

**Finding aid of the Morris
Kight Papers and Photographs
Coll2010.008**

Finding aid prepared by Michael C. Oliveira

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Summary Information

Repository	ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives
Title	Morris Kight papers and photographs
Dates	circa 1920-2003
Extent	27.5 Linear feet 13 records boxes, 1 shoe box, 3 flat boxes, 8 clamshell photograph binders
Language	English
Abstract	The collection, 1920-2003, consists of photographs, correspondence, clippings, annotated materials, and organizational materials primarily documenting Morris Kight's role as a gay activist in Los Angeles. He was born November 19, 1919 in Procter, Comanche County, Texas, married in 1950 in New Mexico, left his wife in 1955, and relocated to Los Angeles in 1958. Kight dedicated his life to a number of progressive causes including improving race relations, the anti-war movement, and the gay liberation / rights movement.

Preferred Citation

Box #, folder #, Morris Kight Papers and Photographs, Coll2010-008, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Biographical Note

Morris Kight the youngest of three children was born in Procter, Comanche County, Texas, on November 19, 1919. His father died when he was 7 years old. His siblings, John Lewis and Mildred, soon left home leaving Kight and his mother to fend for themselves. After graduating from high school in June 1936, he continued onto Texas Christian University. In 1942, he graduated from Texas Christian University. In New Mexico, he married and fathered two daughters. The marriage lasted five years, ending in 1955. Kight relocated to Los Angeles in 1958 where his earliest involvement in the LGBT community can be traced to a donation to ONE, Incorporated, in 1964 and a book review for *Tangents Magazine* in 1968. According to his many interviews, during this time he continued his work on behalf of minorities, the environment, and for other progressive causes. He became known for the founding of the Dow Action Committee (DAC) in 1967. DAC protested the use of napalm and defoliants in Vietnam and appealed to Dow Chemical to end their production. In the same year he met a "companion," Larry Allen. They were together until Allen's death in 1972.

In December 1969, Kight collaborated with others to found the Los Angeles chapter of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). Gay political activism had more widely adopted the direct-action approach Kight had appreciated in other progressive non-violent organizations. The first and successful target GLF protests was Barneys Beanery's "Fagots [sic] Stay Out!" signs.

Later, Don Jackson, a GLF member, proposed the surreptitious take-over of the sparsely populated Alpine County by gays and lesbians. His plan was to have hundreds of gays and lesbians relocate to and register to vote in Alpine County over a period time. While Jackson believed in the feasibility of the plan, Don Kilhefner and Kight realized the publicity potential of the mission. Kilhefner and Kight organized and held press conferences on the plan to re-locate hundreds of gays and lesbians to a new "gay Mecca." The announcements received national media attention, and the Alpine County Board of Supervisors was soon requesting advice from officials in then Governor Reagan's office of legal affairs. Less than a year after the original proposal was made public the GLF abandon the mission.

Kight continued to prove his abilities to organize and promote LGBT causes. He went on to contribute to the founding of Christopher Street West (1970), the sponsor of the Los Angeles Pride parades; L.A. Gay Community Services Center (1971), currently known as the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center; Van Ness Recovery House (1973), a center for substance abuse recovery; National New Orleans Memorial Fund (1973), to aid the survivors of the Upstairs Lounge fire; First Tuesday (1975), a collaborative space for LGBT organizations; Stonewall Democratic Club (1975); Gay and Lesbian Caucus/ California Democratic Party (1977); Orange County Against the Briggs Initiative (1978); Moscone - Milk Memorial Committee (1978); Asian / Pacific Lesbians and Gays (1980); Aid for AIDS (1982); Gay and Lesbian Olympics Visitors Hospitality Committee (1983);

and Old / Older / Senior / Elder Lesbian / Gay Advocates (1992). Kight also promoted LGBT causes such as the boycott of CBS, Coors Beer, and the motion picture *Cruising*. He sought recognition of LGBT rights as human rights, the formation of a Los Angeles police review board, and the reform of United States immigration laws. He served on a number of task forces and commissions including the Governor's Task Force on Civil Rights, Lieutenant Governor's Commission for ONE California, and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. Along with all of this he campaigned for a long list of social justice issues, and yet he would still be available to plead for such causes as the continued funding of Gay Student Union by the UCLA student council.

