

Finding Aid to the Denise D'Anne Papers

(#2021-26)

Repository: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society

Collection Title: Denise D'Anne Papers

Collection Number: 2021-26

Physical Description: 6 linear feet (three cartons, two medium oversize boxes)

Creator: Denise D'Anne

Date (inclusive): circa 1940s-2021

Language of Material: English

Abstract: Denise D'Anne was an activist, environmentalist, civil servant, writer, and candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, as well as a proud trans woman who transitioned in 1968. Her collection is divided into four series: Manuscripts, Photographs, Audiovisual Materials, and Artifacts. The first two series are the most extensive, and collect materials on D'Anne's diverse personal, political, and professional activities.

Preferred Citation:

[Identification of item], Denise D'Anne papers (#2021-26), The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Conditions Governing Access:

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights:

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Acquisition Information:

The collection was donated to the GLBT Historical Society by Geoffrey Scott in October 2021.

Processing Information:

Finding Aid created by Isaac Fellman in 2021.

This finding aid uses terminology for LGBTQ people that was in current use at the time of its creation. Descriptive language for queer identities evolves quickly and some of these terms may now be dated or even offensive. Finding aids are themselves historical documents; they reflect the moment in which they were written and often reflect the terms that subjects used for themselves. Please contact the GLBT Historical Society Archivist with questions or comments.

Biographical/Organizational History Note: Denise D’Anne was an activist, environmentalist, civil servant, writer, and candidate for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, as well as a proud trans woman who transitioned in 1968.

D’Anne was born in 1933 in New York City. Her mother was intermittently unable to care for her, and she spent some of her childhood in various foster homes; one of these placements was with an abusive mother who openly favored her own children over her foster children, a painful and formative experience for D’Anne. As an adult, she served in the army in Europe after World War II before coming to live in California. D’Anne was very aware that she was attracted to men without wishing to be one; she attempted for a time to live as a gay man before becoming increasingly public with her femininity, ultimately transitioning at the age of thirty-five.

In her earlier years, D’Anne was relatively conservative and apolitical, but with time, she was drawn to causes on the left, with her most passionate work reserved for union activism, feminism, and the environment. As a clerk with the San Francisco Department of Social Services (later Human Services), she was very active with SEIU Local 400, advocating for the rights of her fellow clerical employees and also becoming a key member of Union WAGE (Women’s Alliance to Gain Equality). D’Anne also founded the Resource Conservation Program, which encouraged city employees to recycle, reduce, and reuse materials, saving money in the process. For a time in the 1990s, she hosted her own environmentalist radio show, *The Green Lady*.

As an activist, D’Anne was tireless and unapologetic, communicating with everyone from politicians to film manufacturers in her signature formal-but-frank style, and amassing a large collection of published articles and letters to the editor. She tended to focus on small concrete changes which, over time, would add up to larger impacts: fewer cars on the streets, less plastic used in manufacturing, printing on both sides of paper. Her correspondents’ responses ranged from gratefulness to anger, none of which blunted D’Anne’s commitment to making the world a better place. As time passed, she also brought her energy to electoral politics, serving as co-president of the Harvey Milk Democratic Club and running unsuccessfully for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1998 and 2000.

D’Anne wrote extensively in her personal capacity as well, completing two autobiographies (1969’s *Male Facade* was the story of her evolving understanding of her gender and sexuality, and 2003’s *Going the Distance* told the larger story of her life, “from New York to San Francisco, conservative to radical – with stops in between”), as well as an extensive

correspondence and a number of essays. She also edited various newsletters for her organizations, including the Golden Gate Tip Toppers, a club for tall people (D'Anne was proud of her height as well as her beauty, and enjoyed the Tip Toppers' celebration of tall women's glamour and desirability).

In her later years, D'Anne lived with her adopted grandson, Geoffrey Scott, and his husband; she had met Scott at the grocery store, where he'd advised her on choosing the right avocado, and formed a friendship that became a family. She continued to be active in her various causes until her death at the age of 86.

