
Guide to the Ron Mandella Community Garden records, 1971-2005 (2000-2003)

Finding aid prepared by Processed by Michelle Balaguy, Genevieve Beaufret, Rebecca Crowther, Miriam Hull, Lisa C. Prince, Kim Thompson, and Blythe Wilson.

California State University, Sacramento Special Collections & University Archives

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Title: Ron Mandella Community Garden records

Identifier/Call Number: MSS 2005/06

Contributing Institution: California State University, Sacramento Special Collections & University Archives

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 3.98 Linear feet(6 manuscript boxes and 1 flat box)

Date (bulk): Bulk, 2000-2003

Date (inclusive): 1971-2005

Abstract: The records of the Mandella Community Garden are the records of its neighborhood development and later of its legal battle to retain their undeveloped green space in the densely urban setting of downtown Sacramento, California. Interaction within the community and with other community gardens is documented. Numerous tutorials on organic gardening and environmental standards are retained in the records. Included in the collection are membership lists, correspondence and letters, city counsel minutes, CADA agency proposals and minutes, organic gardening publications, photographs and scrapbooks, maps, financial records, legal files relating to the campaign to save the garden, video speeches, newspaper articles, physical artifacts from the garden and various ephemera.

Language of Materials: Language is in English.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Information

The Ron Mandella Community Garden collection was given to the CSUS Special Collections and University Archives by Maria Kochis in 2005.

Custodial History

Members of the Ron Mandella Community Garden assembled these records over many years as part of their effort to document their involvement in organic gardening, air quality improvement, and ethnic harmony.

Scope and Contents

The Ron Mandella Community Garden records consist of 4.0 linear feet and is organized into the seven series listed below:

Series 1: History, 1978-2004 (Bulk dates 1996-2004) Series 2: Correspondence and Letters, 1990-2003 (Bulk dates 2001-2003) Series 3: Business and Finance, 1980-2003 (Bulk 1996-2003) Series 4: Legal Files, 1995-2003 Series 5: CADA/Development, 1995-2004 Series 6: Community Gardens / Organic Gardening, 1987-2004 Series 7: Artifacts 1999-2003

The inclusive dates of the collection are 1971-2005 while the bulk of the documents date from 2000-2003. Within these series are correspondence and letters, legal, official, and financial documents, reports, news clippings, brochures, informational pamphlets, flyers and other printed material related to the operations, history and the court cases in which the Garden was involved in their attempts to save the garden for community members and from development by CADA. Also included in the collection are videos, photographs, a large garden banner and miscellaneous ephemera.

Processing Information

Processed by Michelle Balaguy, Genevieve Beaufret, Rebecca Crowther, Miriam Hull, Lisa C. Prince, Kim Thompson, and Blythe Wilson. Completed May 2006.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item including date], [Folder Title], MSS 2005/06, Ron Mandella Community Garden records, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, The Library, California State University, Sacramento.

Biographical / Historical Note

The Mandella Community Gardens was formed in 1971 as an endeavor in urban organic gardening and alternative energy experimentation. Established in Sacramento, California during an era of community activism, the Gardens promoted urban green space, organic gardening, air quality improvement, and ethnic harmony. The Garden was situated on state owned land under a renewable lease at a cost to the organization. Membership fees maintained any expenses incurred. The Garden was named in honor of Ron Mandella one of the original organizers, who died in 1978. Famous members of the Garden include Judge Lloyd Connelly. Infamous members include "Squeaky" Fromme, one of the followers of the notorious Charles Manson family.

When the state of California decided to sell the block to a private developer, in 200 a lengthy legal and political battle ensued between activist community members and state agencies. Protest rallies, sit-in demonstrations, speeches and news articles resulted in an effort to stop the sale. In 2001 after exhausting all legal resources, the Garden was closed and development of the parcel began. Today, the Garden has been developed into multi-family units. A portion of the original garden remains, but it no longer functions as a community green space.

The records of the Mandella Community Garden are primarily the records of its neighborhood development and later of its legal battle to retain their undeveloped green space in a densely urban setting. Interaction within the community and with other community gardens are documented. Numerous tutorials on organic gardening and environmental standards are retained in the records. Included in the collection are membership lists, correspondence, city counsel minutes, organic gardening publications, photographs and scrapbooks, financial records, legal files relating to the campaign to save the garden, video speeches, newspaper articles, physical artifacts from the garden and various ephemera.

