Pat Nordell papers, 1957-2000

Finding aid prepared by Pallavi Sriram in 2013 in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT), with assistance from Jillian Cuellar; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

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Pat Nordell papers, 1957-2000

Title: Pat Nordell papers
Collection number: 2143
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 4.8 linear ft. (6 document boxes, 6 flat boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1957-2000

Abstract: Pat Nordell is a Los Angeles-based lesbian sports coach and photographer. Nordell was a star athlete and popular personality through her high school years and afterwards in amateur and intramural sports in the Midwest. After finishing a teaching degree at the Illinois State Normal University and a bachelors of science at the University of Arizona at Tucson, she made the shift to California in 1960 to start her teaching career. The bulk of this career was spent at Westchester High School where her outstanding record as coach of Varsity Girls Basketball, Girls Softball, Women’s Track and Field and ultimately Men’s Track and Field, gained her considerable recognition and made her one of the first women coaches of men's athletic teams in Los Angeles. As a strong advocate against gender discrimination in sports, Nordell initiated and won a protracted law suit against the Los Angeles Unified School District for equal pay for women coaches. This collection, comprising of comprehensive scrapbooks and photographs, provides a record of the professional public life, feminist advocacy and private life of Pat Nordell.

Language of Materials: Materials are in English.

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

Restrictions on Access
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UCLA Catalog Record ID
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Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Provenance unknown, 2013.
This collection is part of an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW), and the UCLA Library.

Processing Information
Processed by Pallavi Sriram in 2013 in the Center for Primary Research and Training (CFPRT), with assistance from Jillian Cuellar.
The processing of this collection was generously supported by Arcadia.

Biography/History
Patricia Nordell is a Los Angeles based lesbian sports coach and photographer. Nordell was born in May 1932 and raised in Wheaton, Illinois. As is evidenced in the collection, she was a star athlete and popular personality through her high school years at Wheaton Community High School, from which she graduated in 1950. Nordell stayed in the Midwest after high school, playing amateur and intramural sports in Wheaton and Chicago, excelling in a number of sports including basketball, volleyball, baseball and bowling. Nordell completed a teaching degree at the Illinois State Normal University from September 1956 to June 1957. She continued her college education at the University of Arizona at Tucson from which she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1960. Both in Illinois and Arizona, Nordell continued her engagement with sports, playing namely intramural volleyball and basketball.

Nordell entered her first teaching position almost immediately upon completion of her undergraduate degree. She made the shift to California in 1960 to start her teaching career at Coachella Valley Union High in Southern California where she taught Physical Education for three years. By 1972, she had moved to Los Angeles and began teaching at Westchester High School.
School (WHS), where she continued for the remaining 16 years of her career. Nordell coached Varsity Girls Basketball, Girls Softball and Women’s Track and Field from 1973 onwards, leading the basketball team to their first-ever California State championship win a few years later. In 1980, she received recognition from both the California Coaches Association and the National High School Athletic Coaches Association as Track & Field ‘Coach of the Year’ for her outstanding record at WHS: a 45-1 dual meet record including 6 Western league titles, 2 LA city titles (1977 and 1979) and the State championship (1979). The same year, Nordell started coaching Men’s Track and Field at WHS, making her one of the first women coaches of men’s athletic teams in Los Angeles.

Perhaps due to her own experience playing women’s sports in school, college and otherwise, Nordell was highly invested in combating gender discrimination in sports; she fought against the notion that girls shouldn’t play sports considered to be “unfeminine” and was an advocate for women teachers and coaches, whom she felt were trivialized. She publically spoke out against gender bias in pay scales and most importantly, initiated a law suit in the 1970’s against the Los Angeles Unified School District for equal pay for women coaches. She ultimately won the suit in the late 1980’s.

Scope and Content
This collection gives a view of both the professional public life and private life of LA-based lesbian sports coach, Pat Nordell. The collection is comprised of scrapbooks and photographs. The scrapbooks provide a comprehensive record of Nordell’s long sports, teaching and coaching career, while the photographs provide a view into Nordell’s personal life especially after her retirement in 1988 – relationships, love for outdoor activity, and her involvement in gay and lesbian communities in Southern California. Together, these materials provide a multi-dimensional view of Pat Nordell’s life and career.

Organization and Arrangement
Collection is arranged into two series:

Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1952-1987

Series are arranged chronologically.

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

Subjects
Nordell, Pat --Archives.
Women coaches (Athletics) --California --Archival resources.
Lesbian activists --California --Archival resources.

Genres and Forms of Material
photographs.
scrapbooks.

Scope and Content
This series contains scrapbooks created by Pat Nordell, documenting her public life. They cover the length of her career as a Physical Education teacher and celebrated Track and Basketball coach at Westchester High School in Los Angeles. These comprehensive scrapbooks are systematically arranged and include team rosters, season score and place records, press clippings, captioned photographs, and notes from students. They also document some of Nordell’s earlier life, from her years after high school playing amateur sports in Illinois, to her college years at Illinois State Normal University, University of Illinois, and University of Arizona at Tucson as well as her early teaching career at Coachella Valley Union High School in Coachella, California. One book is devoted entirely to her Coach of the Year Award and her fight for equal pay for women teachers, for which she engaged in a protracted law suit against LAUSD and eventually won.

Box 1, Folder 1
High School Student Honors Press Clipping. 1950.

