Summary

Creator: DeLarverié, Stormé, 1920-2014

Title: Stormé DeLarverié papers

Date: 1980-2014

Size: 4 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: Gift, Lisa Cannistraci and Michele Zalopany, 2014

Abstract: The Stormé DeLarverié Collection documents DeLarverié's long career as a singer, male impersonator, and gay rights activist from the 1980s to 2008. The bulk of the collection contains personal and professional correspondence, biographical information, her passport, death certificate and funeral arrangements. Promotional material of DeLarverié's career including journals, programs and flyers of her performances in the Jewel Box Revue, newspapers clippings and reviews, is also found here. Personal items such as her leather jacket and helmet, as well as a trophy and plaques she received in recognition of her efforts in the LGBT community are included in the collection.

Access: Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in the NYPL's online catalog for detailed location information. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: http://archives.nypl.org/divisions/scm/request_access

Preferred citation: [Item], Stormé DeLarverié papers, Sc MG 901, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Stormé DeLarverié was born on December 24, 1920, in New Orleans, Louisiana to an African American mother and a white father. She is known for being a singer, male impersonator, bouncer, and gay rights activist.

From the mid-1950 through the 1960's DeLarverié was the master of ceremonies of the Jewel Box
Revue, America's first racially inclusive traveling revue of impersonators. The show was called "25 Men and 1 Girl," as DeLarverié dressed as a man and the rest of the cast members, all men, dressed as women. She is one of the most successful male impersonator and drag kings of her day and a prized performer. On June 28, 1969, DeLarverié's name would become legendary to the gay community. At fifty years old, she is credited as having thrown the first punch against a policeman as they raided the Stonewall Inn, sparking a riot and igniting the modern gay rights movement. DeLaverié's role in the movement lasted long after 1969. For decades, she was a self-appointed guardian and supporter of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. She was a member of the Stonewall Veterans' Association, holding the offices of Chief of Security, Ambassador, and in 1998 through 2000 she was the Vice President. DeLarverié was well-known in the community and participated in the annual New York City Gay Pride Parade with the Stonewall Veterans and "Stormé's baby", the historic 1969 Cadillac convertible, the "Stonewall Car". In 2000, DeLarverié received a "Gay Lifetime Achievement Award" from Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE). Often referred to as the "Rosa Parks" of the gay rights movement, DeLarverié was a fierce woman and advocate who stood up for the LGBT community on countless occasions. On May 24, 2014, she passed away in her sleep from a heart attack at the age of 93.

Scope and Content Note

The Stormé Delaverie Collection documents DeLarverié's long career as a singer, male impersonator, and gay rights activist from the 1980s to 2008. The bulk of the collection contains personal and professional correspondence, biographical information, her passport, death certificate and funeral arrangements. Promotional material of DeLarverié's career including journals, programs and flyers of her performances in the Jewel Box Revue, newspapers clippings and reviews, is also found here. Personal items such as her leather jacket and helmet, as well as a trophy and plaques she received in recognition of her efforts in the LGBT community are included in the collection.

Arrangement:  I. Personal, II. Professional, III. Printed Material, IV. General

Key Terms

Subjects
African American entertainers
African American lesbians
African American musicians
African American singers
Black author
Gay bars -- United States
Gay liberation movement
Gay rights -- United States
Lesbian activists -- United States
Male impersonators -- United States
Stonewall Riots, New York, N.Y., 1969

Genre/Physical Characteristic
Clippings
Fliers
Programs
Reviews
Names
DeLarverié, Stormé, 1920-2014
Jewel Box Revue (Musical group)