

2012

Dr. Carl Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers

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Dr. Carl Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers



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Title: Dr. Carl Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers

Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2012.01.19

Contributing Institution: SJSU Special Collections & Archives

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 3.0 Boxes, 3 Linear Feet

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1964-1978

Date (inclusive): 1940-2010

Abstract: The Carl D. Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers collection consists of the personal papers of Patricia (néé Carpio) Whiting and a portion of letters written between Whiting and Dr. Carl D. Duncan from 1964 to 1966. The letters not only provide a glimpse into the everyday lives of Carl D. Duncan and Patricia Whiting but they also reflect a deep bond of friendship between mentor and student. The formats represented include: cards, letters, photographs and poetry from Duncan as well as correspondence, writings, newspaper clippings and newsletters that document the personal and professional life of Whiting. Dr. Duncan, a longtime professor of natural sciences at San Jose State College (SJSC), for whom the Carl D. Duncan Hall of Science building on the San Jose State campus is named, developed a very close friendship with Whiting. Duncan hired Whiting to work as a student secretary in the Field Studies program from 1964-1966. Duncan provided personal encouragement to Whiting and he financially supported Whiting and her family. Before his death he gifted his Menlo Park home to her mother and his estate funded the education of her siblings. After her marriage to Vincent Whiting in 1968, Whiting moved to Oregon and pursued a career in public service. She became the first Filipino woman elected to the Oregon State Legislature and served three terms from 1973 to 1978, focusing key legislation on environmental issues. Whiting remained involved with the community for all of her life until her death from cancer on June 23, 2010.

Physical Location: Vault 1, Range 21A

creator: Duncan, Carl, Dr., 1895-1966

creator: Whiting, Patricia, 1940-2010

Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Dr. Carl Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers MSS-2012-01-19, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Note

Processed By: Mary Alexander and Toni Nix; Reviewed by Danelle Moon

Biographical History

Dr. Carl Dudley Duncan (1895-1966) was born in Fresno, California and received his education from Stanford University between 1923 and 1931. Duncan taught botany and entomology at San José State College from 1922 to 1950, after which he became the head of the Natural Science department until his retirement in 1965. Duncan was a beloved professor to whom many students referred to as "Dunc" and received his mentorship. In addition to his involvement as a professor, Duncan sponsored the Entomology Club and led annual science camps in California's national parks. Duncan was married to Neva Duncan, a folkdance teacher at the Las Lomas School District in Menlo Park, until her death in 1962. They did not have children. As a gift to his "goddaughter" Patricia Whiting, Duncan willed his estate to her upon his death in 1966 and funded the college education of her siblings. Duncan edited and contributed to several books and journals on entomology, including "Insect Stories" by Frederick Shackleford, "The World of Insects" with Gayle Pickford, and more. Duncan served as president of the Pacific Coast Entomological Society from 1937 to 1938 and again in 1947. The Carl D. Duncan Hall of Science building on the San José State campus was dedicated in his name in 1968.

Patricia Whiting (1940-2010) was born Patricia néé Carpio in Chicago, the oldest of eight children, to a single mother who suffered from multiple sclerosis. Her family moved to Gilroy in 1950, where she graduated from high school in 1959 and

attended San Jose State College intermittently from 1960 to 1967. An Arts and Humanities major, Whiting was active in the student body and participated in multiple plays and musicals, choir, flamenco dance and the International Platform Speaker Association, for which she traveled to Washington D.C. with Carl D. Duncan in 1965. In 1964 Whiting toured the United States for the U.S.O. with a troupe of actors for a play entitled "So this is College." After graduating in 1967 she married Vincent Whiting, with whom she would renew her wedding vows every five years until her death.

Whiting first ran for the Oregon State Legislature in 1972 and was elected in 1973. In 1972 she delivered the keynote speech for the 37th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Mexico City, Mexico. In 1973 "Ban the Can", the world's first anti-aerosol can bill, was passed with her support. During her three terms as a representative for the state of Oregon from 1973 to 1978, her key legislation included the world's first ban on smoking in public, the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, marriage license reform, sanitation, traffic and other environmental causes. In 1975 the Rutgers-Carnegie foundation named her as one of the top 50 outstanding legislative leaders. In 1982 Whiting received her Master's degree in Public Administration from Lewis and Clark College, becoming the first former legislator to do so. Whiting was also the first Filipino-American woman elected to a state legislature in the United States.

After retiring from politics in 1978, Whiting remained actively involved in community and humanitarian causes such as parks and recreation and stray animal rescue. Whiting passed away in 2010 from cancer. In September 2011 the city of Metzger Oregon, where she had made her home since 1970, dedicated Metzger Park Hall to be renamed Patricia D. Whiting Hall in her memory.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Carl D. Duncan and Patricia Whiting Papers collection consists of the personal papers of Patricia (né Carpio) Whiting and a portion of letters written between Whiting and Dr. Carl D. Duncan from 1964 to 1966. The letters not only provide a glimpse into the everyday lives of Carl D. Duncan and Patricia Whiting but they also reflect a deep bond of friendship between mentor and student. The formats represented include: cards, letters, photographs and poetry from Duncan as well as correspondence, writings, newspaper clippings and newsletters that document the personal and professional life of Whiting.

