



CLARK P. POLAK PAPERS

Coll2008-028

Contact Information

One National Gay & Lesbian Archives
909 West Adams Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90007
Phone: (213) 741-0094
Fax: (213) 741-0220
E-mail: askone@onearchives.org

Processed by

Loni Shibuyama

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Descriptive Summary

Title

Clark P. Polak Papers

Creator

Polak, Clark P., 1937-1980

Extent

Number of containers: 1 archive carton
Linear feet: 0.2 linear foot

Date

1964 - 1980

Repository

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Abstract

Correspondence, legal papers, notes, printed ephemera and other material from activist and businessman Clark P. Polak. Polak was an influential activist in the Philadelphia gay community throughout the 1960s, who in 1963 became president of the homophile organization, Janus Society. He also created, published and edited the Society's widely-circulated magazine, *Drum*. By 1970, Polak relocated to Los Angeles, where he became a real estate investor and art collector. In addition, he continued to be an activist in the gay movement and helped to establish the Stonewall Democratic Club and the Gay Rights Chapter of the ACLU.



Administrative Information

Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Clark P. Polak Papers, Coll2008-028, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Indexing Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms:

- ACLU of Southern California Lesbian & Gay Rights Chapter
- Gay activists
- Gay liberation movement—Pennsylvania—Philadelphia
- Gay liberation movement—California—Los Angeles
- Gays—California—History
- Gays—Pennsylvania—History
- Janus Society
- Janus Society of America
- Janus Society of Delaware Valley
- Polak, Clark P., 1937-1980
- Stonewall Democratic Club

Related Material

Janus Society Records, Coll2008-027, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California



Acquisitions Information

Donor and date of acquisition unknown.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Loni Shibuyama, June 6, 2008.

Biography

Born on October 15, 1937, Clark Phillip Polak grew up in a Jewish middle-class family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After dropping out of Pennsylvania State University, Polak became a businessman and owner of Frankford Personnel and Northeast Advertising Service.

An active and outspoken member of the Philadelphia gay community, Polak joined the homophile group, Janus Society, in 1962, and was elected the organization's president in 1963. As Janus Society's president, he was largely responsible for building the Society's reputation as more politically aggressive, publicly visible and sexually liberated than other homophile groups of that period. In addition, he created, published and edited the Society's monthly magazine, *Drum*, one of the most widely circulated LGBT magazines in the 1960s.

Outside of the Janus Society, Polak continued to own publishing and book service businesses, which produced and distributed pornographic materials. Because of his businesses and his contentious personality, Polak often had confrontations with local law enforcement and subsequently moved to California after being arrested on federal obscenity charges in 1969. He relocated to Los Angeles where he became a real estate investor and art collector, and he continued to be activist in the gay community. In Southern California, he helped to establish the Stonewall Democratic Club and the Gay Rights Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

By the late 1970s, Polak developed problems with hustlers, drugs and money. He committed suicide in September 1980.

Source: Stein, Marc. "Polak, Clark." *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America*. 3 vols. Marc Stein, Ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons: Thomson Gale, 2003. 388-389.

Scope and Content

This collection comprises correspondence, legal papers, notes, printed ephemera and other material created or collected by businessman and gay activist Clark P. Polak. The majority of the material dates in the 1970s and documents his activities in Los Angeles and its gay community, such as his participation in the Stonewall Democratic Club and the legal committee of the Gay Rights Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. Also included are legal papers from his real estate investments and miscellaneous correspondence.

Container List

Box Folder

1	1	ACLU Gay Rights Chapter. 1976 - 1977
1	2	ACLU Gay Rights Chapter Legal Committee. 1976
1	3	Correspondence. 1964 - 1980
1	4	Handwritten Notes. Undated
1	5	Legal Papers - Real Estate. 1976 - 1977
1	6	Stonewall Democratic Club & Gay Caucus Flyers. 1977
1	7	Stonewall Democratic Club Correspondence. 1977
1	8	Miscellaneous. 1976 - 1979