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## Connie Jean Diaries

1976-2006 (*Bulk:* 1976-1983)

1 box (0.25 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 596



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Little is known about Connie Jean, a gender non-conforming woman assigned male at birth, other than that she was living in Lansdowne, in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, in the late 1970s and 1980s. For at least a decade, she was involved with, and lived with, another transgender woman, "Dick," who had a wife and children before the two met. In her late 30s or early 40s in 1976, Connie Jean began venturing into public dressed as a woman, and after being stopped by police in April 1976, wrote "now they have my name and all the information on me knowing that I am a TV and cannot stop from doing it because I love it." She later wrote that she wished Dick "was all female and not part woman when he has on all the clothes" adding that "it would be nice if he had all the equipment that a real woman has." Both she and Dick apparently considered gender reassignment surgery in the early 1980s.

The two diaries (Feb.-July 1976 and July 1979 through Aug. 1983) and photographs in this small collection offer insight into the lives of a gender non-conforming woman and her partner in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The earliest entries consist of cryptic indications of whether she was staying at home on a given day or venturing into numbered "area" marked on a map (not present), but by April 1976, the entries become much richer. The diaries make frequent reference to Connie Jean's desire for dressing as a woman, her struggle to appear in public, and her support for Dick's transition.

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## Background on Connie Jean Diaries

Although little is known about Connie Jean beyond her first name, and even that is uncertain, portions of her life can be pieced together. A gender non-conforming woman assigned male at birth, Connie Jean lived in Lansdowne, Pa., a small suburban city due west of Philadelphia, during the late 1970s and 1980s. During this time, she became involved with another transgender woman, Dick, who ultimately left her wife and children to move in together. Dick held a steady job throughout their relationship, while Connie Jean relied on "mother" for financial support, at least on occasion.

Connie Jean began venturing in public dressed as a woman in 1976, carefully recording where she went and whom she encountered. Already in her late 30s or early 40s, both she and Dick considered gender reassignment surgery, with Connie Jean writing, "as I sit in the straight chair and write this, I am a woman."

## Scope of collection

The two diaries of Connie Jean's that survive are an important record of the experiences of a transgender woman living in suburban Philadelphia from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s. The diaries grow in detail and insight as the years pass, from early and somewhat cryptic entries describing the "reg areas" where Connie Jean first ventured into public to longer, highly detailed descriptions of her outfits and life with her partner Dick. By the early 1980s, Connie Jean began to describe the struggles that she and Dick faced during her transition, her support for Dick's transition, and her internal thoughts about herself, Dick, and going out. The collection also includes a small photograph album.

## Inventory

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Five Year Diary

1976 Feb-Jul

Box 1

Notebook Diary

1979 Jul-1983 Aug

Box 1

Photo Book

1987

Box 1

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Benjamin Katz, Jan. 2009 (2009-024)

### Processing Information

Processed by Joanna Nevins, May 2018.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* Connie Jean Diaries (MS 596). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Transgender people--Pennsylvania

## Contributors

Connie Jean [main entry]

## Genres and formats

Diaries

Photographs

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