Dr. Duncan, a longtime professor of natural sciences at San Jose State College (SJSC), for whom the Carl D. Duncan Hall of Science building on the San Jose State campus is named, developed a very close friendship with Whiting. Duncan hired Whiting to work as a student secretary in the Field Studies program from 1964-1966. Duncan provided personal encouragement to Whiting and he financially supported Whiting and her family. Before his death he gifted his Menlo Park home to her mother and his estate funded the education of her siblings. After her marriage to Vincent Whiting in 1968, Whiting moved to Oregon and pursued a career in public service. She became the first Filipino woman elected to the Oregon State Legislature and served three terms from 1973 to 1978, focusing key legislation on environmental issues. Whiting remained involved with the community for all of her life until her death from cancer on June 23, 2010.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into two series: Series I: Correspondence, Carl D. Duncan to Patricia Whiting, 1964-1966 (Bulk 1965); Series II: Patricia Whiting Personal Papers, 1940-2010 (Bulk 1972-1978).

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Entomology

Filipino Americans

Natural Science

Oregon -- Legislature

Oregon--Politics and government

Science

Series I: Dr. Carl D. Duncan Letters Bulk, 1965 1964-1966

Physical Description: 1.0 Box

Scope and Content of Series

The material in this series consists of correspondence written between 1964 and 1966 from Dr. Carl D. Duncan to Patricia neé Carpio Whiting during part of her undergraduate career at San Jose State College. The letters not only provide a glimpse into the everyday lives of Carl D. Duncan and Patricia Whiting but also reflect a deep bond of friendship between mentor and student. This series contains letters, poems, postcards, and toasts.

Duncan frequently expressed his admiration of Whiting. Whiting asked Duncan in 1964 if he would like to “adopt” her as his “goddaughter” and often referred to him in her letters as “father.” Duncan and Whiting found an early common bond in poetry and enjoyed critiquing each other’s prose. Duncan’s poems are commonly on light-hearted subjects such as insects, Patricia’s love of cats, and Patricia’s younger siblings. Duncan enjoyed experimenting with different poetic styles such as haiku, sonnet and limerick.

Duncan’s letters reflect the life of an aging professor who, having become recently widowed and having had no children, sought to feel needed in a society dominated by the emerging youth culture. As he stated often in his letters, he desired to remain in touch with the students of the college so that he may best know how to teach them. Rather than embrace his own generation’s conservative reaction to the turbulent 1960s, Duncan chose to keep an open and tolerant mind to the issues of racial prejudice, civil rights movements, psychedelic drugs, transcendental meditation, and anti-war discussions.

Duncan typically wrote Whiting 3-4 letters per week. Common themes in the letters include discussions on nature, family, pedagogy, counterculture, the Vietnam War, and modern philosophy. Duncan often wrote during his trips to national parks, in which he enclosed physical mementos such as flowers, rocks and leaves. Other enclosures include programs from plays and concerts, napkins from restaurants, and newspaper clippings on contemporary topics including LSD, “flying saucers”, fashion, and sensational murder trials. Whiting responses are marginally represented through poetry and occasional brief notes.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1, folders 1-246 Bulk, 1965 1964-1966

Physical Description: 246.0 foldersCorrespondence

Series II: Patricia Whiting Papers Bulk, 1972-1978 1940-2012

Physical Description: 2.0 boxes

Scope and Content of Series

The material in this series consists of correspondence, poetry, diaries, political ephemera and photographs that document the life and death of Patricia Whiting from 1940 to 2010. Her diary entries reflect the life and character of a woman who devoted her life to her family, her community, and the preservation of Oregon's natural resources. Whiting's poetry is free form in contrast to Duncan's concrete style, as are her reflective diary entries. Her correspondence with Duncan is playful, as she refers to him as "Father" and presents him with cards and poetry. The bulk of Whiting's writings begin shortly after Duncan's death, where she reflected on his impact on her life. Common subjects of her poetry and diary include love, conservation, nature and personal reflections on life. Much of her personal works are addressed to her husband Vince and express her love for him.

Highlights of career photographs document Whiting's political rise to the Oregon state legislature with photographs from the set of Good Morning America and meeting with President Jimmy Carter, as well as images of Whiting mentoring students at the Oregon state capitol building and publicity photographs from her election campaigns. Her political papers include a collection of newsletters that document local Oregon politics from 1973 to 1978.

Highlights of personal photographs in the collection include photos of Whiting and Duncan together, her extracurricular involvement in arts and music at San Jose State College, wedding vow renewal ceremonies, her lifelong commitment to sheltering abandoned pets, and the documentation of her battle with cancer.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by format.

Box 2, Folders 1-55, Poetry, 1956-1986

Box2, Folders 56-96, Diaries, 1963-1971

Box 2, Folders 96-101, Letters to Carl. D. Duncan, 1964-1965

Box 2, Folders 101-104, Political documents, 1972-2003

Box 2, Folders 105-107, Whiting newsletters, 1973-1978

Box 2, Folder 108, Personal documents, 1965-2010

Box 2, Folder 109, End of life, 2010

Box 3, Folders 1-3, Family photographs, 1940-1960

Box 3, Folders 4-5, College photographs, 1959-1967

Box 3, Folders 8-9, Adulthood photographs, 1968-1995

Box 3, Folders 10-11, Political career photographs, 1972-1979

Box 3, Folder 12, End of life photographs, 2010
