

Title: Myra Williams Papers

Collection Number: 2023-97

Repository: Bay Area Lesbian Archives (BALA),

P.O. Box 18684, Oakland, CA 94619-0684

balezarchives@gmail.com

bayarealesbianarchives.org

CONTAINER CONTENTS BY SERIES AND LOCATION

Series 1: General

Scope and Content: Carton 1, Folders 1/1-1/16

Includes birth and death certificates for Myra Williams, biographical timelines of Myra's life, a photograph of her birth parents, information about her birth mother, datebooks and address books. It also contains sensitive material pertaining to sexual abuse targeting Myra from various family members.

Carton 1, Folder 1	Birth and Death Certificates
Carton 1, Folder 2	Biographical Timelines
Carton 1, Folder 3	Birth Parents
Carton 1, Folder 4	Sensitive Childhood sexual, emotional and physical abuse
Carton 1, Folder 5	Sexual Abuse / Family Letters
Carton 1, Folder 6	Child Abuse Presentation, April 7, 1992
Carton 1, Folder 7	Address Books
Carton 1, Folder 8	Datebooks 1970s
Carton 1, Folder 9	Datebooks I, 1980s

Carton 1, Folder 10	Datebooks II, 1980s
Carton 1, Folder 11	Datebook 1983
Carton 1, Folder 12	Datebook 1984
Carton 1, Folder 13	Calendar 1990
Carton 1, Folder 14	Datebook, Daily Log 2005-2007
Carton 1, Folder 15	Friends of Myra 2012-2017
Carton 1, Folder 16	Memorials of Friends 1992-2010

Series 2: Education

Scope and Content: Carton 1, Folders 1/17-1/31

Contains transcripts from 1953 through graduate school at the University of California Berkeley. Also contains numerous trainings and workshops towards skills enhancement and personal growth. Included are four, Folder folders pertaining to the work she did with Byron Katie in 2008.

Carton 1, Folder 17	School transcripts 1953-72
Carton 1, Folder 18	Los Angeles City College 1956-65
Carton 1, Folder 19	Los Angeles University Yearbook 1969 B.A.
Carton 1, Folder 20	University of California, Berkeley, graduate school 1965-69
Carton 1, Folder 21	Continuing Education 1996
Carton 1, Folder 22	Intensive Journal Dec. 1977 – Nov. 1978
Carton 1, Folder 23	Meditation Course 1977-78
Carton 1, Folder 24	National Selling Manual 2000

Carton 1, Folder 25	The “Possibility of Woman” 2000
Carton 1, Folder 26	Hoffman Quadrinity Process
Carton 1, Folder 27	Alexander Technique 2007
Carton 1, Folder 28	Byron Katie, Program 2008
Carton 1, Folder 29	Byron Katie, The Work 2008
Carton 1, Folder 30	Byron Katie, Your Story 2008
Carton 1, Folder 31	Byron Katie, Worksheets 2008

Series 3: Employment

Scope and Content: Carton 1, Folders 1/32-1/37; Carton 2, Folders 2/1-2/5

Includes documents regarding teaching English at Cabrillo College in California, a gardening business with her work journal, and running her own business, Wonder Woman Plumbing, 1982-2011. In addition, there are resumes, job applications and achievement awards. This collection alludes to but does not include documents pertaining to the myriad of low-paying jobs Myra had throughout her life.

Carton 1, Folder 32	Teaching at Cabrillo College 1972
Carton 1, Folder 33	Work Permit 1979
Carton 1, Folder 34	Urban Ecology Farms 1979-80
Carton 1, Folder 35	Garden Journal 1981
Carton 1, Folder 36	Work Notes 1982
Carton 1, Folder 37	Job Applications
Carton 2, Folder 1	Resume 1981-89
Carton 2, Folder 2	Work Awards
Carton 2, Folder 3	Wonder Woman Plumbing I 1982-2011

Carton 2, Folder 4	Wonder Woman Plumbing II 1982-2011
Carton 2, Folder 5	Diary & Business Feb. 2001, Jun. 2003, and 2005, 2010

Series 4: Journaling

Scope and Content: Carton 2, Folders 2/6-2/17

Subseries 4.1: Journals

Scope and Content: Carton 2, Folders 2/6-2/10

Myra Williams was a consummate journal writer, as evidenced by the numerous journals in this collection, dating from 1952 when she was twelve, until 2010. Notable is the red leatherette diary from 1952. It has the familiar clasp and lock, minus the key. This item is quite frail, with many detached pages. It is inserted into a clear, acid-free pouch for preservation purposes.

