Finding Aid for the James and Margarita Mendez Papers, 1918-2003 CSRC.127

Doug Johnson
Chicano Studies Research Center Library

July 2019
144 Haines Hall
Box 951544
Los Angeles, California 90095-1544
librarian@chicano.ucla.edu
URL: http://chicano.ucla.edu
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Chicano Studies Research Center Library
Title: James and Margarita Mendez Papers
Creator: Mendez, Margarita
Creator: Mendez, James
Identifier/Call Number: CSRC.127
Physical Description: 4.8 Linear Feet (4 boxes; 3 flat boxes; 2 oversize flat boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1918-2003
Abstract: This collection contains material on the lives of James and Margarita Mendez. It consists of photographs, printed matter, memorabilia, correspondence, and realia. It includes material on Garfield and Roosevelt High Schools, the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans, the World War II service of James Mendez and Margarita's brother Eloy Duran, and material related to Margarita's career as a social worker.
Language of Material: Materials are in English, Spanish, and Japanese.
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library and Archive for paging information.
Conditions Governing Access
Open for research.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Victor Duran Mendez, June 7, 2011.
Arrangement
The collection was arranged by an unknown person, who seems to have attempted to retain the donor's original order.
Biographical / Historical
James Aleman Mendez was born July 21, 1921 in Los Angeles. He attended James Garfield High School and Frank Wiggins Trade School before joining the United States Army. He served in the 127th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Infantry Division and fought in New Guinea and the Philippines. After the war he worked as a salesman for the General American Life Insurance Company.
Margarita Acosta Duran was born on December 5, 1925 in Los Angeles. She attended Theodore Roosevelt High School, UCLA, and USC, where she earned a Master of Social Work degree. As a social worker, she specialized in youth and mental health issues. She was repeatedly recognized by professional organizations, the city and county of Los Angeles, and the State of California or her contributions to her profession and community. She died on February 26, 1996 in Bellflower.
Margarita's younger brother, Eloy, served in the same Army regiment as James. Though there is no evidence in the collection, it is possible that he introduced them. James and Margarita were married on December 23, 1950. They had at least four sons.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], James and Margarita Mendez Papers, 127, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.
Processing Information
The collection was arranged by an unknown person. The collection was described by Doug Johnson, July 2019.
Related Materials
The Maria Acosta Duran Papers at the UCLA CSRC is a collection of Margarita's mother's papers.
Scope and Contents
This collection contains material on the lives of James and Margarita Mendez. It consists of photographs, printed matter, memorabilia, correspondence, and realia. There is a great deal of material on their secondary school years at both Garfield High School and Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles. Both schools had large populations of Japanese American students whose educations were interrupted by forced relocation and incarceration. Margarita had many Japanese American friends throughout her life and perhaps because of this fact she retained material from the Gila River and Poston camps. During the Second World War, James served in the 127th Infantry Regiment of the 32nd Infantry Division alongside Margarita's brother Eloy. Both men retained a significant amount of material from their service in the Pacific War and, in Eloy's case, the American Occupation of Japan. While there is only a small amount of material related to James's career as an insurance salesman, there is a great deal on Margarita's career in social work. There is material on her education, including a draft of her thesis, material on various positions she held, publications, and information about Trabajadores de la Raza, an
association of student and professional social workers founded in 1969. There are also a number of plaques and certificates bestowed on Margarita throughout her career.

**Conditions Governing Use**

These materials are made available for use in research, teaching, and private study pursuant to U.S. Copyright Law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of materials, including but not limited to infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source. The original authors may retain copyright to the materials.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Theodore Roosevelt High School (Los Angeles, Calif.)
James A. Garfield High School (Los Angeles, Calif.)
World War, 1939-1945
Japanese Americans--Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
United States. Army. Infantry Division, 32nd
United States. Army. Infantry Regiment, 127th
Social service
Trabajadores de la Raza (Organization)

---

**Box 1, Folder 1**

**Printed material 1946-1979**

**Scope and Contents**


**Box 1, Folder 2**

**Correspondence 1942-1995**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes: letter explaining that high school student Marguerita Duran had been judged the third best speaker in Southern California, 1942-05-11.

