Finding Aid for the Vahac Mardirosian papers, 1964-2007

Processed by Yasmin Damshenas in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT), with assistance from Kelley Wolfe Bachli and Megan Hahn Fraser, December 2011; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

The processing of this collection was generously supported by Arcadia funds.

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Vahac Mardirosian papers

**Date (inclusive):** 1964-2007

**Collection number:** 1887

**Creator:** Vahac Mardirosian

**Extent:** 7 document boxes and 1 half document box (3.75 linear ft.)

**Abstract:** Reverend Vahac Mardirosian has been a major advocate of Mexican-American educational reforms in Los Angeles and San Diego school districts since the early 1960s. This collection contains material related to his pastoral work, his involvement with the 1968 East Los Angeles walk-out demonstration and organizations he helped found and run, including the Hispanic Urban Center Board of Education (founded 1970) and Parent Institute for Quality Education (founded 1987). Materials include clippings and press releases, letters and statements, notes, sermons, evaluation reports, reading score percentiles and rankings, memoranda, fact sheets and administrative documents, and cover a wide variety of educational topics including bilingual education, integration, teachers' attitudes towards Mexican American students, parental involvement, and reading achievement.

**Language:** Finding aid is written in English.

**Repository:** University of California, Los Angeles. Library Special Collections.

Los Angeles, California 90095-1575

**Physical location:** Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact UCLA Library Special Collections for paging information.

**Restrictions on Access**

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**Provenance/Source of Acquisition**

Gift of Vahac Mardirosian, 2011.

**Processing Note**

Processed by Yasmin Damshenas in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT), with assistance from Kelley Wolfe Bachli and Megan Hahn Fraser, December 2011.

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**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Vahac Mardirosian papers (Collection 1887). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

**UCLA Catalog Record ID**

UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6946790

**Biography**

Reverend Vahac Mardirosian has been a leading advocate of educational reform in Southern California, especially in the Mexican American communities, since the late 1960s. Of Armenian descent, he was born in Aleppo, Syria and raised in Mexico City and Tijuana. He became ordained as a Baptist priest in California in 1946 and went on to serve the Mexican American communities of Topeka and Chicago, before returning to California in the 1950s. In 1968 he became involved with the walk-out protests at Garfield High School in the East Los Angeles School District. He acted as a mediator with administrators and became a representative of parents and students in his role as chairman of the Educational Issues Coordinating Committee (EIICC).

He founded and acted as executive director of the Hispanic Urban Center in Los Angeles in 1970, which focused on in-service education for teachers, seeking to enhance their perceptions of Mexican American culture and improve teacher/student relations. In 1987 Mardirosian started the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) to address underperforming schools in the San Diego School District in response to concerned parents. PIQE offers a 9-week program to help improve education through the joint collaboration of parents, students and teachers and emphasizes the role of parents as advocates for their children. In 2006 California State University (CSU) began working with PIQE to provide
finding and support of outreach and training for low-income families.
In 1988 Mardirosian received recognition from Phi Delta Kappa for his service and leadership in educational reform and in 1998 CSU awarded him an honorary doctorate for his impact on the lives of parents and children of California. In 2010 Mardirosian received the "Remarkable Leader in Education" award from the University of San Diego.

Scope and Content
This collection contains material related to Vahac Mardirosian's pastoral work, his involvement with the 1968 East Los Angeles walk-out demonstration and the organizations he helped found and run, including the Hispanic Urban Center Board of Education and the Parent Institute for Quality Education. Materials include clippings, press releases, letters, statements, notes, sermons, evaluation reports, reading score percentiles and rankings, memoranda, fact sheets, and administrative documents, and cover a wide variety of educational topics including bilingual education, integration, teachers' attitudes towards Mexican American students, parental involvement, and reading achievement.

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1. Pastoral Work
2. East Los Angeles High School Walk Out
3. Hispanic Urban Center Board of Education
4. Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)
5. Biographical Materials

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects
Mardirosian, Vahac --Archives.
Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE).
Hispanic Urban Center Board of Education.
Baptists --California, Southern --Clergy --Archival resources.
Hispanic Americans --Education --Archival resources.

Related Oral History
The following oral history is available through the UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research:
- Interview of Vahac Mardirosian.

UCLA: Chicano Studies Research Center Library, Collection 56, The Desegregation Collection:

Stanford University Special Collections, Collection M0673, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund:
- RG 5, Box 1105, Folder 8, Mardirosian, Vahac Rev. Part of the Los Angeles alphabetical case files.

