Guide to the San Diego Open Forum Records MS 133

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Mills
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.
San Diego History Center Document Collection
1649 El Prado, Suite 3
San Diego, CA, 92101
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March 27, 2013
Title: San Diego Open Forum Records
Identifier/Call Number: MS 133
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
Date (inclusive): 1918-1974
Abstract: This collection contains meeting minutes and other business papers of the San Diego Open Forum, a non-profit organization promoting free speech, from 1918 to 1974.
creator: San Diego Open Forum.
Processing Information
Collection processed by Samantha Mills on March 27, 2013.
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.
Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.
Conditions Governing Use
The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply.
Preferred Citation
San Diego Open Forum Records, MS 133, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.
Arrangement
Collection is arranged by subject.
Biographical / Historical Notes
The San Diego Open Forum was founded in 1919 to promote democracy and freedom of speech in San Diego County. The organization was inspired after an incident in 1918 in which police prevented a lecture by investigative reporter Lincoln Steffens at the First Unitarian Church for fear of a gathering mob of protesters. Founders included prominent citizens Lyman J. Gage, George A. Garrett, E.M. Scofield, William E. Ritter, W. Templeton Johnson, Douglas Young, Judge Spencer M. Marsh, and the Reverend Dr. Howard Bard.
Beginning in 1919, the Open Forum presented an annual series of lectures from October through May, hosted by Dr. Bard at the First Unitarian Church. The group hosted academics, doctors, activists, and controversial figures from a variety of political backgrounds. The Open Forum remained active for 55 years. By the 1970s, they faced competition from lecture series at local universities and in televised broadcasts, and in 1974 the Board of Directors gave in to the decline in funding and attendance and dissolved the organization.
Scope and Content
This collection contains meeting minutes and other business papers of the San Diego Open Forum, a non-profit organization promoting free speech, from 1918 to 1974. Meeting minutes for the Board of Directors run from 1959 through the organization's dissolution in 1974. Other business papers include their Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws (as adapted in 1933); financial papers (including correspondence with their ongoing funder, the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation); brochures advertising their annual lecture series; and numerous press releases and newspaper clippings.
Comments
"San Diego Open Forum Newspaper Clippings" (Box 1 folders 17-18) are photocopies of newspaper clippings originally contained in a binder.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation.
First Unitarian Church (San Diego, Calif.).
San Diego Open Forum.
Freedom of speech
San Diego (Calif.)

Box-folder 1:1 History of the Open Forum, 1918-1965
Box-folder 1:2  Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, 1919-1958
   Includes:
   Original founders’ statement of purpose, with ratifying signatures, dated October 27, 1919
   (in Oversize Collections D9)

Box-folder 1:3  List of Board of Directors, 1945-1974
Box-folder 1:4  Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1959 May 6-1962 December 5
Box-folder 1:5  Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1963 January 2-1965 December 1
Box-folder 1:6  Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1966 January 5-1969 December 2
Box-folder 1:7  Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1970 January 6-1974 June 13
Box-folder 1:8  Committees, 1948-1970
   Includes:
   Resignation of the Committee of Three
   Report from the Committee on “Should We, Can We, and How Are We To – Stay Alive?”

Box-folder 1:9  Finances: income and budgets, 1962 February 1-1974 July 13 and undated
Box-folder 1:10 Finances: Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation, 1951 February 8-1972 July 6
Box-folder 1:11 Annual Lecture Series Programs, 1927-1973
Box-folder 1:12 Guest speakers, 1959-1962
   Includes:
   Partial list of speakers from 1919-1959 and introductions for Harold Urey, Peter Comanduras,
   Dr. Daniel Mishell, and Dr. Warren Bostick.

Box-folder 1:13 Press releases, 1933 January 2-1967 May 7
Box-folder 1:15 Press releases, 1968 October 9-1969 May 2
Box-folder 1:16 Press releases, 1969 October 9-1974 March 7
Box-folder 1:17 "San Diego Open Forum Newspaper Clippings," 1933-1964