Scope and Content: The collection is divided into four series: Manuscript Materials, Photographs, Audiovisual Materials, and Artifacts. The Manuscript Materials series is the largest and comprises D'Anne's writings, correspondence, autobiographies, professional and activist materials, and an extensive collection of articles by or about her, including articles in which she was quoted. Also extensively represented are press releases, reflecting D'Anne's cultivation of journalists to further her work. The series also contains materials to D'Anne's education, clubs such as the Golden Gate Tip Toppers, birthday parties, and small businesses such as D&D Income Tax and Cafe Denise. The Photographs series contains various personal snapshots of D'Anne and friends, ranging from the 1940s to the 2010s. Of particular note is a photo album of D'Anne at the time when she was transitioning, with many other photos of people who would have identified variously as cross-dressers, queens, and trans women. The Audiovisual Materials series is limited in scope; it contains 1950s and 1960s reel-to-reel footage of D'Anne and her travels. These materials have also been digitized. The Artifacts series is similarly limited, containing award plaques and three rosaries.

Indexing Terms:

Activism
Aging
Amateur film
Catholic people
Diaries
Environmentalism
Feminism
Journalism
LGBTQ
Labor
Photography
Radio
Trans women
Transgender people
Veterans

Container Listing

Series I: Manuscript Materials

Physical Description: Two cartons

Scope and Content: The Manuscript Materials series comprises D'Anne's writings, correspondence, autobiographies, professional and activist materials, and an extensive collection of articles by or about her, including articles in which she was quoted. It also contains materials to D'Anne's education, clubs such as the Golden Gate Tip Toppers, birthday parties, and small businesses such as D&D Income Tax and Cafe Denise.

Arrangement: This series has been organized into thematic folders and alphabetized by title. D'Anne's collection had a fairly strong original order, with many materials in labeled binders and folders; the archivist expanded upon this order and added new categories.

- 1:1 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1972-1993
- 1:2 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1972-1992
- 1:3 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1971-1991, undated
- 1:4 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1958-1998
- 1:5 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1958-2015
- 1:6 Articles by and about D'Anne, 1974-1999
- 1:7 Autobiography: Male Facade [1 of 2], 1969
- 1:8 Autobiography: Male Facade [2 of 2], 1969
- 1:9 Autobiography: Male Facade, 1969
- 1:10 Autobiography: Going the Distance, 2003
- 1:11 Autobiography: Going the Distance, 2003
- 1:12 Awards, 2001-2019 (more awards in oversize box 2)
- 1:13 Birthday celebrations, circa 1983-2011
- 1:14 Cafe Denise, 1980, undated
- 1:15 Cafe Denise, 1980
- 1:16 Campaign for Supervisor, 1998
- 1:17 Campaign for Supervisor, 1998
- 1:18 Campaign for Supervisor, 2000
- 1:19 Campaign for Supervisor, 2000
- 1:20 Campaign for Supervisor, 2000
- 1:21 Campaign for Supervisor, 2000
- 1:22 Campaign for Supervisor, 2000
- 1:23 Celebration of Life program and speeches, 2021
- 1:24 Citizens for Fiscal Responsibility, 1972-1994
- 1:25 Clippings and similar material collected by D'Anne, 1974-2004, undated
- 1:26 College coursework, 1958-1963
- 1:27 Correspondence and letters to editor, 1961-2019, undated
- 1:28 Correspondence and letters to editor, 1967-2003
- 1:29 Correspondence and letters to editor, circa 1950s-2009

- 1:30 Correspondence (not D'Anne), 1974-1996
- 1:31 D&D Income Tax, circa 1990s
- 1:32 Department of Human Services, 1991-2000
- 1:33 De Young bond campaign, 1997-1998
- 1:34 Diary, 1975-1976

