Descriptive Summary

Title: Jessica Barshay papers
Dates: 1957-1998
Collection Number: 2003-04
Creator/Collector:
Extent: 4 linear feet (3 cartons)
Repository: GLBT Historical Society
San Francisco, California 94103
Abstract: Jessica Barshay (1940-1998) was a psychotherapist who lived with multiple disabilities, including asthma, Chronic Fatigue Immune Deficiency Syndrome (CFIDS), and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS). Barshay was a lesbian feminist and identified strongly with both Jewish and Buddhist faiths. The collection includes correspondence, journals, subject files, newsletters, medical records, and professional papers.
Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is open for research, with the exception of five folders containing medical records, Social Security Disability application materials, and medical correspondence. These have been restricted until the year 2048, fifty years after Barshay’s 1998 death.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Jessica Barshay papers. GLBT Historical Society

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated to the GLBT Historical Society by Judith Masur in 2003.

Biography/Administrative History
Jessica Barshay was a psychotherapist who lived with multiple disabilities, including asthma, Chronic Fatigue Immune Deficiency Syndrome (CFIDS), and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS). Barshay, a Jewish lesbian feminist, received her Master’s in Social Work from UC Berkeley and practiced in the Bay Area until moving to Arizona with her partner, Judith Masur, in an attempt to find a less polluted climate and improve her quality of life. Barshay died by suicide in 1998.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection includes correspondence, personal journals, publications, subject files, newsletters, medical records, and professional papers. A considerable amount of material relates to Barshay’s Jewish and Buddhist spirituality, as well as fat activism. Carton 3 consists entirely of journals and newsletters for the community of people with CFIDS, MCS, and related illnesses.

Indexing Terms
People with disabilities
Lesbians
Jewish people
Buddhists
Long-term relationships

Guide to the Jessica Barshay papers