Glady Strope Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Glady Strope Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers

Dates: 1940-2005

Collection Number: 1999.09

Creator/Collector:

Extent: 9 cubic feet

Repository: Humboldt State University Library
Arcata, California 95521-8299

Abstract: The Glady Strope Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers consists of the files and publications created and accumulated by Glady Strope while she served on mental health advisory committees and groups from the late 1950s until 2005 for Humboldt County and the State of California. It includes materials from a wide variety of governmental, professional and advocacy mental health entities. Glady Strope was instrumental in starting mental health services in Humboldt County, California. The collection reflects the evolution of mental health treatments and services and the increased involvement by citizen advocates, consumers and their families throughout the United States, during the last quarter of the 20th Century.

Language of Material: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Glady Strope Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers. Humboldt State University Library

Acquisition Information

Glady Strope donated the collection to the Humboldt State University Library in three parts. The first part arrived in late 1995 and very early 1996, a second part was donated on March 9, 2001, and the final part was donated in 2005.

Biography/Administrative History

In the late 1950s Glady Smith Strope started her career as a volunteer citizen advocate for mental health services in Humboldt County. Glady is a graduate of Humboldt State University, class of 1944, where she majored in Psychology and Education. She came to her volunteer work well informed about the mental health theories and practices of that era. Her advocacy work started at the same time that California passed the Short/Doyle Act (1957) that mandated county level public mental health services. Glady chaired Humboldt County’s first Mental Health Committee. She was tireless in recruiting others to the cause and in speaking out that there was a genuine need for mental health treatment services at a time when the local general public was not yet in full agreement because the causes of mental duress and illness were not well understood beyond professional circles. Humboldt County citizens and elected officials made progress and by 1965 the county was offering direct services. From that time until her retirement from active service in 1995 Glady stayed at the forefront, advocating for effective programs for every age group and segment of the population, especially children. Over the years Glady became more and more active on statewide committees and attended many conferences. She was continually educating herself, then others, and publicizing the need for good quality mental health services. Glady was appointed to the California Council on Mental Health in 1986 and then, starting in 1991, she served as Chair and Chief Executive Officer for one term. Glady remained active at the county level even after she received state level appointments. Glady started and ended her career as a volunteer. Within her papers (Box 9, folder 27) is Glady’s full statement of the ideas and philosophy that guided her through the decades. Included here are the last two paragraphs; they provide a good summary: “I am personally totally committed to Community Mental Health, and I feel very strongly, along with many experts in the field, that mentally and emotionally ill people can be treated much better and at a much lower cost-both financially and emotionally-in the community setting. Volunteers help make this community care possible. We are primarily concerned with enhancing the ‘quality of life’ of our patients, not only throughout their hospital stay but when they return to their homes as well.” “There are many frustrations, low points and discouraging times when working as a Volunteer with the mentally and emotionally ill and with alcoholics. However, I can assure you that the personal benefits that accrue from giving a bit of one’s self, and in sharing the most important thing we possess – the gift of time- far outweigh the frustrations and can be an incredibly rewarding experience!” In the last decade of her life Glady was still alert and attuned to mental health issues, though her direct participation gradually waned. Many of her memories are captured in the interviews she
did with KEET’s Living Biography program and the oral history interview conducted by the Humboldt County Historical Society. See the Related Works section of this Finding Aid for additional biographical information and the text of “History of Mental Health In Humboldt County as told by Gladys Strope.”

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The Glady Strope Mental Health Citizens Advocacy Papers consist of the files and publications accumulated by Glady Strope while establishing and serving on citizen advisory groups in Humboldt County and the State of California, and materials from a wide variety of government, professional, and advocacy mental health entities from the late 1950s to 2005. The collection is fuller for the latter half of the time period. It reflects the breadth of her interests and the long duration of her involvement. The great changes in psychiatric theories, treatment methods, and public financial support for services during the late 20th Century in the United States, and California in particular, are all reflected in the files. The collection also reflects the changing nature of mental health services and the role of government in the second half of the 20th century. California passed ground breaking legislation in 1957 (Short/Doyle Act) requiring counties to address mental health needs. Humboldt County citizens and elected officials made progress in satisfying the requirements by 1965 when the county began offering direct services. In 1967 California passed the Lanterman-Petris-Short Community Mental Health Services Act which accelerated change in the whole mental health field in the state. This legislation along with the Short/Doyle Act shifted California’s mental health services from a centralized state hospital model to community based services intended to serve citizens in their home counties. The state hospital populations were reduced quickly and dramatically, but sufficient funds to support necessary local services were not forthcoming. Funding for essential services has been a challenge for every California county ever since. Advocacy efforts, such as Glady’s, were necessary to garner public support to keep the needs of the public before the legislature and resource allocators. Humboldt County’s mental health programs, issues, and events, as well as those for other rural California areas, are also well documented with materials spread throughout the collection. Humboldt County has made a concerted effort to provide prevention services, especially to children, and to achieve greater interagency coordination since the mid-1980s. Records describing and tracking these efforts are found throughout the collection.