Descriptive Summary

Languages: English

Contributing Institution: Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla 92093-0175

Title: Roberto Martinez Papers

Identifier/Call Number: MSS 0652

Physical Description: 3 Linear feet (8 archives boxes)

Date (inclusive): 1969-2009

Abstract: Papers of Roberto Martinez, Chicano rights activist, political organizer, and director of the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) San Diego chapter from 1983 to 2001. The collection documents Martinez's career as an activist, locally in San Diego, as well as on a national level. The majority of the papers are Martinez's subject files on immigration and border issues. The papers also contain Martinez's writings and speeches, and documents relating to his work with AFSC and the Coalition for Law and Justice. Collection contains documents in both Spanish and English.

Biography

Roberto Martinez was born on January 21, 1937, in San Diego, California. He attended San Diego High School and earned a commercial art degree at San Diego City College.

His first position as an activist was with the Roman Catholic Diocese, then later with the Chicano Federation. In 1983 he was chosen to head the U.S.-Mexico Border Program for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker human rights organization. He remained with the AFSC as the San Diego program's director for 18 years until his retirement in 2001.

In the mid-1990s, Martinez collaborated with other organizations to fight Operation Gatekeeper, the federal program that forced illegal immigrant traffic into dangerous mountain and desert terrains that resulted in hundreds of migrant deaths each year. In 2000, Martinez helped start the Ecumenical Migrant Outreach Project after five Latino men were beaten by San Diego high school students. Throughout his career, he fought law enforcement abuses against the Latino and immigrant communities by documenting alleged abuses, filing complaints, and serving on committees like the Border Patrol Civilian Accountability Committee.

Martinez was the recipient of many local, national and international honors, including the Human Rights Watch Award in 1992, the first awarded to a U.S. citizen, and the Ohtli Award, one of Mexico's highest honors.

Martinez died in 2009.

Related Materials


Scope and Content of Collection

The Roberto Martinez Papers include correspondence with other human rights activists, notes and documents relating to speeches he gave and events he attended, and subject files containing clippings, notes, and correspondence on topics like farm workers, immigration, law enforcement abuses, human rights at the U.S./Mexico border, militarization, Operation Gatekeeper, and other border-related issues.

The papers are arranged in two series: 1) PERSONAL FILES and 2) SUBJECT FILES.

SERIES 1: PERSONAL FILES

The PERSONAL FILES series is arranged alphabetically by file title and contains correspondence, documents on Martinez's professional activities, and biographical information.

Correspondence is from various members of the immigrant rights community about community news, planned events, and opportunities for collaboration. There is also a series of letters Martinez wrote to San Diego Police Department (SDPD) Chief David Bejarano addressing police violence, including Martinez's letter of resignation from the SDPD Latino Advisory Committee. Also included are death threats written to Martinez from various white supremacist groups.

Documents relating to Martinez's work with the AFSC and the Coalition for Law and Justice include letters requesting information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, newspaper clippings, and some correspondence. Also included are Martinez's typed speeches, flyers advertising events and event programs, and several testonies he gave to government subcommittees and commissions on immigration and border issues.
Biographical information includes the 1992 Human Rights Watch Award and two folders of newspaper clippings about or featuring Martinez.

SERIES 2: SUBJECT FILES

The SUBJECT FILES series is the bulk of the collection and contains mostly newspaper clippings, handwritten notes, correspondence, and reports. The series is arranged alphabetically using Martinez's own subject headings. There are sizable files on alleged abuses by the U.S. Border Patrol, the San Diego and National City police departments, and the San Diego Sheriff's Department, most dating from the 1980s. Testimonies and police and coroner reports from these files have been restricted.

The series also contains select issues from smaller human and civil rights publications and newsletters including Crossroads, Voces Unidas, Klan Watch Intelligence Report, and Migrantes.

Restrictions

Materials located in box 3, folder 8; box 6, folder 7; and box 7, folder 3 are restricted until the year 2085 according to federal and state laws.

Publication Rights

Publication rights are held by the creator of the collection.

Acquisition Information

Acquired 2009.

