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# Guide to South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project

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## **Guide to the South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project**

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Guide to the South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project

**Dates:** 2006-2010

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**Creator:** San Jose State University, Special Collections & Archives

**Collection Size:** 3 custom boxes 1.25 linear feet

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**Abstract:** The South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project, 2006-2010 (bulk 2006) consists of thirteen digital recordings and complete transcriptions documenting the experiences of women in politics in San José and Santa Clara County. The interviewees include: Blanca Alvarado, Joan Goddard, Susan Hammer, Janet Gray Hayes, Linda J. LeZotte, Dianne McKenna, Madison Nguyen, Sally Reed, Lu Ryden, Leona Egeland Siadek, Lee Sturtevant, Susanne Wilson, and Zoe Lofgren. This collection is arranged into one series: Series I. South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project, 2006-2010 (bulk 2006).

**Physical location:** For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

**Access**

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#### **Preferred Citation**

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#### **Processing Information**

Collection processed and EAD encoded by Elizabeth Lopez. Reviewed by Danelle Moon.

#### **Project Information**

This finding aid was created as part of the Survey and Cataloging Project, a two-year San José State University Library grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The project began in 2008. The Project Director is Danelle Moon. The Project Archivist is Erin Louthen.

#### **Project History**

The South Bay Second Wave Feminist Oral History Project was funded by a CSU Research Grant from 2005-2006. This oral history project resulted in thirteen digital recordings and complete transcriptions documenting the experiences of women in politics in San José and Santa Clara County. The interviewees include: Blanca Alvarado, Joan Goddard, Susan Hammer, Janet Gray Hayes, Linda J. LeZotte, Dianne McKenna, Madison Nguyen, Sally Reed, Lu Ryden, Leona Egeland Siadek, Lee Sturtevant, Susanne Wilson, and Zoe Lofgren.

In this time period, San José and Santa Clara County become known as the "Feminist Capital" of the nation, starting with the mayoral success of Janet Gray Hayes, who became the first elected female mayor in the United States of a city of 500,000. Her political ascendancy represented a watershed for female office holders in the U.S., and this key victory opened a floodgate for female participation in almost every level of California government, from the Mayor's office to the California Assembly, and eventually Congress. As a result Santa Clara County and specifically the city of San Jose became known as the "Feminist Capital of the Nation." This combined with the success of other female candidates across the U.S. led a number of national magazines to run stories on the role of women, feminism, and politics. *Time*, *People*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and even some international papers carried stories highlighting the success of these female candidates. Gray Hayes was featured in a number of articles, alongside Diane Feinstein of San Francisco, Jane Byrne of Chicago, Isabella Cannon of Raleigh, North Carolina, Carole McCellan of Austin, Texas, and Margaret Hance of Phoenix, Arizona. In 1979 the *U.S. News and World Report* ran a story highlighting the recent victories of women in politics across the U.S. According to this report 750 cities had female mayors out of 18,800 municipalities—women were making clear inroads into politics at all levels. From 1975 to 1979 the number of women in public office increased from 4.7% to 10.9%, with the largest increase at the local and state levels.

These pioneering women worked directly and indirectly for equal rights and equal participation in the political process. Some of them played a key role as the first recognized political figures in San José and the larger Bay Area, while others worked as activists and lobbyist for the Equal Rights Amendment, the environment, civil rights, including outlawing marital and date rape, and reproductive rights. Each narrator was asked to reflect on her political and social experiences from the 1960s to the present, with the objective to document women's experience through the political process, as politicians, and as non-governmental lobbyists and activists. This project provides a deeper understanding of the important role that women have played in Bay Area politics, and will advance historical understanding of the important events, activities, and resulting policies that transformed the political landscape and opened up new opportunities for women, despite the failure to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

#### **Bibliography**

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Matthews, Glenna. *Silicon Valley, Women, and the California Dream: Gender, Class, Opportunity in the Twentieth Century* (Stanford University Press, 2003).

Philip J. Trounstine and Terry Christensen. *Movers and Shakers: The Study of Community Power* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1982).

#### **Related Material**

Susan Hammer Papers. San José State University Archives Collection. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt6r29r199>

Janet Gray Hayes Papers. San José State University Archives Collection. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4v19r0fx>

Dianne McKenna Papers. San José State University Archives Collection. <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt767nc8vv>



Box 3

**Interviews: Wilson, Donor Agreements, 2006**