographs

Scrapbooks

Audiovisual materials

Series I: Sanchez v. Johnson, 1997-2005

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Box 1, Folder 3

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