Preferred Citation

Roberto Martinez Papers, MSS 652. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Martinez, Roberto, 1937-2009 -- Archives
American Friends Service Committee. Mexico-U.S. Border Program -- Archives
Chicano Federation of San Diego County

PERSONAL FILES

Box 1, Folder 1-3  American Friends Service Committee 1985-2006
Box 1, Folder 4  Biographical profile
Box 1, Folder 5  Coalition for Law and Justice 1984-2002
Box 1, Folder 6-7  Conferences and events 1985-2004
Correspondence
Box 1, Folder 8  1989-2002
Box 1, Folder 9  2003-2006
Box 1, Folder 10  Death threats
Box 1, Folder 11  Human Rights Watch Award December 1992
Box 1, Folder 12  Loose handwritten notes undated
Box 1, Folder 13  Memorial service program 2009
Box 2, Folder 1-2  Newspaper clippings 1987-2006
Box 2, Folder 3  Speeches and presentations 1991-2004
Box 2, Folder 4-5  Testimonies 1986-2002
Box 2, Folder 6  Writings by Roberto Martinez 1985-1997

SUBJECT FILES

Box 2, Folder 7  American Civil Liberties Union 1993-2005
Box 2, Folder 8-11  Border Patrol 1979-2006
Box 3, Folder 1  Border Patrol Civilian Accountability Committee 1987-2004
Box 3, Folder 2  Border Pilgrimage 1990-2003
Box 3, Folder 3  Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego (formerly International Visitors Council) 1998-2005
Box 3, Folder 4  Civilian border patrols 2002-2006
Box 3, Folder 5  Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) 2002-2004
Box 3, Folder 6  Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) 2000-2003
Box 3, Folder 7  Hate crimes 1983-2003
Box 3, Folder 8  Hate crimes 1993

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Box 3, Folder 9  High speed vehicle pursuits 1982-2006
Box 3, Folder 10  Human rights 1990-2004
Box 4, Folder 1-2  Human rights 1990-2005
Box 4, Folder 3  Human Rights Watch 1992-1994
Box 4, Folder 4  Illegal drugs 1985-2001
Box 4, Folder 5  Immigrant raids 1982-2004
Box 4, Folder 6-10  Immigrant rights 1983-2007
Box 5, Folder 1  Immigrant rights organizations 1995-2006
Box 5, Folder 2  Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) 1992-2005
Box 5, Folder 3  Immigration and the Roman Catholic Church 1976-2005
Box 5, Folder 4-5  Immigration 1982-2006
Box 5, Folder 6  Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights 2002-2003
Box 5, Folder 7  Latino community 1997-2005
Box 5, Folder 8-9  Law enforcement abuses 1980-2007
Box 6, Folder 1  Mexico 1983-2006
Box 6, Folder 2  Migrant deaths 1994-2005
Box 6, Folder 3  Migrant workers 1983-2005
Box 6, Folder 4  Mojados: Through the Night (Documentary, released 2004) 2002
Box 6, Folder 5-6  National City Police Department 1982-1987
Box 6, Folder 7  National City Police Department 1982-2005

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Box 6, Folder 8  Native Americans 1969-2006
Box 6, Folder 9  Patriot Act 2001-2004
Box 6, Folder 10  Press conferences 1983-2005
Box 6, Folder 11  Proposition 187 (California) 1995-2004
Box 6, Folder 12  Rallies, demonstrations, and protests 1999-2005
Box 7, Folder 1-2  San Diego Police Department 1978-2004
Box 7, Folder 3  San Diego Police Department 2002

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Box 7, Folder 4  San Diego Sheriff's Department 1985-2006
Box 7, Folder 5  Taser deaths 1987-2006
Box 7, Folder 6  United States House of Representatives bills
Box 7, Folder 7  H.R. 418 (REAL ID) 2005
Box 7, Folder 8  H.R. 2119 and H.R. 3927 1993-2001
Box 7, Folder 9-13  H.R. 3981 (Oversight Bill) 2000
Box 7, Folder 14  United States-Mexico border 1983-2007
Box 7, Folder 15  Voting issues 1997-2004
Box 8, Folder 1-2  Miscellaneous journals 1989-2006
Box 8, Folder 3  Miscellaneous newsletters 1985-2002