**Box 1, Folder 3**

**Awards and certificates 1948-1996**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes: certificate of appreciation from Harry Truman, 1948-12-29.

**Box 1, Folder 4**

**University documents 1944-1971**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes: UCLA associate degree; USC MSW degree; USC bulletins, 1949; copies of transcripts.

**Box 1, Folder 5**

**USC School of Social Work 1982-2000**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes: Hispanic Caucus material; bulletin, 1994-1996; program for "A Summer Tardeada" benefit in support of the Margarita Mendez/Juan Ramos Endowed Fund.

**Box 1, Folder 6**

**Trabajadores de la Raza 1990-1992**

**Scope and Contents**

Includes correspondence regarding the establishment of a School of Social Work at Cal State LA; report "Challenge for Social Work Education in a Multi-Cultural Society in the 21st Century: A Latino Perspective."

**Box 1, Folder 7**

**Trabajadores de la Raza 1976-1995**

---

**Box 1, Folder 8**

**Social work certifications 1969-1979**
Box 1, Folder 9  **Essays 1950-1991**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes: thesis "The Role of the Worker in Terminating Services to Groups" by Margarita Duran; untitled essay for USC class, 1991.

Box 1, Folder 10  **Facilities 1996-1998**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes material on social welfare facilities posthumously named in honor of Margarita Mendez.

Box 2, Folder 1  **Thesis 2000**  
**Scope and Contents**  
"A Case Study of Culture and Social Work Practice" by Erica Rodriguez Bawek.

Box 2, Folder 2  **Memorials 1996-2003**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes: eulogies, cards, and other material memorializing Margarita Mendez; also includes information on the Margarita Mendez Lecture in Social Work at Cal State LA, which was instituted in 2003.

Box 2, Folder 3  **Miscellaneous 1948-1986**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes: identification cards; wedding announcement; copy of marriage certificate; wedding congratulations from John Anson Ford; resume; letters of recommendation.

Box 2, Folder 4  **Panel of Americans 1944-1945**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Contains material on a group of female UCLA students of different religions and ethnicities who engaged in a state-wide speaking tour. Includes: text of Margarita Duran's speech; program; clippings; photographs with Paul Henreid, Victor Francen, Fletcher Bowron.

Box 2, Folder 5  **Photographs of Margarita 1926-1981**

Box 2, Folder 6  **Photographs circa 1939**

Box 2, Folder 7  **Photographs circa 1946**

Box 2, Folder 8  **Photographs circa 1946**

Box 2, Folder 9  **Photographs circa 1950**

Box 2, Folder 10  **Photographs - vacation circa 1945**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes Yosemite.

Box 2, Folder 11  **Photographs 1940-1947**

Box 2, Folder 12  **Photographs 1943-1957**

Box 2, Folder 13  **Photographs 1960s-1970s**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes Margarita with Kenneth Hahn.

Box 3, Folder 1  **Schools 1934-1990**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes: James's memory book, inscribed by his classmates; Garfield High School graduation program and diploma, 1939; Garfield High Class of 1940 50th anniversary program.
Box 3, Folder 2  **Schools 1938-1941**

**Scope and Contents**
Includes: report cards; Robert Louis Stevenson Junior High yearbooks, 1940 and 1941.

Box 3, Folder 3  **Roosevelt High School 1939-1993**

**Scope and Contents**
Includes: student handbooks, 1939 and 1942; literary magazine, 1941; *Je Sais Tout* French Club publication; *Hi-School* magazine, February 1942; Ephebian Society initiation program, 1943; commencement program and diploma, 1943; programs for 25th and 50th reunions [the 50th reunion program includes a tribute to the Japanese-American students who could not complete school because of the incarceration].

Box 3, Folder 4  **"Select photos" 1940-1996**

Box 3, Folder 5  **Japanese incarceration 1943-1946**

**Scope and Contents**
Includes: "A Year at Gila Anniversary Booklet"; "The Displaced Japanese Americans"; "Poston Notes and Activities"; copy of James's honorable discharge from the Army.

