



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Gerri Major papers

1927-1985

Sc MG 147

Summary

Creator: Major, Gerri, 1894-1984

Title: Gerri Major papers

Date: 1927-1985

Size: 1.34 linear feet (2 boxes, 1 oversize folder, 2 volumes)

Source: Gift of Gerri Major, 1981.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Geraldyn "Gerri" Hodges Major was a journalist and editor for several African American publications including the New York Amsterdam News, Ebony Magazine, and Jet Magazine. The Gerri Major papers reflect some aspects of the career of this journalist and writer, but much of the collection consists of biographical information.

Preferred citation: [Item], Gerri Major papers, Sc MG 147, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Janice Quinter, January 2010.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the New York Public Library Menu Collection collection, SASB, Rare Book Collection Rm 328: one item

Transferred to the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Library for the Performing Arts: printed matter

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Creator History

Geraldyn "Gerri" Hodges Major, journalist and writer, was raised and educated in Chicago. Known then as Geraldyn Dismond, she pursued a professional career as a writer, journalist, and editor for several African American newspapers including the *New York Amsterdam News*. Black society was Major's primary journalistic interest, and she wrote about society fashion, food, and style, frequently traveling around the globe as she covered social events. From 1934-1946, Major worked for the New York City Health Department's Bureau of Public Health Information and Education as an administrative assistant. In 1953, then known as Gerri Major, she began a 25 year career at the New York office of the Johnson Publishing Company where she served as society editor and associate editor for *Ebony* Magazine, and later, *Jet* Magazine. She became senior staff editor for *Ebony* in 1967, and briefly was a European correspondent. She wrote and lectured on aspects of black society, and co-authored a book, *Black Society*, published in 1976. Major died in New York City in 1984.

Scope and Content Note

The Gerri Major papers reflect some aspects of the career of this journalist and writer. Much of the collection consists of biographical information in the form of news clippings about her worldwide travels, her achievements, and other activities. Major's writings include her columns for the *New York Amsterdam News*, 1939-1944; a couple of issues of *Jet* Magazine; reports and articles written during her employment with the New York City Health Department, Bureau of Public Health Information and Education; and early submissions to *Opportunity* and other journals. The balance of the collection consists of materials relating to her 80th and 85th birthday celebrations, in 1974 and 1979, respectively. Her 80th birthday is acknowledged with news clippings, and for her 85th, celebrating sixty years in the writing field, there are news clippings describing the festivities, and two scrapbooks containing numerous letters, telegrams, and greeting cards.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American women authors
African American women journalists
African Americans -- New York (State) -- New York
African Americans -- Social life and customs
African Americans--Newspapers
Authors, Black
Upper class African Americans

Names

Major, Gerri, 1894-1984
New York (N.Y.). Department of Health

Container List

Biographical 1939-1979

- b. 1 f. 1 Resumes, work record, citations, and family history 1939-1976
- b. 1 f. 2 o. 1 Certificates 1952-1979
All certificates are located in oversize folder.

News clippings

- b. 1 f. 3 1940s
- b. 1 f. 4-5 1950s
- b. 1 f. 6-9 1960s
- b. 1 f. 10 1970s
- b. 1 f. 11 Magazines 1954-1976

Writing 1927-1966

- b. 2 f. 1 1927-1966
- b. 2 f. 2 New York City Health Department, Bureau of Public Health Information and Education 1939-1944

Columns

- b. 2 f. 3-5 1939-1944
- b. 2 f. 6 "*Gerri Major's Society*", *Jet Magazine* 1961-1964

Radio and television appearances

- b. 2 f. 7-8 "*Ladies of the Press*", *TV Guide listings* 1963-1966
Major was a panelist on the show.
- b. 2 f. 9 Other 1965
- b. 2 f. 10 Programs 1966
- b. 2 f. 11 Miscellaneous 1955-1975
- b. 2 f. 12 Estate 1985

Birthday celebrations

- b. 2 f. 13 80th birthday 1974
- b. 2 f. 14 85th birthday 1979
- v. 1 Scrapbooks 1979
- v. 2