- 2:1 Dr. Henry Bruyn dispute, 1975-1976
- 2:2 Employment at City of San Francisco, 1991-2000
- 2:3 Employment at City of San Francisco, 1975-1999
- 2:4 Employment at City of San Francisco, 1975-1999
- 2:5 Employment at City of San Francisco, 1990-2001
- 2:6 Employment at City of San Francisco – workplace conflicts, 1978-1992
- 2:7 Erickson Educational Foundation and other trans periodicals, 1968-1972
- 2:8 Fliers and signs, 1979-2013, undated
- 2:9 Fundraisers, 1994
- 2:10 Frederick Hobson harassment case, 2000-2001
- 2:11 Golden Gate Tip Toppers, 1972-1996, bulk 1972-1974
- 2:12 Golden Gate Tip Toppers, 1973-1974
- 2:13 Golden Gate Tip Toppers correspondence, 1974
- 2:14 Golden Gate Tip Toppers and other tall clubs, 1973-1976
- 2:15 Green Lady and other environmental work, 1979-1997, undated
- 2:16 Harvey Milk LGB Democratic Club, circa 1998-2009
- 2:17 Holiday letters, 1974-2012
- 2:18 Jim Highland fan club, circa 1950s
- 2:19 Local 400, 1975, undated
- 2:20 Local 400, 1975-1984
- 2:21 Local 400, 1975
- 2:22 Local 400, 1975
- 2:23 Local 400, Union WAGE, and other union materials, 1974-1999
- 2:24 Master's degree coursework, circa 1970s
- 2:25 Name change documents, 1969-1972
- 2:26 Natural Resources Division (NRD) Newslog, 1967-1968
- 2:27 Parking and public transit, 1991-2000
- 2:28 Personal ad correspondence, 1972
- 2:29 Press releases, 1974-1999
- 2:30 Press releases, 1983-1998
- 2:31 Poetry, undated
- 2:32 Quotations and copies from books collected by D'Anne, undated
- 2:33 Radio scripts, circa 1980s-1990s
- 2:34 Resumes, circa 1970s-1980s
- 2:35 Satires and jokes, 1979-1994, undated

- 2:36 Scrap paper, receipts, and similar materials, circa 1990s-2000s
- 2:37 Tax documents, 1956-1976
- 2:38 Union newspapers, 1973-1979
- 2:39 Union newspapers, 1972-2014
- 2:40 Union Pacific Railroad employment, 1967-1969
- 2:41 Writings, 1963-circa 2009
- 2:42 Writings on childhood, undated

Oversize Box 2

OS 2:1 Denise D'Anne commendations, signed photograph of woman, circa 1950s-2019, bulk 1984-2019

Series II: Photographs

Physical Description: 2.25 linear feet (1 carton, 1 medium oversize box)

Scope and Content: The Photographs series extensively documents D'Anne's life from her youth to her death, with particular focus on her travels, friendships, fashion, activism, and work. D'Anne's photographs reveal her as a person who was comfortable in front of the camera throughout her life, but who particularly enjoyed recording her life as a woman.

Arrangement: D'Anne arranged her photographs into albums and color-coded plastic boxes, with one additional shoe box of loose photos. Photographs in albums were left in situ and are described below. Photographs in plastic boxes (apparently gathered by date and theme, with most labeled 1-A, 1-B, etc.) were rehoused and kept in original order. The unsorted photographs have been rehoused into envelopes and folders according to size.

Box 3

Photo album with bridge on cover; contains photographs of D'Anne and friends, many of whom appear to be cross-dressing or in the process of transition, circa 1960s and early 1970s (a few photos are dated 1970). Some of these photos may depict the "Girl Factory," an informal community of trans women centered around a wealthy older person who had decided not to transition, but who funded the transitions of younger trans women. The community is described in D'Anne's autobiography *Male Facade*.

Red photo album with "Photo Album" printed on the cover in gold; contains photographs of D'Anne and friends, circa 1970s (some photos are dated 1971). Many of the photos appear to depict Tip Toppers beauty contests and other Tip Toppers events.