Beyond his time and experience, Kight contributed his art collection to the community. This tangible legacy grew from his love of art and his own showcase, his residence on McCadden Place. As his collection became more prominent, an increasing number of quality works were donated to the collection. While the collection was located at McCadden Place, it was curated by David T. Spencer (David Schwinkendorf), Kight and his partner, Roy Zukeran. After Spencer's death and because of Kight's failing health, Miguel Angel Reyes and Ron Anderegg became the collection's curators. The collection was exhibited at a variety of events from 1985-1995 and later went into storage, before its donation to ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives.

Kight died on January 19, 2003, survived by Roy Zukeran, his "companion" of twenty-five years.

Ciotti, Paul. "Morris Kight: Activist Statesman of L.A.'s Gay Community: [Home Edition]." *Los Angeles Times* (pre-1997 Fulltext), December 09, 1988, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed April 1, 2011).

Clendinen, Dudley, and Adam Nagourney. *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

Nardi, Peter M., David Sanders, and Judd Marmor. "Interview with Morris Kight." *Growing Up Before Stonewall: Life Stories of Some Gay Men*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994. 15-34.

Wat, Eric C. *The Making of a Gay Asian Community: An Oral History of Pre-AIDS Los Angeles*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002. 109-110, 112-113.

Scope and Content

The Kight papers consists primarily of fliers, correspondence, and other records that document his involvement in a number of LGBT, progressive, and political organizations in Los Angeles. While Kight exchanged letters with several lesbian and gay leaders his longest running correspondence of a dozen letters, 1972-1983 was with Marty Manford of the Gay Activist Alliance of New York. The other records include awards,

proclamations, resolutions, plaques, and trophies documenting the community's recognition of his contribution to LGBT causes. The clippings Kight collected provide a rich source of information concerning his public involvement in the movement. His notes and annotated documents provide insight into the mundane tasks of organizing and his personal views of people and events. The notes include various lists, such as incoming and outgoing calls, along with speaking and event planning outlines. Kight issued statements and press releases to inform the media and the public of his position on community events and plans, along with notices of events he was planning. He often hosted events at his residence on McCadden Place, this allowed him to show and grow his art collection. The growth and exhibitions of his art collection are recorded in the McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Series.

The McCadden residence provided a meeting space for many of the organizations, including those that Kight contributed to founding, such as First Tuesday and the Stonewall Democratic Club. The collection contains documents from many of the organizations and causes he led or contributed to their efforts. His role as a Commissioner, 1980-2002, on the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations is the best documented. His photographs primarily document his later life from the 1990s until the year before his death in 2003.

Arrangement Note

Files are arranged in the following series:

[Series 1. Biographical Documents, 1962-2003](#)

[Series 2. Correspondence, 1964-2001](#)

[Series 3. Notes and Annotated Documents, 1975-2000](#)

[Series 4. McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection, 1977-2000](#)

[Series 5. Organization, Event, and Topical Files, 1971-2001](#)

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

Researchers wishing to publish material must obtain permission in writing from ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives as the physical owner of the material. Note that permission to publish does not constitute copyright clearance. ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials from the copyright holder(s).

Processing Information

Processing this collection has been funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Formerly housed in record boxes 103-024, 103-064, 103-341, 104-076, 104-077, 104-078, 104-079, 104-080, 104-081, 104-082, 104-083, 104-158, A078, A079, A080, A081, A082, A083, A084, A085, A086, A087, A088, A089, A090, A091, A092, A093, and A094, 29 linear feet. Collection processed by Michael C. Oliveira, March 25, 2011.

Related Materials

Related Archival Material

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives:

Rob Cole Papers, Coll2009-019, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Lillene H. Fifield Papers, Coll2007-014, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

L. A. Gay & Lesbian Center Records, Coll2007-010, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Pat Rocco Papers, Coll2007-006, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Unprocessed Christopher Street West Historical Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Unprocessed Christopher Street West Records, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Unprocessed Crossroads Employment and Job Counseling Services Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

Unprocessed Hudson House Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.

