Guide to the Fielding M. McGehee III Papers

Special Collections & University Archives

Overview of the Collection

Collection Title: Fielding M. McGehee III Papers
Dates: 1967-1999
Bulk Dates: 1967-1980
Identification: MS-0525
Creator: McGehee, Fielding M., III
Physical Description: 0.42 linear ft
Language of Materials: English
Repository: Special Collections & University Archives
5500 Campanile Dr. MC 8050
San Diego, CA, 92182-8050
URL: http://library.sdsu.edu/scua
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Biographical Information:

Fielding Merwin McGehee III was born in Charlottesville, Virginia at the end of the 1940s at the height of the Baby Boom. He is the oldest child of parents Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee. Due to his father’s occupation, McGehee spent a significant portion of his adolescence in the Netherlands. He was rebellious as a teenager, a time that coincided with the period of social tumult in the mid-to late-1960s. As part of that rebellion, at Antioch College in Ohio McGehee became an activist against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, an activism which led him to drop out of college and pursue a leadership role in antiwar organizations. Furthermore, McGehee became an active resister to the military draft.

After a four-year hiatus, McGehee returned to Antioch College to complete a degree in journalism and political science. Following the failures of an early marriage and an ill-conceived business venture in journalism that had taken him to California, Fielding returned to Washington in 1977. There he renewed a friendship with a former college classmate and fellow writer, Rebecca Moore - a friendship that soon evolved into romance and marriage in 1980, both of which continue to this day. Fielding followed Rebecca in her several careers – first in television production, then as a college professor – in South Dakota, Montana, Nevada, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and California, before their recent relocation to Friday Harbor in Washington State.

Fielding McGehee has had several careers with public interest groups – the National Council to Repeal the Draft, the Military Audit Project, and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press among them – but it wasn’t until the 1978 tragedy in Jonestown, Guyana which resulted in the deaths of more than 900 people that he found his calling. He is the co-founder of the Jonestown Institute, an online resource which seeks to honor both the living and the dead from the tragedy, and to gather as much information as possible – including reflections of the survivors – into a single place. More than 15 years after its beginning, the resource is the largest repository of government records on the tragedy, the only location with a complete listing of everyone who died that day – including biographical information, photos, and remembrances from loved ones – and a collection of original and reprinted academic articles from numerous perspectives. The Jonestown Institute continues to thrive at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu.

Access Terms

This Collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Genre/Form of Material:
Personal Papers

Personal Name:
McGehee, Fielding M. III

Topical Term:
Correspondence--20th century
Draft--History--20th century--Sources
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Conditions Governing Access:
The collection is open for research.

Preferred Citation:
Identification of item, folder title, box number, Fielding M. McGehee III Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University.

Related Materials:
Rebecca Moore Papers (1951-2013)
Information about related materials is available at http://jonestown.sdsu.edu

Scope and Contents
The Fielding M. McGehee III Papers (1967-1999) consist primarily of correspondence between McGehee and his parents, Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee, and also include some correspondence to and from other family members. Many letters include discussion about draft resistance efforts as well as Peoples Temple and the agricultural settlement at Jonestown, Guyana. Some writings related to the draft are also included.

Some of the letters in the collection from friends and family members contain stories about Hillary Ann Moore, the youngest of three siblings adopted by Fielding and his wife Rebecca while living in South Dakota. Hillary was born with endomyocardial disease, a condition which resulted in her death in 1995 at the age of 15. Determined not to let memories of her pass into oblivion, Fielding and Rebecca gathered these stories into a published memoir of her life, A Streak of Scarlet.

Box 1, Folder 1  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Family Members 1969-1976
Box 1, Folder 2  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee 1967-1969
Box 1, Folder 3  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee 1970-1972
Box 1, Folder 4  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee 1977-1979
Box 1, Folder 5  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee 1980, 1999
Box 1, Folder 6  Correspondence from Fielding (Mac) McGehee III to Fielding McGehee, Jr. and Helen McGehee n.d.
Box 1, Folder 7  Correspondence from Fielding McGehee, Jr. to Fielding (Mac) McGehee III 1968-1971
Box 1, Folder 8  The Impact of the Draft and Draft Repeal Research Project of the National Council to Repeal the Draft 1970
Box 1, Folder 9  Poetry by Fielding (Mac) McGehee III 1967
Box 1, Folder 10  Writings about Draft Resistance 1970, n.d.