Carton 2, Folder 6	Diary, 1952
Carton 2, Folder 7	Journals, 1970s
Carton 2, Folder 8	Journals, 1983 & through 1990s
Carton 2, Folder 9	Notes by Topic, 1984-95
Carton 2, Folder 10	Journals, 2000-2007, 2010

Subseries 4.2: Journal Entries and Notes

Scope and Content: Carton 2, Folders 2/11-2/17

Includes numerous notebooks, tablets, and logs with Myra's thoughts, to-do lists, and reminders between the years 1980-2016.

Carton 2, Folder 11	Journal Entries & Notes, 1980-81
Carton 2, Folder 12	Journal Entries & Notes, 1987-2002
Carton 2, Folder 13	Journal Entries & Notes, 1990-2012
Carton 2, Folder 14	Daily Log, 2007-2009
Carton 2, Folder 15	Journal Entries & Notes, 2010
Carton 2, Folder 16	Journal Entries & Notes, 2011
Carton 2, Folder 17	Journal Entries & Notes, 2013-16

Series 5: Travel

Scope and Content: Carton 2, Folders 2/18-2/20

Myra loved travel, using her RV for road trips and work. She enjoyed a number of trips abroad, including six months in Amsterdam. This collection includes passports, travel documents, an itinerary for Venezuela, items pertaining to her trip to Mexico including post cards, as well as travel journals.

Carton 2, Folder 18 Passports

Carton 2, Folder 19 Brochures and Receipts

Carton 2, Folder 20 Travel Journals

Series 6: Correspondence

Scope and Content: Carton 2, Folders 2/21-2/30; Carton 3, Folders 3/1-3/3

This series offers many letters to and from Myra to family and friends, including quite a few from her stepmother, Ethel White. There are numerous greeting cards for special occasions, and to and from Myra from lovers and partners. Folder 2/21 are a few notable examples.

Carton 2, Folder 21 Notable

Carton 2, Folder 22 Letters from Myra to family

Carton 2, Folder 23 Letters to Myra from stepmother Ethel White

Carton 2, Folder 24 Letters from Friends, 1971-82

Carton 2, Folder 25 With Hogie Wyckoff, 1973

Carton 2, Folder 26 From Mary Gusty Winds, 1976-78 & 1980-81

Carton 2, Folder 27 Greeting Cards, 1978

Carton 2, Folder 28 From MeKelia Drake, 1982-86

Carton 2, Folder 29 Cards from Friends, 1984-2015

Carton 2, Folder 30 With Nancy Manahan, 1988-2013

Carton 3, Folder 1 Cards from Friends, 1990s & 2000s

Carton 3, Folder 2 Housing, 2013

Carton 3, Folder 3 Miscellaneous

Series 7: Affiliations

Scope and Content: Carton 3, Folders 3/4-3/14

Myra was an activist, involved in political, social, and service groups. This collection includes materials reflecting her commitment to diverse communities: African American, elder lesbian, and political groups. See Carton 3/13 for an Oakland Tribune Article from 1/19/2003 quoting Myra as an anti-war activist. One organization with an acronym WOFF changed its name when members aged from “Women Over Forty and their Friends” to “Women Over Fifty and their Friends,” same acronym. Carton 3/4 contains a document describing the work of the “Boston University Black Women’s Health Study” in which Myra participated. Also in this series are several folders showing her participation in the Gay Games over several years. She was an athlete. See Series 10 for photographs from these Games, and Carton 3 Rear for her trophies and medals.

Carton 3, Folder 4 Boston University Black Women’s Health Study, 1995-2015

Carton 3, Folder 5 Social Groups, 1994

Carton 3, Folder 6 Business Cards

Carton 3, Folder 7 Certificates of Achievement, 1990/1994

Carton 3, Folder 8 Gay Games 7, Chicago 2006

Carton 3, Folder 9 African American 40 Plus Meeting Notes, 2000-2016

Carton 3, Folder 10 OLOC (“Old Lesbians Organizing for Change”) Articles

Carton 3, Folder 11 WOFF (“Women Over Fifty and Friends”) Events, Group, Politics 1969-2016

**Carton 3, Folder 12 WOFF (“Women Over Fifty and Friends”)
Notes, 2012, Jan. 2013-Apr. 2013, 2016**

Carton 3, Folder 13 Anti-war Articles/Pamphlet

Carton 3, Folder 14 Lavender Seniors

Series 8: Financial Documents

Scope and Content: Carton 3, Folders 3/15-3/21

Includes numerous handwritten notes, spread- and ledger-sheets, bank records, car loan records, and bankruptcy documents.

