



The New York Public Library Music Division

Guide to the

Connie Francis papers

1981-1982

JPB 16-01

Summary

Creator: Francis, Connie

Title: Connie Francis papers

Date: 1981-1982

Size: 1 linear foot (2 boxes)

Source: Collection was acquired in 1988.

Abstract: Connie Francis was an actress, singer and activist for crime victims' rights. The Connie Francis Papers include biographical information, press material, and records of Francis' activities on behalf of crime victim advocacy.

Preferred citation: Connie Francis papers, JPB 16-01. Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Collection was processed in 1988 under the classmark Music-Am. (Letters) 88-9. Collection was rehoused and inventoried in 2016 by Mary Freeman.

Creator History

Connie Francis is an Italian-American popular music singer, actress, and activist for humanitarian and political causes. She was born in Newark, New Jersey on December 12, 1938, as Concetta Rosa Maria Franconero, the first child of George Franconero, Sr. and Ida Franconero (née Ferrari-di Vito). She spent her childhood in Brooklyn.

From the age of four, Francis was encouraged by her father to compete in talent contests, pageants, and to perform at local festivities, as a singer and accordion player. She attended Newark Arts High School and Belleville High School (Belleville, NJ), from which she graduated as salutatorian in 1955. During this time, she continued performing locally and occasionally on TV, including in NBC's variety show *Startime Kids*.

Francis changed her stage name and stopped performing with the accordion on the advice of Arthur Godfrey, on whose show (*Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*) she performed in 1955. At this time, she also began singing on demonstration records, generic recordings of songs for stars to use when deciding what to record themselves. In addition, her father and her manager paid for a private recording session of four songs. One of these won Francis a contract with MGM Records, and was released as her first single. After several failed singles, she had a minor success with a duet, "The Majesty of Love" with Marvin Rainwater. But, her contract was terminated. Francis then applied and was accepted to medical school at New York University, where she was offered a four-year scholarship.

At her final recording session for MGM, in 1957, she recorded "Who's sorry now?," which became a hit and launched her five-decade long career in pop and adult contemporary music. Many other hits followed, especially throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s when Francis was a top-charting female vocalist. As musical taste gravitated towards rock and roll, Francis transitioned to adult contemporary music. Additionally, she pursued international markets for her music, touring overseas and recording songs and albums in multiple languages. Francis' worldwide popularity led to television specials in numerous countries. In 1963, she wrote an autobiography entitled *For Every Young Heart*. In 1968, she recorded a television advertisement for then presidential candidate Richard Nixon. From 1970 until 1973, Francis took a hiatus from performing, only appearing occasionally on television. In 1973, she had a modest come-back success with "(Should I) tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree?," after which she began performing regularly again.

In 1974, Francis ceased performing after she was raped and nearly suffocated at her hotel in upstate New York. The perpetrator was never found. She did not perform again regularly for many years; however, she recorded studio albums in 1978 and 1981 (including the 1981 single "I'm me again," which was her last single to make the Adult Contemporary charts).

In 1981, as her career was beginning to gather steam again, another tragedy occurred - Francis' brother was killed by members of the Mafia. Francis kept performing throughout 1981 and 1982, and became involved in crime victims' advocacy groups, often appearing in television and magazine interviews. She became involved in the organizations Women Against Rape, and VALOR, the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization (VALOR), a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the legal rights of crime victims, and was involved in a case against Judge William Reinecke of Grant County in southwestern Wisconsin.

In late 1982 or early 1983, Francis' new career was brought to a sudden halt. She was diagnosed with manic depression and was treated in several hospitals over the next four years. However, in 1984, Francis wrote a second autobiography, entitled ""Who's Sorry Now,"" which became a New York Times bestseller.

As Francis recovered, she continued to be involved in humanitarian work and activism. President Ronald Reagan appointed her to be head of his task force on violent crime. Francis has also been the spokeswoman for Mental Health America's trauma campaign, and worked for the USO and UNICEF.

In 1989, Francis resumed her recording and performing career, achieving some success in the U.S. and Germany. She was still performing in the first decade of the new millennium, appearing in Las Vegas in 2004 and 2010.

Scope and Content Note

The Connie Francis Papers collection documents Francis' career between 1981-1982, including

interviews, court records of Judge Reinecke's trial and sentencing, and much sympathetic correspondence between Francis and other crime victims.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in five series: Biographical materials, Interview requests, Press material, Anti-rape activism, and Crime victims advocacy. Arrangement is loosely chronological within each series.

Key Terms

Occupations

Actresses -- United States

Singers

Subjects

Rape victims

Names

Francis, Connie

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-3 Biographical materials
 - Interview requests
- b. 1 f. 4 November 1981-February 1982
- b. 1 f. 5 March-April 1982
- b. 1 f. 6 April-June 1982
- b. 1 f. 7 May-July 1982
- b. 1 f. 8 Undated
- Press material
 - General press material
- b. 1 f. 9 October 1981-February 1982
- b. 1 f. 10-11 March 1982
- b. 1 f. 12 April 1982
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- b. 1 f. 16 September 1982
- b. 1 f. 18-19 Undated
- b. 1 f. 20 Press releases October 1981-September 1982
- Anti-rape activism material
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- b. 2 f. 4 Jury trial November 1981
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- b. 2 f. 8 Correspondence with crime victims
- Crime victims advocacy, VALOR, Inc
- b. 2 f. 9-10 General files 1979-1982
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