Celeste West Papers

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San Francisco Public Library, James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center
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2016
Descriptive Summary

Title: Celeste West Papers
Dates: 1972-1996
Collection Number: GLC 124
Creator/Collector: West, Celeste.
Extent: 24 boxes
Repository: San Francisco Public Library. James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center
San Francisco, California 94102
Abstract: The papers contain correspondence, drafts of books and articles written and edited by West, subject files for library work, and Booklegger Press and Elsa Gidlow materials.
Language of Material: English
Access
UNARRANGED COLLECTION. The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Box 17 (love letters) is closed for research until 2056.
Preferred Citation
Celeste West Papers. San Francisco Public Library. James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center
Acquisition Information
Donated by Tina Perricone for the Estate of Celeste West, 2009-2012.
Biography/Administrative History
Celeste West (1942-2008) was a writer, activist, radical librarian, publisher, polyamorous lesbian, and Buddhist. She graduated with a B.A. in journalism from Portland State University and an M.A. in Library Science from Rutgers University. She moved to San Francisco in the late 1960s and worked at the main San Francisco Public Library. West was a founder of the Bay Area Reference Center (BARC), which published the monthly periodical "Synergy" for librarians engaged in addressing bias and systemic change. She also founded Booklegger Magazine, a feminist library journal in the mid 70's. With Sue Critchfield and Valerie Wheat, West co-founded Booklegger Press. Their first title, "Revolting Librarians," edited by Elizabeth Katz and Celeste West, was an anthology that highlighted biased library practices. West wrote numerous books on the theme of lesbian love and literary freedom, encouraging librarians to be critical thinkers and to challenge established library traditions. West served on the advisory board for the Eureka Valley/Harvey Milk Memorial Branch library, and she was the library director at the San Francisco Zen Center for over 20 years.
Scope and Content of Collection
Indexing Terms
Librarians--United States.
Lesbian librarians--United States.
Women publishers--United States.
Lesbians--Sexual behavior.
Lesbians--Social life and customs.
West, Celeste--Social and political views.
West, Celeste--Archives.