

---

## **Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton papers**

Finding aid created by Barbara Smith Eychaner  
Center for Sacramento History  
551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd.  
Sacramento, California 95811  
(916) 808-7072  
[csh@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:csh@cityofsacramento.org)  
<http://www.centerforsacramentohistory.org/>  
2019

---

## **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton papers

**Dates:** 1952-2008, (bulk 1999-2003)

**Collection Number:** MS0006

**Creator/Collector:** Barnett, JeanneCharlton, EllieFado, Don

**Extent:** 2 linear feet(3 boxes)

**Repository:** Center for Sacramento History  
Sacramento, California 95811

**Abstract:** The Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton papers relate to the Holy Union Service performed at the Sacramento Community Theater on January 16, 1999. The files are divided into five series: Series 1. Holy Union, Series 2. Personal, Series 3. Photographs, Series 4. Artifacts, and Series 5. Oversize. Within the collection are correspondence (letters, cards, and printed e-mails), newspaper articles, photographs, audio and video tapes, lapel pins, buttons, badges, scrapbooks, plaques, ephemera, personal information, promotional material, material relating to Jeanne Barnett's memorial service, and two purple jackets worn at the Holy Union Service. The Oversize series contains newspaper and magazine articles relating to the Holy Union service. Some material provided dates; for other material the date is unknown.

**Language of Material:** English

### **Access**

The collection is open for research.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton papers, MS0006, Center for Sacramento History

### **Acquisition Information**

Acquired from Ellie Charlton, 2009 (Accession #2009/007).

### **Biography/Administrative History**

The United Methodist Church amended their Social Principals in 1996 to say that same sex union shall not be conducted by Methodist clergy. In 1998 the church further ruled that clergy could be held accountable for conducting same sex unions and could be dismissed from the ministry. Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton had been together for fifteen years and were both active members of the United Methodist church; Barnett had been elected lay leader of the regional conference, the highest elected (and clerical) position in the conference, and Charlton served as a member of the conference board of trustees. Together, they started an after-school program at their local church. Their Holy Union was performed in Sacramento in January 1999 and was coordinated by Rev. Don Fado, who asked more than 100 retired or near-to-retirement clergy in the conference if they would stand with him to perform the service. The service may have been an act of ecclesiastical disobedience for the approximately 68 clergy involved, but Fado felt he was, in fact, being obedient to his calling in uniting this couple.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton papers consists of two linear feet. The Holy Union Series contains e-mail correspondence in preparation for the service, the service's invitation and program, and congratulatory greeting cards. The folder "Church Involvement" contains a history of homosexuality/homophobia compiled by the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, correspondence, meeting minutes, and newsletters outlining the background of the Sacramento St. Mark's United Methodist Church's position on the issue of Holy Union services for same-gender couples, and documents relating to the "Sacramento 68" clergy who participated in the Holy Union, including "Why We Officiated at a Service of Holy Union" and an edited version of the oral statement given by Rev. Don Fado to the Committee on Investigation in 2000.

The Personal Series consists of individual information for both Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton, including Charlton's marriage announcement and divorce agreement, Barnett's birth and death certificates, a dissolution of property agreement for Barnett and Charlton, articles for publications written by Barnett and by Charlton, information on the Lazarus Award presented to Barnett, and cards of consolation written following Barnett's death. An additional folder contains information about the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Holy Union after Barnett's death. Also included are materials relating to traveling the two women did together and for a house concert performed by Judy Fjell in 1986.

The Oversize series contains newspaper and magazine articles relating to the Holy Union and same sex marriage.

The Artifacts Series is composed of a scrapbook (containing memorabilia from travels and events attended), audio and video tapes, lapel pins, buttons, badges, a plaque presented to Barnett and Charlton from the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, the Lazarus Project plaque presented in 2000, and the 1994 Bishop's Award presented to Barnett by the United

---

Methodist Church, San Francisco Area California-Nevada Conference.

