



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Jeanne Manford papers

1972-1995

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Summary

Creator: Manford, Jeanne

Title: Jeanne Manford papers

Date: 1972-1995

Size: 1 linear foot (3 boxes)

Source: Gift of Jeanne Manford, June 1993-1994; 2001.

Abstract: Jeanne Manford, mother of gay rights activist Morty Manford, is best known as co-founder of the first support group for parents of gay children. Known as Parents of Gays (POG), the group was the predecessor to PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians). The collection contains Manford's correspondence, administrative files, photographs, posters, speeches, printed material, and sound and video recordings related to her work on behalf of gay rights.

Conditions Governing Access:

Sound and video recordings are unavailable until duplicated. Please contact the Division regarding access.

One folder of correspondence is restricted until 2075.

Preferred citation: Jeanne Manford Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Compiled by Manuscripts and Archives Division staff; machine readable finding aid created by FAKER.

Related Materials:

Morty Manford Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Gay Activists Alliance Records. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

International Gay Information Center Records. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

Creator History

Jeanne Manford, mother of gay rights activist Morty Manford, is best known as co-founder of the first support group for parents of gay children. Known as Parents of Gays (POG), it was the predecessor to PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

Manford had always supported her son, gay activist Morty Manford, but became active on behalf of gay rights after the police failed to intervene while he was kicked and beaten during a Gay Activists Alliance demonstration in April 1972. She wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Post, which was published in the April 29, 1972 issue, expressing her outrage at the incident. In that letter she also stated, "I have a homosexual son and I love him." The statement sparked much public response and drew attention to violence against gays.

In June of 1972 Manford joined her son in the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade (predecessor to NYC Gay Pride Parade), carrying a placard stating, "Parents of Gays Unite in Support for our Children." She assumed the cheers and encouragement heard from the crowd were for Dr. Benjamin Spock, who walked just behind her and her son. It wasn't until parade participants began to approach her and express gratitude for her presence with hugs and tears, asking Jeanne to speak with their own parents to help them understand, that she realized the cheers were for herself and her open support of gay children.

The Manfords had been discussing organizing a support group for parents of gay children; these events convinced them such a group was needed. About 20 people attended the first meeting on March 11, 1973. At first the group called itself Parents of Gays or POG. The group sought to give parents a place to ask questions, talk about their issues, and begin to better understand their children. Groups developed across New York and in other major American cities as the gay rights movement as a whole developed, and as Jeanne and husband Dr. Jules Manford spoke out for their cause through television, newspaper, and radio interviews.

By the early 1980s, the group formally established itself as a national organization fighting against discrimination against gay people in employment and housing. At about that time the name of the organization was changed to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). PFLAG is now an international organization of parents, family members and friends working for understanding and support of their gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual loved ones. Their mission includes support, education, and advocacy.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Jeanne Manford document Manford's involvement with POG (Parents of Gays), the predecessor organization of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), a homosexual support and educational group. The collection contains her correspondence and administrative files, photographs, newsletters, press releases, clippings, transcriptions of speeches, drafts of placard slogans, posters, printed material, and sound and video recordings, and mementos from Gay Pride parades.

Arrangement: The Jeanne Manford Papers are organized in the following series: Series I. Correspondence, 1972-1995 Series II. POG/PFLAG Files Series III. Photographs Series IV. Sound Recordings, 1974-1977 Series V. Video Recordings, 1974; 1992; 1994 Restricted Letters

Key Terms

Subjects

Gay activists
Parents of gays
Parents of gays -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs
Placards
Posters
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names

Manford, Jeanne
Manford, Morty
Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Container List

Series I. Correspondence 1972-1995

The correspondence files include memos, notes and letters between Jeanne Manford and other members of the office regarding the various functions of the organization, and the activities of other branch offices (Philadelphia, Boston, Denver, etc). Of particular interest are the letters from parents asking for information or assistance, and from young people questioning their own sexuality or asking if or how they should tell family and friends. The originals of these letters are closed until 2075, but photocopies with personally identifying information removed have been placed in box 1, folder 5.

- b. 1 f. 1 1972 - 1975
- b. 1 f. 2 1976
- b. 1 f. 3 1977
- b. 1 f. 4 1978
- b. 1 f. 5 1973-1979

Photocopies of original letters with name and street address of writers deleted. Original letters are closed until 2075.

- b. 1 f. 6 1979-1995

Series II. POG/PFLAG Files

- b. 1 f. 7 Awards
- b. 1 f. 8 By-laws
- b. 1 f. 9-10 Clippings
- b. 1 f. 11 Drafts
- b. 1 f. 12 Financial accounts
- b. 2 f. 1 Grand Marshall name tag - Queens Gay Pride Parade 1993
- b. 2 f. 2 Mailing Lists
- b. 2 f. 3 Newsletters - NYC PFLAG
- b. 2 f. 4 Newsletters- PFLAG outside of NYC
- b. 2 f. 5 Newsletters - non-PFLAG
- b. 2 f. 6 Outreach - meeting notices, radio announcements
- b. 2 f. 7 Outreach - conventions; dinners
- b. 2 f. 8 Outreach - workshops
- b. XXX-1 Placards and posters
- b. 2 f. 9 Press releases
- b. 2 f. 10-12 Publications
- b. 2 f. 13 Speeches

b. 3 Series III. Photographs

Photographs in the this series include images of gay pride parades, the Manfords walking with placards demonstrating support for gay children, and shots of Morty Manford.

Series IV. Sound Recordings 1974-1977

Recordings of public appearances by Jeanne Manford and "Get Out the Vote" campaign ads by the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights.

Sound recordings are unavailable until duplicated. Please contact the Division regarding access.

Series V. Video Recordings 1974, 1992, 1994

Video recordings are unavailable until duplicated. Please contact the Division regarding access.

The Pat Collins Show 1974 July 5

Parents of gay children. Interviews with Jeanne and Jules Manford and others.

Geraldo Live! 1992 Jun

Same sex prom dates. Jeanne Manford, Andy Humm of Hetrick Martin Institute for Lesbian and Gay Youth; Paul Cameron of Family Reserach Center in audience, responding to stage discussion.

Mother's Day speech 1994 May 8

Jeanne Manford's speech at a S.F. (San Francisco?) PFLAG meeting.