
A Woman's Place Bookstore records

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2020

Descriptive Summary

Title: A Woman's Place Bookstore records

Dates: 1971-1983

Collection Number: 1999-07

Creator/Collector:

Extent: .4 linear feet (1 box)

Repository: GLBT Historical Society

San Francisco, California 94103

Abstract: This collection contains primarily legal and business records kept by Darlene Pagano, one of the locked-out collective members of A Woman's Place Bookstore. It includes legal documents, meeting minutes, and business correspondence, ephemera, and news clippings about the bookstore and the much-publicized 1982 lockout.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research. Funding for processing this collection was provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

A Woman's Place Bookstore records. GLBT Historical Society

Biography/Administrative History

I.C.I-A Woman's Place Bookstore began as the brainchild of Carol Wilson and Alice Molloy, who intended to form a collective of women to run a feminist bookstore in Oakland, California. (I.C.I. stands for Information Center Incorporate, indicating the store's goal of serving as a feminist community center.) Most of the original collective members had been friends for several years, and had also worked together on a feminist newspaper. The store first opened its doors on January 18, 1972, and its original collective members included Alice Molloy, Carol Wilson, Natalie Lando, Nancy Cook, Gretchen Milne, Rosalie, Starr, and Marianne Perron. The bookstore operated cooperatively, partly based upon anarchist principles. Most notable in the store's history is an infamous lockout that took place in 1982, the result of conflicts begun in 1981, most importantly allegations of racism. By this time, the collective included Carol Wilson, Natalie Lando, Darlene Pagano, Jesse Meredith, Keiko Kubo, and Elizabeth Summers. Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services carried out arbitration between plaintiffs Keiko, Darlene, Jesse, and Elizabeth, and defendants Natalie, Carol, and Alice. Darlene Pagano issued a statement describing the conflict (see folder #5). She stated that the greatest conflict among the women in the collective pertained to their "differing visions of feminism." This is evident from the disputes transcribed in the collective's minutes. In particular, collective members disagreed strongly on a store events policy, and the conflicts turned into racial ones. As the two women of color in the collective, Keiko and Elizabeth felt that the other women were not listening to them and considering their life experiences with racism. Alongside other disagreements in the collective, the racial tension grew to the point that Carol, Alice, and Natalie sided against the other women and locked them out of the store on September 12, 1982. Strong community and media involvement followed the lockout, with many in support of the plaintiffs who felt that their rights and agreements with the defendants had been violated. These women held several community benefits to support their cause, and arbitration and litigation (with Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts-BALA) began soon after. On September 15, 1982, the store was suspiciously burglarized and its business records stolen, which the Plaintiffs attorney later returned. The store reopened under the management of Alice Molloy on September 20, 1982. Finally, legal records in the collection chronicle the arbitration and court decisions concerning the dispute between the collective members. On February 22, 1983, both parties submitted the Arbitration Agreement, the provisions of which required the collective to become incorporated. In October of that year, Molloy and Wilson opened a new feminist bookstore of their own in Berkeley called Mama Bears.

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection contains primarily legal and business records kept by Darlene Pagano, one of the locked-out collective members of A Woman's Place Bookstore. It includes legal documents, meeting minutes, and business correspondence, ephemera, and news clippings about the bookstore and the much-publicized 1982 lockout. GSSO Linked Terms:

http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/GSSO_000381; http://purl.obolibrary.org/obo/GSSO_002229

Indexing Terms

Lesbians

Feminism

[A Woman's Place Container List](#)