Pastoral Work 1964-2007
Scope and Content Note
Mostly VM's handwritten notes and sermons, as well as some typescript notes on a variety of materials including notebook paper, index cards and the back of ephemera. Most tend to be undated. Majority of sermons labeled with biblical references. Also, typescript draft of Mardirosian's "Our Cultural Heritage and the Gospel," and programs, letters, clippings and periodicals, minutes for Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Theological Education for Hispanic-Americans, and report of Baptist Hispanic Caucus.

Box 1, Folder 1 Southern California Baptist Convention written materials 1964, 1968 April
Scope and Content Note
Brochure. Also, letter received and newsletter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 2</th>
<th>Article by VM, &quot;Testimonio Social&quot; Ca. 1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Letters received by VM 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 4</td>
<td>50th Anniversary of Hispanic Baptists anniversary program 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>Avance Bautista Hispano clippings 1972, 1982-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clipping from 1972 &quot;Avance&quot; and 1980s copies of Hispanic Baptist newsletter &quot;Avance&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 6</td>
<td>American Baptist Seminary of the West commencement program 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 7</td>
<td>National Hispanic Baptist Caucus summary report Ca. 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary report of history, constitution, regulations, functions, organization chart and logo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 8</td>
<td>Clippings and correspondence 1969-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes letters received, programs, press releases and clippings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 9</td>
<td>Clippings 1983, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copy of February 1983 &quot;Buenas Nuevas&quot; monthly newsletter with profile on VM and 1989 &quot;Education Week&quot; excerpt by VM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 10</td>
<td>Sermons 1955, 1966 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 11</td>
<td>Sermons 1963, Ca. 1992-1994 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten drafts of VM's sermons. Some undated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 12</td>
<td>Sermons 1964, 1983, and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM's sermons. Mostly undated. Also, agenda for 1964 Spanish American Baptist Seminary workshop &quot;The Church in a Changing Community.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 13</td>
<td>Sermons Ca. 1980s and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM's sermons. Mostly undated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 14</td>
<td>Sermons Ca. 1983 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM's sermons. Mostly undated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 1</td>
<td>Sermons Ca. 1980s-1990s and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten drafts of VM's sermons. Mostly undated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 2</td>
<td>Sermons Undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM's sermons. Mostly undated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 2, Folder 3  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated.

Box 2, Folder 4  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated.

Box 2, Folder 5  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated.

Box 3, Folder 1  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated.

Box 3, Folder 2  
**Sermons and pamphlet Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten and typescript drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated. Also copies of Southern California Baptist Convention pamphlet.

Box 3, Folder 3  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Mostly undated.

Box 3, Folder 4  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Organized in envelopes with his typescript notations of the sermon’s title and/or biblical references. Some envelopes empty.

Box 3, Folder 5  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Organized in envelopes with his typescript notations of the sermon’s title and/or biblical references. Some envelopes empty.

Box 4, Folder 1  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Organized in envelopes with his typescript notations of the sermon’s title and/or biblical references. Some envelopes empty.

Box 4, Folder 2  
**Sermons Undated**  
Scope and Content Note  
Handwritten drafts of VM’s sermons. Organized in envelopes with his typescript notations of the sermon’s title and/or biblical references. Some envelopes empty.

**East Los Angeles High School Walk Out 1968-1972**  
Scope and Content Note  
Clippings, statements made by VM, memoranda, letters, notes, leaflets, press releases, and drafts. In addition to the 1968 walk out, topics include the Mexican American Education Commission, death of Ruben Salazar, profile of Cesar Chavez, youth leadership and community development project, chapter VM wrote on “Planning for Effective Schools,” 1969 sit-in demonstration, and actions taken by Board of Education.
Box 4, Folder 3  Inter-Religious Goals Committee memoranda and suggestions Ca. 1968 February
Scope and Content Note

Box 4, Folder 4  Copies of flyer for meeting of educational issues committee. 1968, July 23
Box 4, Folder 5  Editorial responses Ca. 1968
Scope and Content Note
Letters written in response to newspaper editorials on East Los Angeles education issue.

Box 4, Folder 6  Publications and writings 1968
Scope and Content Note
Pamphlet, copy of "Con Safos" magazine, flyers and information sheets, contact list, clippings, meeting minutes, letters received, notes, and poems. Includes information on student demands, indicted instructors, a police riot at Roosevelt High School.

