National Transgender Library collection

Finding aid created by GLBT Historical Society staff using RecordEXPRESS
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2020
Descriptive Summary

Title: National Transgender Library collection


Collection Number: 2001-15

Creator/Collector:

Extent: 8 linear feet (10 manuscript boxes, 1 half-size manuscript box, one medium oversized box, and one custom box)

Repository: GLBT Historical Society
San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: The National Transgender Library and Archive was the project of Dallas Denny, an Atlanta-based activist, writer, and organizer in the transgender community. This collection contains a wide range of transgender material, from popular representations of transgender people, to medical reports, to advertisements for conferences and events.

Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is open for research. Mailing lists and other records holding the names, addresses and/or phone numbers of individuals are restricted until March 2021.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
National Transgender Library collection. GLBT Historical Society

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated to the GLBT Historical Society by Julie Herrada in 2001, with further accessions in 2002 and 2003.

Biography/Administrative History
The National Transgender Library and Archive was the project of Dallas Denny, an Atlanta-based activist, writer, and organizer in the transgender community. She began compiling materials for the library in the early eighties, adding to her personal files. In September of 1990, Denny founded the American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), a not-for-profit organization for disseminating information on gender dysphoria, and providing referrals to physicians, gender clinics, attorneys, ministers, and support groups. The organization promoted the Standards of Care set up by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., and made referrals based on these standards. The National Transgender Library & Archive became an integral part of AEGIS and tripled in size over the next eight years, as AEGIS used membership funds and sales from its journal Chrysalis: The Journal of Transgressive Gender Identities to actively acquire new materials. While executive director of AEGIS, Denny compiled a bibliography of transgender and transsexual-related texts titled Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research, which was published in 1994 by Garland Press with an introduction by Vern L. Bullough. A copy of the original 900-page manuscript is held in this GLBTHS collection, along with correspondence between Denny and Bullough relating to the manuscript. In 1998, AEGIS became part of Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA), a Georgia-based non-profit organization addressing the needs of gender-variant people; a history of AEGIS and its relationship with GEA can be found at www.gender.org, the official GEA website. In 2000, the NTL&A became too extensive to house locally, and the GEA board donated the entire collection to the University of Michigan (UM). Archivists at UM gave duplicates and materials not suited to their archive to the GLBT Historical Society.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection contains a wide range of transgender material, from popular representations of transgender people, to medical reports, to advertisements for conferences and events. The bulk of the material relates specifically to the practice of cross-dressing and the cross-dressing community. This collection has six parts. The first series, and the largest, consists of periodicals specifically related to transgender issues and cross-dressing. Most are small, Atlanta-based journals that deal with some topic (such as performance technique, acceptance, spirituality) in the cross-dressing community. A few are larger-circulation medical journals or popular culture magazines with a cover story on transgender issues. These periodicals are not in complete series; in fact, most folders contain less than five issues of any one periodical. The periodicals are organized alphabetically. The Periodicals/Media series also contains a folder of articles clipped from mass-circulation
journals (such as Esquire and Good Housekeeping) on transgender issues. The second series consists of conference and workshop materials, some of which Dallas Denny attended or presented at, and others which she did not appear to attend. Each folder contains the materials from one conference, including lists of speakers, events, and brochures. The folders are organized chronologically, by the date of the conference, from 1987-1997. The third series consists of AEGIS materials, taken in original order from two large binders. These folders contain hundreds of articles on cross-dressing, gender-affirming surgery, and events in the transgender community. Many articles relate specifically to AEGIS; some are written by AEGIS members. This series also contains a small collection of photographs taken at an award ceremony for entertainer Carolyn “Tula” Cossey, and a folder of Ms. Denny’s business correspondence. The Shopping series contains catalogues, order forms, and directories for large-sized women’s shoes, wigs, lingerie, sex toys, cosmetics, and erotic novels. The material is broken down into mass-circulation catalogues, and catalogues marketed specifically to cross-dressers or transgender people. The Medical series is comprised of pamphlets and brochures on electrolysis, breast prosthetics, and hormones. Also included are descriptions of gender-affirming surgery, medical advisories, and a document on Standards of Care for transsexuals. The Index series is comprised solely of Denny’s original 900-page research index, later published in a reduced form; the index lists books on transgender issues alphabetically by author. The remainder of the collection consists of miscellaneous flyers and announcements from Atlanta, guides to transgender organizations, some anonymous erotic fiction with cross-dressing themes, and one folder marked “other,” which contains a few unrelated items such as a drag queen paper doll set, a book of Wigstock memorabilia, an autographed book on sexual behavior, and a comic book. Some periodicals were filed into our Periodical Collection (such as ETVC, Out Magazine, and Girlfriend), several boxes of Allure magazine with no transgender content were discarded, and some geographically out-of-scope material was forwarded to the Stonewall Archives in Florida.

**Indexing Terms**

Transgender people

Guide to the National Transgender Library collection