University of California, Los Angeles:

Morris Kight Papers (Collection 354). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives collection of film and video, circa 1965-1999. UCLA Film and Television Archive, University of California, Los Angeles.

University of Connecticut:

Foster Gunnison, Jr. Papers. Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut Libraries.

Separated Materials

Relocated to the ONE Periodical Collection:

This Week in Texas, November 19-25, 1993; December 3-9, 1993

Relocated to the ONE Banner Collection:

"Morris Says Hello," Pride Parade Banners (2), circa 1997

Indexing Terms

Genres and Forms of Materials

- Correspondence
- Photographs

Subjects - Topics

- Christopher Street West (CSW) (Los Angeles, Calif.)
- Gay activists--California--Los Angeles
- Gay liberation movement--California--Los Angeles
- Gay pride parades--California--Los Angeles
- Gay rights--California--Los Angeles
- Gay rights--United States--History--20th century

Biographical Documents

Collection Inventory

Biographical Documents 1962-2003 [18 folders + 4 records boxes, 1 shoe box, 2 flat boxes]

Scope and Content

The Biographical Series contains files related to the life and time of Morris Kight. The Biographical Documents file consists of miscellaneous personal records. Documents related to his speaking engagements, events, endorsements, and honors are contained in the Fliers and Programs files. The "Dissidents" folder documents the unauthorized forwarding of Kight's mail to Clifton, New Jersey. Concerned about the preservation of his legacy, Kight copied clippings, fliers and other documents and mailed them to a number of gay and lesbian archives across the country, this became known as "The Project." The Texas Christian University file documents his school visit and speaking engagement.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Awards, Proclamations, and Resolutions 1971-2003
11	2	Awards, Proclamations, and Resolutions (oversized) 1979-2003
1	2-3	Biographical Documents 1972-2003 [2 folders]
11	1	Biographical Documents (oversized) 2003
10		Business Cards Collected circa 1975-2000
	Folder	
9	12-22	Clippings 1962-2003, undated [11 folders]
18		Clippings (oversized) 1963 <i>Citizen-News</i> Front page articles on "Sexual Deviants" in Hollywood February 04, 1963-February 14, 1963 and a <i>Heard Examiner</i> image of "Seven Men booked on charge of impersonating women at nightclub."
	Folder	
11	3	Clippings (oversized) 1978-2003
1	23	"Dissidents" L.A. Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (LAGLCSC) 1975-1984
1	4	Documentary & Film 1997-1999
1	5	Family 1962-1997
1	6	Fliers circa 1972-1999
1	7	Interview Typescripts 1974-2001
13-18		Plaques and Trophies 1979-2002 Kight received awards from the following organizations: AIDS Healthcare Foundation, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, Being Alive/People with AIDS Action Coalition, California State Assembly, Christopher Street West, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Elections Committee of the County of Orange (ECCO), Gay and Lesbian Issues Committee - United Teachers Los Angeles, Gay Asian Pacific Support Network, Imperial Court of Los Angeles, L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, Long Beach Lambda Democratic Club, Long Beach Lesbian & Gay Pride, Inc., Los Angeles

Correspondence

County Commission on Human Relations, Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Heritage Society, Metropolitan Community Church Los Angeles, National Association of Social Workers California Chapter, National Conference of Gay/Lesbian Public Officials, Northeast Los Angeles Gay-Lesbian Pride Committee, Palm Springs Gay Veterans, San Diego Lesbian & Gay Pride, Southern Californians for Democratic Action, Stonewall Democratic Club, The City Council of the City of West Hollywood and the West Hollywood Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, The Hollywood/Highlands Democratic Club, The Privy Council & 29th Reign of the Royal Court de Santa Monica, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, The Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, United States Mission, Valley Business Alliance, and Van Ness Recovery House

	Folder	
1	8-9	Programs 1975-2000
1	10-13	"The Project" 1995-2003 [4 folders]
1	14	Texas Christian University 1997-2000
1	15	Writings circa 1974-2000

Correspondence 1964-2001 [44 folders]

Scope and Content

The Correspondence Series includes memorial service cards along with traditional correspondence. The alpha files are followed by files of chain letter, hate mail and anonymous mail. The First Name Only files contain correspondents that could not be identified by last name. Photographs included with correspondence are located in the Photograph Series.