Box 3, Folder 6  **Mendez family documents 1918-1988**

**Scope and Contents**
Includes: registration cards for the draft and the Alien Poll Tax; Frank Wiggins Trade School documents; certificates of naturalization for Santiago and Concepcion Mendez, James's parents; Garfield High School diploma; ballots for Mexican legislative elections, circa 1950; press release and photograph of James presenting a scholarship.

Box 3, Folder 7  **General American Life insurance 1956-1968**

**Scope and Contents**
Contains material relating to James's career as a life insurance salesman; includes convention programs and photographs; certificates.

Box 4, Folder 1  **Duran, Eloy - Pacific 1944-1946**

**Language of Material:** Material is in Japanese and English.

**Scope and Contents**
Contains material relating to Margarita's younger brother's service with the 127th infantry regiment during and after World War II. Includes: a few photographs from the Philippines and Papua New Guinea; many photographs from postwar Japan; post cards; War Department Japanese phrase book; Japanese flag; letter from Eloy discussing his work in intelligence in Fukuoka during the Occupation; *Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors*, a Meiji-era code of conduct for the Japanese military.

Box 4, Folder 2  **Miscellaneous 1953-1991**

**Scope and Contents**
Includes: photographs; insurance company planning calendars; Ruben Salazar column reprints.

Box 4, Folder 3  **Photographs - James in uniform 1944-1946**
Box 4, Folder 4  
**32nd Infantry Division 1942-1946**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes: booklet "The 32nd Division: The Red Arrow Division"; memo from Major General W. H. Gill; booklet "13,000 Hours"; notebook with notes on various weapons and pieces of equipment; cards for the Domain of the Golden Dragon and the Domain of Neptunus Rex; U.S. Navy postcard book; booklet "I Am a Doughboy"; essay "Noose that Tied Japs on Luzon" by Russell Brines; booklet "Ninety-Fourth Infantry Training Battalion"; program for Easter Sunday service aboard the U.S.S. General W.F. Hase; program for Christmas mass in New Guinea; newsletters; memorial program for Staff Sergeant Ysmael R. Villegas, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Box 5  
**Among the Valiant by Raul Morin 1963**  
Scope and Contents  
Awarded to Margarita by the Latino managers at the Department of Child Services.

Box 5  
**Glass plaque 1992**  
Scope and Contents  
Awarded to Margarita by the Latino managers at the Department of Child Services.

Box 5  
**Realia circa 1972-2003**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes: pins; brass business card holder monogrammed for Margarita from ELAMHS [East Los Angeles Mental Health Services?]; Elks Lodge nameplate for James.

Box 6  
**Yearbooks 1938-1943**  
Scope and Contents  
Four Garfield High yearbooks; four Roosevelt High yearbooks.

Box 7, Folder 1  
**UCLA diploma 1946**  
Scope and Contents

Box 7, Folder 2  
**Certificates of appreciation 1961-1996**  
Scope and Contents

Box 7, Folder 3  
**Publications 1945-1946**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes: *Yank*, 1945-08-31; *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 1946-12-25;

Box 7, Folder 4  
**Photographs 1919-circa 1940**  
Scope and Contents

Box 7, Folder 5  
**Retirement card 1981**  
Scope and Contents

Box 7, Folder 6  
**National Chicano Moratorium poster 1990**  
Scope and Contents

Box 8, Folder 1  
**Publications 1939-1945**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes: *Santa Ana Register*, 1939-11-21 and 1939-12-11; *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 1941-12-07 [reprint]; *Sixth Army News*, circa 1945; *Los Angeles Daily News*, 1945-04-14 [front page only; FDR funeral]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1945-08-15 [incomplete; "PEACE"]; *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 1945-12-08 and 1945-12-30 [incomplete].

Box 8, Folder 2  
**School newspapers and photographs 1936-1945**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes: Belvedere Jr. High panoramic photograph, 1936; Stevenson Jr. High panoramic photograph, 1940; Roosevelt High *Rough Rider*, 1941-10-08 and 1942-12-10; *Long Beach Poly High Life*, 1945-10-19.

Box 8, Folder 3  
**Business 1958-1971**  
Scope and Contents  
Box 8, Folder 4  Clippings and certificates of appreciation 1982-1999
Box 9  Plaques and trophies 1957-1994