Accrual Information

No additions are expected.

Access

This collection is open for research. Some restrictions may apply.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Connelly, Lloyd G.

Fromme, Lynette Alice, 1948-

Kochis, Maria

Mandella, Ron

Community gardens

Environmental standards and studies

Organic gardening.

Series 1: History, 1978-2004

Series Description

This series consists of newsletters, flyers, applications, and photographs that document the history of the Ron Mandella Community Garden. The bulk of the series is comprised of newspaper, magazine, and Internet articles that describe the aims of the Ron Mandella Community Garden and their ensuing legal action against the Capitol Area Development Authority. The series also includes board meeting minutes, RMCG member plot maps, proposed CADA development maps, an overhead projector presentation, and certificates of appreciation for one of the Garden members, Goli Sahba. Materials within each folder are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Board Member Meetings, 1996-2001

Board Member Minutes, 1996-2004

Member Newsletters/Flyers, 1991-2002

Flyers (General Community), 1996-2003

Maps, 1997-2003

Over-head Project Presentation, 2003

Photographs, 2000

Certificates of Appreciation for Goli Sahba, 2003

Articles, 1978-2003

Confidentiality Issues: Membership Apps. and Rosters, n.d.

Series 2: Correspondence and Letters, 1990-2003**Series Description**

This series contains correspondence between garden members and others in the community such as city officials, CADA representatives and letters written by elementary school children. A large portion of this correspondence directly relates to the garden members' attempts to "save the garden" from development by CADA. This also contains letters from community members writing in support of keeping the garden. The series is divided into three areas; General correspondence, which contains the "save the garden" efforts, official correspondence (between garden members and the city or county officials), and the letters from school children, and is organized into 7 folders. The bulk of the correspondence dates from 2000 to 2003. Arranged chronologically within the files and alphabetically by folder subject.

Box 2, Folder 1
Box 2, Folder 2
Box 2, Folder 3
Box 2, Folder 4
Box 2, Folder 5
Box 2, Folder 6
Box 2, Folder 7
Box 2, Folder 8
Box 2, Folder 9

Correspondence: Saving the Garden, 1999-2001

Correspondence: Saving the Garden, 2001

Correspondence: Saving the Garden, 2002-2003

Letters: Elementary School Thank You, 2002

Letters: Community Supporters, 1990-2003

Letters: Interagency, City, State, 1998-2003

Letters: From RMCG Board Members, 1997-2002

Letters: To Garden From City Officials, 1995-2001

Letters: To Garden From Official Agencies, 1998-2003

Series 3: Business and Legal, 1980-2003**Series Description**

This series consists of the financial and business records reflecting the daily operations of the Ron Mandella Community Garden. It contains bank statements, cancelled checks, invoices, receipts, insurance papers, and payment stubs. It also has correspondence with the City of Sacramento and with their insurance company regarding disputes over bills and payments, arrangements for event-specific insurance, by-laws, incorporation papers, legal service invoices and agreement papers, and lease papers.

Box 3, Folder 1
Box 3, Folder 2
Box 3, Folder 3
Box 3, Folder 4
Box 3, Folder 5
Box 3, Folder 6
Box 3, Folder 7
Box 3, Folder 8

Bank statements and cancelled checks, 1994-2003

Check stubs, 1993-1998

Incorporation papers, by-laws, lease papers, board papers, 1980-2002

Insurance papers, 1995-2003

Legal services agreements and invoices, 1996-2003

Miscellaneous expenses and income, 1997-2003

Treasurer's reports, 1996-2003

Utility bills, 1997-2003

Series 4: Legal Files, 1995-2003**Series Description**

This series contains letters and other information for the Ron Mandella Community Garden attorney to look over (including a sheet called "Possible Areas of Litigation"). Most of the correspondence is to and from RMCG member Robert Stuter and government/state officials or representatives, in California State offices of Department of General Services, Office of Housing and Community Development, CADA, and even Gray Davis as Lt. Governor. There are also letters between officials such as City councilmember Deborah Ortiz, (and Assemblywoman Ortiz), Councilmember Jimmie Yee, councilmember Heather Fargo, Mayoral Candidate 2000 Julie Padilla, and other community members mostly in support of keeping the garden. These items seem to be what Robert Stuter in particular wanted his attorney to see. Letters span the period of November 1995 - August 2000. There are briefs of lawsuits between CADA and RMCG as both Plaintiffs and Defendants that span the period of December 2002 through December 2003, and Police Counter Reports and a Misdemeanor Complaint from May 9, 2000, October 17, 2001 and June 22, 2003.