Box 4, Folder 7  Walk-out demonstration materials 1967-1969
Scope and Content Note
Press releases, clippings, map of march route from Placita Park to Board of Education, meeting program, fact sheet on Roosevelt High School, letter received, financial report, handwritten notes, statements made by VM to Board of Education.

Box 4, Folder 8  Reprinted profile on Chavez from the New Yorker by Peter Mathiessen. 1969 June
Box 4, Folder 9  Press and publications 1969
Scope and Content Note
Pamphlet, press release, newsletter clippings, flyers, Board of Education member list. Topics include the Mexican American Education Commission and reading scores and programs.

Box 4, Folder 10  Ruben Salazar clippings
Box 4, Folder 11  Writings by VM Ca. 1980s-2005
Scope and Content Note
Typescript chapter by VM on "Planning for Effective Schools" and a 2005 account by VM of a sit-in at the D.A.'s office.

Box 4, Folder 12  Clippings, notes, correspondence, and statements 1968 March 17-April 25
Scope and Content Note
Clippings and handwritten notes about walkout and its aftermath. Also, letters received, VM's statements to Board of Education, meeting minutes of Educational Issue Coordination Committee (EICC), and teacher proposals.

Box 5, Folder 1  Clippings, notes and minutes 1968 May 2 - July 26
Scope and Content Note
Clippings and handwritten notes re: Educational Issues Committee sponsoring a walk through, East L.A. selected for UAW community plan, opponents of the walk-out, integration in schools, indictment of participants. Also EICC minutes and VM statement.

Box 5, Folder 2  Clippings, writings and notes 1968 August 1 - November 22
Scope and Content Note
Clippings, minutes, draft and notes re: Board of Education & Urban Affairs meeting, student demands, indictment of participants, statements by VM, demonstration at Lincoln High School, bilingual education, sit-in at the School Board, interview with VM.
Box 5, Folder 3  **Clippings, minutes and notes 1968 December 17 - 1969 May 9**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Meeting minutes of Educational Issue Coordination Committee (EICC), clippings and notes re: Spanish language programs, creation of citizen units, studies on education, ethnic makeup of Urban Affairs and Housing Committee members, demonstrations.

Box 5, Folder 4  **Clippings, notes and statements 1969 June 1 - 1971 March**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Re: prejudice charges against Lincoln High instructor, School Board meetings and decisions, bilingual education, Mexican American Education Commission, reading programs, reform bill on teacher licensing, report card elimination proposal, integration.

Box 5, Folder 5  **Press on teachers’ attitudes towards Mexican Americans 1972**  
**Hispanic Urban Center Board of Education 1970-1979**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Includes progress reports, program proposals, clippings, leaflets, letters, school visit commentary, fact sheets, L.A. school sample lists and reading scores, press release for VM’s candidacy as school board member (District 5), photographs.

Box 5, Folder 6  **Center open house materials, reports and proposals 1971-1977**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Brochure, reports and proposals, invitation to open house, program honoring VM, letters received, fact sheets. Includes 3-phase plan for the Center.

Box 5, Folder 7  **Media materials and committee meeting documents 1970**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Pamphlets, press releases, clippings about education, Mexican American Education Commission task force memoranda, EICC meeting agenda, copy of "Regeneracion" newsletter, KABC broadcast transcript.

Box 5, Folder 8  **Letters, clippings and address 1971**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Letters of interest, clippings about education, reading scores, address by VM "God's team: Clergy and Laity."

Box 5, Folder 9  **Reading scores, update report, and in-service education proposal 1972**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Clippings about bilingual education and test scores, copies of reading scores, VM’s update report on the Center, proposal for in service education program for teachers.

Box 5, Folder 10  **Reading achievement materials and in-service education project summary 1973**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Reading scores, summary of community project for in-service cultural education, clippings, VM’s reports on reading achievement, program for Baptist church on South McDonnell St.