Box 1

Box 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 3</td>
<td>Women's Track (Westchester Highschool). 1980.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 1</td>
<td>Speaking out against gender discrimination- Press clippings. 1979-1981.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 6</td>
<td>Women's, Varsity Mens, Junior Varsity Mens Track (Westchester Highschool). 1981-1982.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 6</td>
<td>Women's, Varsity Mens, Junior Varsity Mens Track (Westchester Highschool). 1988.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Scope and Content

This series contains Nordell’s personal photographs. It documents Nordell’s private life in detail starting with the beginning of her first long-term relationship and ending with her move to Arizona 10 years after her retirement. It includes holiday and vacation photos of Nordell with her family and friends. Photos also document activities and events in which Nordell regularly participated or was affiliated with including Oktoberfest celebrations, Dinah Shore Weekend, the Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU), Camp Shalom in the Santa Monica Mountains, and Calzona. Each file contains a catalogue card written by Nordell which provides details on the photographs in that file including dates, events, and personal notes.

Box 7, Folder 1 | Beginning of Relationship with partner Lee Cornell, Family Holidays. 1968-1972. |
| Box 7, Folder 4 | Westchester High School Wins State Championships, etc. |
| Box 7, Folder 5 | Trip to Pinon Pines, Friends' Birthdays. etc. 1979-1980. |
| Box 8, Folder 1 | Running Springs (Friends' cabin). 1982. |
| Box 8, Folder 2 | Holidays, Partner (Lee)'s first communion. 1982. |
| Box 8, Folder 3 | Family Holidays, Summer Travel. 1983. |
| Box 8, Folder 4 | Rosebowl, Superbowl, Holidays. 1984. |
| Box 8, Folder 5 | New Motor Home, Holidays. 1984. |
| Box 8, Folder 6 | Friends' Birthdays, Holidays. 1985. |
| Box 8, Folder 7 | Calzona #1. 1985. |
| Box 8, Folder 8 | Long Vacation to Oregon. 1985. |
| Box 8, Folder 9 | Open House, Family Holidays. 1985. |
| Box 8, Folder 10 | Calzona #2, first vacation alone (partner, Lee Cornell died March 1986). 1986. |
| Box 8, Folder 11 | Oktoberfest #10, camping. 1986. |
| Box 8, Folder 12 | Camping. Weekend trip in Desert. 1987. |
| Box 8, Folder 13 | Calzona #3, fishing (Bend 100 Trails). 1987. |
| Box 9, Folder 1 | Oktoberfest#11 (last), Holidays. 1987-1988. |
| Box 9, Folder 3 | Calzona #4, Summer Vacation Travel. 1988. |
| Box 9, Folder 4 | Summer Vacation (contd), Girl Scout Reunion, etc. 1988. |
| Box 9, Folder 6 | Calzona #5. 1989. |
| Box 9, Folder 7 | Friends' Retirement Parties, garage sale, etc. 1989. |
| Box 9, Folder 8 | Vacation Travel with friend June Palmer, other travel. 1989. |
| Box 9, Folder 10 | Christmas Season. 1989-1990. |
| Box 9, Folder 11 | Camping at Lake Elsinore, Road trip. 1990. |
| Box 9, Folder 12 | Easter Season. 1990. |
| Box 9, Folder 13 | Calzona #6. 1990. |
Box 9, Folder 14  
Camp Shalom, Weekend Trip, Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) 
Camp. 1990.

Box 9, Folder 15  
LA Field Hockey Association 65th Yr Reunion, etc. 1990.

Box 9, Folder 16  
Holidays with Friends. 1990.

Box 10, Folder 1  
Dinah Shore Weekend, Friends' Commitment Ceremony, etc. 1991.

Box 10, Folder 2  
Calzona #7, Camp Shalom. 1991.

Box 10, Folder 3  

Box 10, Folder 4  
Summer vacation (contd), Partner (Micky)'s photos from before relationship. 1991.

Box 10, Folder 5  
First Holiday season with new partner, Micky. 1991.

Box 10, Folder 6  
Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) Lesbian Rights Awards 
Banquet, etc. 1992.

Box 10, Folder 7  
Calzona #8 (last), 60th Birthday, etc. 1992.

Box 10, Folder 8  

Box 10, Folder 9  

Box 10, Folder 10  
Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) Lesbian Rights Award 

Box 10, Folder 11  

Box 10, Folder 12  

Box 11, Folder 1  

Box 11, Folder 2  
Birthdays, Friends' Anniversaries, etc. 1994.

Box 11, Folder 3  

Box 11, Folder 4  
New Years at the Pueblo (RV Women's Resort), Dinah Shore Weekend, etc.  

Box 11, Folder 5  
Summer Vacation back to Midwest. 1995.

Box 11, Folder 6  

Box 11, Folder 7  
Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) 45th Anniversary, other 
anniversaries, etc. 1995.

Box 11, Folder 8  
Christmas Season, Gay Night at Disneyland, etc. 1995-1996.

Box 11, Folder 9  
Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) Events, etc. 1996.

Box 11, Folder 10  
Friends' Parties. 1996.

Box 12, Folder 1  

Box 12, Folder 2  

Box 12, Folder 3  

Box 12, Folder 4  
Going Away Party, etc. 1998.

Box 12, Folder 5  

Box 12, Folder 6  

Box 12, Folder 7  

Box 12, Folder 8  

Box 12, Folder 9  
Easter Season, Yosemite Trip. 2000.