Carton 3, Folder 15 Unknown Dates

Carton 3, Folder 16 1971-78

Carton 3, Folder 17 1979-81

Carton 3, Folder 18 Gold Investment 2006-2009

Carton 3, Folder 19 Bankruptcy 2001, 2011

Carton 3, Folder 20 Social Security Statement 1993, 2012

Carton 3, Folder 21 2016-2021

Series 9: Dementia Years

Scope and Content: Carton 3, Folders 3/22-3/32

In 2012 Myra Williams was diagnosed with dementia, and a care team was inaugurated, calling themselves “Circle of Friends.” This series reveals the challenges and issues Myra faced, and how her caregivers coped with them: medical and financial, necessary housing changes, and

disputes. They set up communication channels between themselves and Myra, and had numerous meetings to discuss problems and distribute tasks on Myra's behalf. They also made sure Myra had fun, holding parties and including laughter in her life.

Carton 3, Folder 22 Timeline

Carton 3, Folder 23 Finance / Medical Records 2013

Carton 3, Folder 24 Advance Health Directive 2015

Carton 3, Folder 25 Caregivers Circle – Photos and Names

Carton 3, Folder 26 Caregivers Circle – Meetings I 2014-16

Carton 3, Folder 27 Caregivers Circle – Meetings II 2013-17

Carton 3, Folder 28 Male Harassment 2015

Carton 3, Folder 29 Dispute with Terry 2014-15

Carton 3, Folder 30 Correspondence between Caregivers

Carton 3, Folder 31 Housing Issues

Carton 3, Folder 32 Resources

Series 10: Photographs

Scope and Content: Carton 3, Folders 3/33-3/45

This collection includes a considerable photographic story of Myra's life, as well as photos from her father's family from the 1920s onward. A selection of these photographs has been retained in this series. Notable in Carton 3/37 is an 8x10 pencil drawing of Myra by artist Catherine Zhang.

Carton 3, Folder 33 Earl White (father) Family and Friends

Carton 3, Folder 34 Birth Mother and Caretaker 1937-41

Carton 3, Folder 35 1950s-60s

Carton 3, Folder 36 Graduations

Carton 3, Folder 37 1970s

Carton 3, Folder 38 Husbands 1 and 2

Carton 3, Folder 39 1980s

Carton 3, Folder 40 1990s

Carton 3, Folder 41 Gay Games 1994-2006

Carton 3, Folder 42 Travel 2003-2005

Carton 3, Folder 43 2001-2011

Carton 3, Folder 44 Dementia Caregivers

Carton 3, Folder 45 Unidentified

Series 11: Sports Trophies

Scope and Content:

Includes trophies, ribbons and awards from Gay Games. Of notable interest is the dramatic trophy 6.5" x 6.5" pink triangle on black base.

Carton 3, Rear Trophy. 9.5" high. Depicts female figure with racquetball racket. Inscribed "M.S.A.C Winter League Intermediate I Div. 86 Myra Williams 1st Place"

Carton 3, Rear Participant Medal, bronze colored, with ribbon. Gay Games 1994. Round, diameter 2-3/8". On one side is a 5-pointed star with "Unity '94" in the center. Around circumference is "Gay Games IV New

York City June 1994". On back is Olympic-style flame over triangular base, with 3 interlocking circles.

Carton 3, Rear Silver Colored Medal with Ribbon mounted on 8.5" x 11" cardboard backing, enclosed with protective foam wrapping. Round, 1994 Gay Games with the words "Myra Williams" and "Racquetball." Backing has additional metallic label. Use care on opening, the foam protective sheet is partially glued to the award.

Carton 3, Rear Bas-relief plaque 6.5" x 6.5" with prominent pink lucite triangle on glossy black base. Base is labeled "MYRA WILIAMS | Silver Medalist – Racquetball | Gay Games '94 | A.A.L. 40 Plus Salutes You"

Carton 3, Rear Bronze Colored Medal with Ribbon. Round, diameter 2". One side depicts Olympic style flame and triangle, and 3 interlocking rings. Has words "Gay Games Amsterdam 1998."

Carton 3, Rear Dark Bronze Colored Medal with Ribbon. Round, diameter 2-5/8". One side has words "Gay Games VII Chicago 2006" and 3 interlocking rings. Also "Personal Best."