Arrangement Note

The series is arranged alphabetically by folders and not by item. A few correspondents are group together within the alphabetically folders.

Box	Folder	
1	16-22	A-B 1971-2001 [7 folders]
11	4	A (oversized) 1991
2	1-16	C-M 1971-2001 [16 folders]
3	1-17	M-Z 1964-1999 [17 folders]
3	18	Chain Letters 1978-1984
3	19	First Name Only 1967-1996
4	1	First Name Only 1972-1999
4	2	Hate Mail & Anonymous Mail 1983-1985

Notes and Annotated Documents circa 1975-2000 [30 folders]

McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Records

Scope and Content

The Notes and Annotated Documents Series includes samples of his lists, notes, and outlines. The series also includes his typescript annotations concerning various notes, lists, ephemera, and realia. In the interest of preserving his legacy he sent the archives a number of "Memorandums for: Archives." Kight's annotations and memorandums documents his reflections on events and people.

Arrangement Note

The notes folders are arranged by title and then chronologically. The Annotated documents and Memorandums are arranged by the date of the annotation.

Box	Folder	
8	3-5	Notes circa 1975-2000 [3 folders]
11		Annotated Ephemera and Realia circa 1975-1990
	Folder	
8	6-21	Annotated Notes 1972-1984, undated [16 folders]
9	1-2	Annotated Notes 1985-1998 [2 folders]
9	3	Annotated Receipts 1970-1985
9	4-11	Memorandum for Archives 1974-1985, undated [8 folders]

McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Records 1977-2000 [20 folders]**Scope and Content**

The McCadden Place / Morris Kight Collection Series documents the growth of Kight's art collection. Fliers and invitations make up the bulk of the files concerning various events and exhibits of the collection. The series also includes records such as collection catalogs, inventories, and exhibit information. The Donald William Saban photographs of McCadden Place are located in the photograph series. The North Martel Avenue files consist of the legal records concerning Kight's residence at the property.

Box	Folder	
7	4-5	McCadden Place Events 1977-1987 [2 folders]
7	6-7	1447 North Martel Avenue 1993-1995 [2 folders]
7	8-12	McCadden Place Collection 1984-2000 [5 folders]
12		McCadden Place Collection Signs (oversized) circa 1990 [6 items]
	Folder	
7	13	Pink Triangle 1983-1985
7	14	McCadden Place Collection Catalog 1984
7	15-19	McCadden Place Collection Inventory 1992-1993 [5 folders]
7	20	Donations to Collection 1993-1998
7	21	Text for Exhibit Captions / Labels circa 1993
8	1	Exhibit Captions / Labels circa 1990
8	2	Foundation / Grant Research 1994-1999

Organization, Event, and Topical Files

Organization, Event, and Topical Files 1971-2001 [64 folders]

Scope and Content

The Organizations, Events, and Topics Series consists primarily of fliers along with agendas, meeting notes, and correspondence. The best documented organizations include Aid for AIDS; First Tuesday, a moving collaborative space to coordinate Los Angeles lesbian and gay events; and the Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations. The series also contains topical files for the Human Right Coalition and Police Commission / Review Board files, which document a number of precursor organizations. The California and Los Angeles and the Progressive Organizations files consist of scarcely documented organizations. The final topical file, Radio and Television, documents the media's stereotypical portrayal of gays and lesbians and the communities reaction to the *Marcus Welby* episode, "Outrage" (1974, ABC); *America's Secret Shame* (1977, KHJ); *Gay Power, Gay Politics* (1980, CBS) and other broadcasts. Aside from Morris Kight Press Releases & Memorandums files, the remaining folders document events and organizations.