Photo album with brightly colored flowers on cover; contains photographs of D'Anne and Friends, circa 1970s or 1980s (none are dated). Some photos depict a trip to Europe, including England and Italy.

Photo album with color photograph of heterosexual couple on cover; contains photographs of D'Anne and friends, circa 1970s or 1980s (none are dated). Some photos are of theme parks and holidays.

Larger photographs:

- 3:1 Photographs (printouts and 8X10s), circa 1950s-2018
- 3:2 Family photograph album pages, circa 1940s-1950s
- 3:3 Photographs (5X7 and other medium formats), circa 1970s-2010s

Photographs from plastic boxes:

- 3:4 1-A: People, parties, air museum, circa 1980s
- 3:5 1-B: London, Christmas, tall club, circa 1970s-1980s
- 3:6 1-C: People, parties, children, circa 1970s-1980s
- 3:7 1-D: Parties, New York, people, 1989
- 3:8 1-D: People, recycling, Christmas, 1989
- 3:9 2-A: Family and other older photographs, 1955-1958, undated
- 3:10 2-C: Family and other older photographs, 1954-1961, undated
- 3:11 2-D: People, travel, 1984-1985, undated
- 3:12 2-D: People, travel, 1985, undated
- 3:13 2-E, Parties, people, travel, 1983, undated
- 3:14 2-E, People, parties, Christmas, 1984, undated
- 3:15 La Rossa family and other early photographs, 1955, undated
- 3:16 Early photographs of D'Anne, 1956-1968, undated
- 3:17 D'Anne and friends, tall club, 1971, undated
- 3:18 Travel, 1983, undated
- 3:19 Family and other early photographs, 1955-1957, undated

Unsorted photographs from shoe box:

- 3:20 Campaign for supervisor, recycling, labor and others, 1990-2006, undated
- 3:21 Family, friends, co-workers, circa 1990s-2018
- 3:22 Travel, parties, protests, and others, circa 1990s-2010s
- 3:23 Older photographs, 1950s-1970s
- 3:24 Older photographs, early transition, Cafe Denise, 1950s-1970s
- 3:25 Parties, travel, supervisor campaign, 1990s-2010s
- 3:25 People, parties, travel, 1980s-2010s
- 3:26 Travel, parties, people, supervisor campaign, 1990s-2010s
- 3:27 Travel, people, parties, supervisor campaign, 1990s-2010s

Oversized Box 2

Red photograph album documenting D'Anne's Army service, 1951-1952

Red photograph album with family photos, 1943-1965

Series III: Audiovisual Materials

Physical Description: 2 linear feet (1 large oversize box)

Scope and Content: Six reels of film: “NY World’s Fair ‘65 May/Washington DC”; “Painted Desert/Grand Canyon ‘58/San Diego ‘60/kids from boarding house/Toot’s wedding ‘61/Zeta + son [illegible] Hermes ‘62/Xmas ‘61”; “Rosalita Beach May ‘64/Ensenada ‘64/Mexico City ‘64/Laguinilla Market (Thieves’ Market)”; “France, NY ‘54/NY ‘58”; Germany – 1953/Kaiser’s Lavatory – Koblenz/Hillscheid/Rhine – Kaiser Wilhelm/La Roche Sur Yon – Les Sables/Madrid – San Sebastian/Lourdes”; “Xmas ‘62/Lake Tahoe ‘63/San Francisco, Nov ‘64/Coast Highway.” One CD, “Photos by Cathy Cade/Denise D’Anne Personal History + Photos, 2005.” One thumb drive of digitized film reels and scans of *Male Facade* (materials pulled and saved in Islandora).

Arrangement: Contained in Oversize Box 2.

Series IV: Artifacts

Physical Description: 2 linear feet (1 large oversize box)

Scope and Content: Award plaques, certificates of recognition, a large illegibly signed photograph of an unknown woman, a caricature of D’Anne as candidate for supervisor, and three rosaries.

Arrangement: Contained in Oversize Box 2.