Box 4, Folder 1
Box 4, Folder 2

Letters to support case in favor of RMCG (For legal team), 1995-2003

Capitol Area Development Authority vs. RMCG Lawsuit, 2002-2003

Box 4, Folder 3
Box 4, Folder 4

RMCG vs. Capitol Area Development Authority Lawsuit, 2002-2003
Police Counter Reports and Misdemeanor Complaint, 2000-2003
Series 5: Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA) Development, 1995-2004

Series Description

This series is primarily related to the Capitol Area Development Authority operations, community, and City of Sacramento involvement in development of the Ron Mandella Community Garden area from 1995-2004. Files within this series include general information about the Capitol Area Development Authority, Environmental Impact Reports and related environmental studies documents for the Fremont Mews/Site 13 (Mandella Community Gardens area), CADA board meeting minutes and agenda from 1995-2004, and other documentation from CADA. Folders also consist of City of Sacramento Citizen's Advisory Committee for Parks and Recreation agendas, letters from the City of Sacramento regarding the Fremont Mews Development Project, Owner Participation Agreements from the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento, information on community workshops for Site 13, and letters from the public to CADA related to the Fremont Mews/Site 13 development project.

Box 4, Folder 5
Box 4, Folder 6
Box 4, Folder 7
Box 4, Folder 8
Box 4, Folder 9
Box 4, Folder 10
Box 5, Folder 1
Box 5, Folder 2
Box 6, Folder 1
Box 6, Folder 2
Box 6, Folder 3
Box 6, Folder 4
Box 6, Folder 5

CADA General Information, 2000-2002
CADA Public Relations, 2000-2003
Community and Local Correspondence with CADA, 1998-2003
CADA and the City of Sacramento, 2000-2003
CADA Board Minutes and Agendas, 1995-2000
CADA Board Minutes and Agendas, 2001
CADA Board Minutes and Agendas, 2002-2004
CADA Environmental Impact Reports, 1998-2004
CADA Fremont Terrace Proposal, 2000
CADA Fremont Terrace Project Misc., 1996-2000
CADA Soil Investigations for Garden Site II, 2001
CADA Garden Site II: Limited Phase I/II Investigation, 2002
CADA Site 13 Resolutions and Agreements, 2000-2003

Series 6: General Garden Information, 1987-2004

Series Description

This series contains literature on gardening techniques and information used in the Mandella gardens. Also included in this box are pamphlets and newsletters about community gardens in the Sacramento area as well as other California regions. The folders in this series also contain news clippings and web based reports documenting the effects of soil contamination, along with methods of successful organic gardening. Also included in this series are signs and flyers targeted at "save the garden" efforts, as well as lists and newsletters of tasks needed to be fulfilled in the garden.

Box 6, Folder 6
Box 6, Folder 7
Box 6, Folder 8
Box 6, Folder 9

Gardening Literature, 1987-2004
Community Garden Literature, 1987-2004
Save the Garden Literature, 1987-2004
Compost Sign Hung in Garden, 1987-2004

Series 7: Artifacts, 2000-2003

Series Description

This box contains the physical artifacts from the Garden. In its entirety, the artifacts consist of one scrapbook, one wooden plaque, one cloth banner, one laminated page with photos, and one Rainbow Day Care flyer. The box also holds one CD (with copies) that contains flyers, documents, a garden song, and the Garden's web-site. Two VCR tapes remain (with copies) of a city council meeting and a local community access show. Both programs argue for the Garden to be protected from development.

Box 7, Object 1
Box 7, Object 2
Box 7, Object 3
Box 7, Object 4

Scrapbook, 1999-2001
Wooden plaque, n.d.
Cloth banner, n.d.
Photographs (laminated), n.d.

Box 7, Object 5

Box 7, Object 6

Box 7, Object 7

Flyer: Rainbow Day Care, n.d.

CD featuring flyers, documents, garden song, and web-site information, n.d.

VCR tapes of city council meeting and local community access show, n.d.