The Photographs Series contains photographs from the Holy Union service and reception, and photos of the activities outside the Sacramento Community Theater; photographs from Barnett's church memorial service and reception; and various photographs of the two women.

**Indexing Terms**

Same-sex marriage  
Methodist Church

---

**Series 1. Holy Union 1979-2004**

**Physical Description:** 4 folders

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

The Holy Union Series contains e-mail correspondence in preparation for the service, the invitation to the service, the program for the service, and congratulatory greeting cards prior to and following the service. The folder Church Involvement contains a history of homosexuality/homophobia compiled by the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, correspondence, meeting minutes, and newsletters outlining the background of the Sacramento's St. Mark's United Methodist Church position on the issue of holy union services for same-gender couples, and documents relating to the "Sacramento 68" clergy who participated in the Holy Union, including "Why We Officiated at a Service of Holy Union" and an edited version of the oral statement given by Rev. Don Fado to the Committee on Investigation in 2000.

Box 1 **Holy Union service 1999-2004**  
Box 1 **E-mail correspondence 1998-1999**

---

Box 1 **Congratulatory greetings 1998-1999**

---

Box 1 **Church involvement 1979-1999**

---

**Series 2. Personal 1930-2008**

**Physical Description:** 7 folders

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

Personal Series consists of individual information for both Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton, including Charlton's marriage announcement, divorce agreement, Barnett's birth and death certificates, a dissolution of property agreement for Barnett and Charlton, articles for publications written by Barnett and by Charlton, information on the Lazarus Award presented to Barnett, and the cards of consolation written following Barnett's death. An additional folder contains information about the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Holy Union after Barnett's death. Also included are materials relating to traveling the two women did together and for a house concert performed by Judy Fjell in 1986.

Box 1 **Eleanor Charlton 1952-2008**  
Box 1 **Jeanne Barnett personal papers and The Lazarus Award 1930-2008**  
Box 2 **Jeanne Barnett's death 1987-2004**  
Box 2 **Sympathy cards 2003-2004**  
Box 2 **Anniversary celebration 2004**  
Box 2 **Travel memorabilia 1986-2003**  
Box 2 **House concert 1986-2005**

---

**Series 3. Oversize**

**Physical Description:** 1 oversized folder

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

The oversize folder contains newspaper clippings from Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Jose, Eureka, San Francisco, and from the California-Nevada annual conference of the United Methodist Church, as well as magazine articles, and photo displays from the Holy Union.

**Series 4. Artifacts 1984-2007**

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

The artifacts consist of a scrapbook from Barnett and Charlton's travels, a videotape of the Holy Union, a videotape of an interview with the two women, and a video prayer for the two. The three audiotapes are recordings of the services held after Barnett's death in 2003. Three 3 1/2" floppy disks contains the testimonies given at the Committee on Investigation held for the clergy involved in the Holy Union service. The Bishop's Award presented by the United Methodist Church San Francisco area in 1994 to Barnett is an artifact in this collection. There are also 46 button badges that relate to gay and lesbian issues. The badges state things such as: I support reconciling congregations, Celebrate Community, Honor Diversity, That All May Freely Serve, Stand Together with Women, The Body of Christ Includes Lesbian and Gay People, and Pro-Faith, pro-family, pro-choice Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Eighteen of the 30 lapel pins relate to United Methodist Church, lesbian and gay issues, IAPES (the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security), or bowling. The other pins relate to Sacramento area professional basketball. The two jackets were worn by Barnett and Charlton during the Holy Union Service.

Box 3

**Series 5. Photographs circa 1948-2003**

**Physical Description:** 1 box

**Series Scope and Content Summary**

The photographs in this collection represent primarily the Holy Union service. There are several 8" by 10" enlargements of the couple, the pastor, and the guests. Many photos taken at the event were not printed, but are shown on contact sheets. A few earlier photographs, including Barnett's high school graduation photo, are also included. Photos taken at the memorial service for Barnett in 2003 are also included. At that memorial service t-shirts that Barnett had owned were displayed; a duplicate set of photographs of those t-shirts are included.