Toni Swanger Collection

Papers, 1951-2000 (Predominantly, 1970's-1994)

9 linear feet

Accession #1777 OCLC #

The papers of Toni Swanger were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by Ms. Swanger in May of 2002 and opened for research in December of 2002.

Antoinette (Toni) Bilicki Swanger was born in Detroit, Michigan on July 29, 1944. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York and Detroit, the daughter of a tool and die maker in the auto industry and a homemaker. Foreshadowing a career in the media, she participated in the speech and theater programs at Cody High School, graduating in 1961. After obtaining an associate's degree from Henry Ford Community College, she took a secretarial job at Ford Motor Company. In 1965 she married William Swanger. Their separation in 1976 forced her into the role of family breadwinner and single parent to their daughter Sasha, home-birthed that year, and profoundly affected all her future reporting on issues related to marriage and motherhood. The couple divorced in 1984.

In the early 1970's Ms. Swanger returned to school, enrolling in Wayne County Community College, and did freelance secretarial work for Control, Conflict & Change, the Urban Bishops Coalition and other political and religious groups. A paper she wrote on Harriet Arnow's *The Dollmaker* for a women's studies course at WCCC got her her first spot (in December of 1974) on Detroit's public radio station, WDET-FM's "All Together Now," a feminist radio program written, produced and engineered by the volunteer members of the Detroit Women's Radio Workshop. Programming changes introduced in 1983 saw the program's cancellation and its replacement with a weekly five-minute Workshop-produced commentary delivered by Ms. Swanger. She resigned from the station in 1993 in protest over further programming changes.

Ms. Swanger's secretarial skills and political activism brought her to the attention of the founders of Detroit's alternative newspaper, Metro Times, when they needed an office manager in 1980. She turned the offer down, opting instead for jobs as typesetter, production manager and managing editor. She retired as a full-time staff member in 1989, but continued to write occasional news and feature stories as well as a regular column, which ran from 1990 to 1994.

Toni Swanger remains a Metro Times contributing editor and lives in Detroit with her husband, former Metro Times cartoonist John McCormick, whom she married in 1989.

The Toni Swanger Collection consists primarily of audio tapes, scripts, tear sheets, drafts, notes and interviews for her radio commentaries and Metro Times articles and newspaper clippings, magazine articles, correspondence, advocacy group literature and other material related to her research, writing and speaking about women's issues.

Important subjects in the collection:

Abortion Control, Conflict & Change Detroit Women's Radio Workshop Family violence Feminism Feminist radio Sonia Johnson Metro Times Midwifery National NOW Conference, 1977 Rape Sex discrimination in employment Sexual harassment **Urban Bishops Coalition WDET-FM** Women--Health and hygiene Women in the mass media industry Women's rights

Important correspondents in the collection:

Marvin Granger Caryn Mathes Leonard Nimoy

Non-manuscript material:

Audio tapes of several "All Together Now" programs as well as Ms. Swanger's radio commentaries and two posters have been placed in the Archives Audiovisual Collection. A few books have been transferred to the Archives Library.

Related Collections

Edith Van Horn

American Association of University Women of Michigan
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Detroit Feminist Women's Health Center
Detroit Revolutionary Movements
Detroit Women's Press
Joyce Hennessee
Susan Holleran
Joan Israel
Mildred Jeffrey
Olga Madar
Loretta Moore
NOW Downriver Chapter
Ann Shafer
UAW Women's Department

UAW Women's Department: Dorothy Haener

Contents

9 storage boxes

Series I, Personal Files, 1950's-1994, Boxes 1 & 9 (oversize):

Correspondence, minutes, mailing lists, flyers, publications, programs, speeches and other material related to Ms. Swanger's organizational affiliations, awards and speaking engagements.

Series II, WDET and Metro Times, 1971-1998, Boxes 1-4:

Transcripts of Swanger-produced radio shows and commentaries for WDET and copies of her articles and columns for Metro Times. Related correspondence, early drafts and rewrites, notes, interviews and some research material are included, although most of her research files may be found in Series III. Files are arranged alphabetically, with WDET-related material preceding Metro Times files.

Series III, Subject Reference Files, 1965-1994, Boxes 4-8:

Files on a wide variety of issues of concern to women used by Ms. Swanger in research for her radio commentaries and Metro Times articles. Files contain magazine articles and newspaper clippings, advocacy group newsletters, brochures, mass mailings, flyers and press releases, reports and academic papers.

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