Box 5, Folder 11  **Awards, experimental course and board of education application 1974**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Materials related to VM’s KNX Newsradio Man of the Year Award, outline of experimental course on minority student education, Mexican American Education Commission progress report, clippings, reading scores, VM’s application to CA state board of education.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Box 5, Folder 12** | **Clippings, reading scores and site visit summaries 1975**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Clippings, letters received, reading evaluation contract with RAND, press release re: KNX Man of the Year Award, reading scores, draft letters from VM re: site visits |
| **Box 6, Folder 1** | **Communications, reports and evaluations 1976**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Educational development committee communications include recommended sample of schools, district reading plan. RAND reports, reading scores, letters received, affirmative action advisory committee agenda, progress reports, sample school lists, flyer. |
| **Box 6, Folder 2** | **Tom Bradley letters, reading plan materials and research 1977**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Letters received, clippings, brochure on course offerings, VM consultant contract, sample school list, reading scores, copy of "Teaching Reading and Language" by Wesley Becker, guidelines for district reading plan, analysis of Rand Reports. |
| **Box 6, Folder 3** | **Assessment materials and resignation 1978**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Chicano Teacher Program materials, clippings, letters received, reading scores, assessment results, consultant contract. Topics include integration, Hispanic teachers, bilingual education. Also VM's resignation. |
| **Box 6, Folder 4** | **School board campaign, folder 1 of 3 1979**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Letters re: VM's move to San Diego, materials regarding VM's candidacy for school board including typescript drafts, handwritten notes, clippings, petition for candidacy, press releases, funding raiser invitation |
| **Box 6, Folder 5** | **School board campaign, folder 2 of 3 1979**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Letters, press releases and broadcasting announcements, clippings, sample ballot, statements, map for fund raising walk, steering committee contact lists, campaign update memorandum re: endorsements, district map, pamphlet |
| **Box 6, Folder 6** | **School board campaign, folder 3 of 3 1979**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Clippings, letters and cards, campaign photographs of VM. |
| **Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) 1971-2004** | **Scope and Content Note**  
| **Box 6, Folder 7** | **Research materials 1971-1989**  
  Scope and Content Note  
  Clippings, newsletters, letters and reading achievement scores dating back to 1971. Most materials primarily from 1980s. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 1</th>
<th>Literature on reading achievement and learning 1972-1982</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Urban Center 1972 evaluation report, ethnic survey, newsletters, clippings and writings, statements, fact sheet for Project Rainbow.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 2</th>
<th>San Diego reading scores 1979-1985</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading score percentile charts and ranking. Also clippings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 3</th>
<th>C.I.E.N. materials 1980-1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures, ethnic surveys, newsletters, superintendent reports, handwritten notes, reading scores, San Diego Board of Education brochure, letters, statement and flyer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 4</th>
<th>Reports and clippings 1980-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures, focus group report, details on drug workshop, agreement with San Diego City Schools, financial information, clippings, bylaws, letters, proposals, flyers and information sheets</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational assessment, evaluation summary, and materials about the Mexican-American Advisory Committee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 6</th>
<th>PIQE organizational materials 1987-1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements and reports, financial reports and budgets, clippings, meeting minutes, fact sheet, announcements, annual report and photograph.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 7</th>
<th>Administration binder 1987-1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters, proposals, funding information, meeting minutes, parents' contact information, charts, handwritten notes, form letters, evaluation reports and annual reports.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 8</th>
<th>Newspaper clippings 1987-2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover PIQE, Hispanic education, VM's involvement and Cesar Chavez.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 9</th>
<th>Informe newsletter 1988 January to 1993 July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of &quot;Informe&quot; newsletter published by PIQE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8, Folder 1</th>
<th>World Vision U.S. Ministry collaboration 1989-1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIQE proposal to WVUS (World Vision U.S.), agreement, fact sheets, grant commitment letters and proposals, organizational chart, clippings, fund raising materials, recommendations and findings, coursework listing, memoranda.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Box 8, Folder 2 | APUS (Association of Parents of University Students) bylaws and registration form 2002 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Box 8, Folder 3 | APUS (Association of Parents of University Students) organizational materials 2002-2003  
Scope and Content Note  
Stationery, copy of student-parent-teacher pact, member directory information, fact sheet, clipping, announcement, activity lists. |
| Box 8, Folder 4 | Universidad newsletter 2001 March - 2003 June  
Scope and Content Note  
Copies of the "Universidad" Spanish language newsletter issued by APUS (Association of Parents of University Students). |
| Box 8, Folder 5 | San Ysidro School District resolution of support 2003  
Scope and Content Note  
Includes resumes and honors for VM |
| Box 8, Folder 6 | Resumes for VM Undated |
| Box 8, Folder 7 | Honors 1988, 1998  
Scope and Content Note  
Phi Delta Kappa program and certificate for recognition of VM. Also, honorary degree of Doctor Humane Letters from trustees of California State University. |