Arrangement Note

The first four folders contain Kight's press release and memorandums on variety of topics printed on his letter head. The remainder of the series is arranged alphabetically by the name of the organization, event, or topic. Only the First Tuesday and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations folders are arranged at the item level.

Box	Folder	
4	3-6	Morris Kight Press Releases & Memorandums 1976-1999 [4 folders]
4	7-10	Aid for AIDS 1982-1998 [4 folders]
4	11	Asian / Pacific Lesbian & Gay Organization 1980-1981
4	12	Black and White Men Together 1985
4	13	California and Los Angeles Organizations 1978-1985
4	14-17	California Democratic Committee (CDC) 1976-1982 [4 folders]
4	18-19	Christopher Street West (CSW) 1976-1998 [2 folders]
5	1	Christopher Street West (CSW) 1976-1998
5	2	Coors Beer Boycott 1978-1998
5	3	<i>Cruising</i> and <i>Windows</i> , motion pictures 1980
5	4-5	First Tuesday 1976-1987 [2 folders]
5	6	Easter Russell French v. Morris Kight (1977) 1982-1983
5	7	Friends of Morris Kight 1994-1997
5	8	Gay and Lesbian Olympics Visitors Hospitality Committee 1983-1984
5	9	Governor's Task Force on Civil Rights 1980-1982
5	10	Hollywood Redevelopment Project 1977-1985
5	11	Human Rights Coalition 1977-1982 Includes California Human Rights Advocates and Coalition for Human Rights documents
5	12	Humanist Association 1993-1998
5	13	Jobs with Peace Initiative 1983-1984
6	7	L.A. Gay Community Services Center 1996
5	14-21	Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations 1975-1984 [8 folders]

Photographs

6	1-6	Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations 1984-2002 [6 folders]
12		Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations poster (oversized) 1994
	Folder	
6	8	Lieutenant Governor Commission for ONE California 1999-2001
6	9	March on Sacramento 1979-1981
6	10	March on Washington, D.C. 1978-1993
6	11	Moscone - Milk Memorial Committee, Los Angeles 1978
6	12	National New Orleans Memorial Fund (Upstairs Lounge Fire) 1973-1976
6	13-14	No on Briggs Initiative Committee (Proposition 6) 1977-1979 [2 folders]
6	15	Old / Older / Senior / Elder Lesbian / Gay Advocates 1992-1996
6	16	Police Commission / Review Board 1975-1998
	Box	
6	17-18	Progressive Organizations (non-LGBT) 1971-2001
6	19	Radio and Television 1972-1984
6	20	Stonewall 25 Organizing Committee 1992-1994
6	21-23	Stonewall Democratic Club Los Angeles (SDC) 1975-1999 [3 folders]
7	1-2	War Resisters International / League 1974-2002 [2 folders]
7	1	We Are Everywhere 1978-1984

Photographs circa 1920-2002 [7 clamshell photograph binders]

Scope and Content

The Photograph Series contains photographs Kight annotated, images he received in correspondence, and photographs of himself and others at various events. The photographs of events document award presentation ceremonies, birthdays, pride parades, speaking engagements, and the Matthew Shepard memorial in West Hollywood. There are a couple of early photographs of Kight and his siblings, along with photographs of his brother, John Lewis Kight, later in life. The series also includes Donald William Saban's photographs of the interior and exterior of McCadden Place. The Other People and Places photographs contain images of friends collected or given to Kight, along with building exteriors. The exteriors include his residence at McCadden Place and 909 West Adams Boulevard, before ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives relocated to the property. Later in life Kight posed for a number of photograph portraits, along with these images are a small number of press photographs of Kight at various events.

Arrangement Note

The photographs are arranged in series of images from the same roll when possible; they are not arranged within the binders chronologically or by event in the binder.

Box-binder

13	Annontated Photographs 1976-1989
13	Correspondence with Photographs 1971-2002
14-16	Event Photographs 1977-2002
14	Family Photographs circa 1920-2000

Photographs

- 17 McCadden Place by Donald William Saban 1984
- 18 Other People and Places 1974-circa 1995
- 19 Portrait and Press Photographs 1978-2002
- 20 Pride Parades Photographs 1982-1999