Deans, Marie; Papers apap377

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
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Summary Information

Repository: M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Title: Marie Deans Papers
ID: apap377
Date [inclusive]: 1958-2011
Physical Description: 5.0 cubic ft.
Physical Location: The materials are located onsite in the department.
Language of the Material: English.
Abstract: This collection documents the death penalty abolitionist work of Marie McFadden Deans. A smaller amount of personal materials, such as Deans' poetry and writing, also is included.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Marie Deans Papers, 1958-2011. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Deans Papers).

Biographical Note

Marie McFadden Deans (1940-2011) was a death penalty abolitionist and an advocate for individuals on death row. Following the murder of her mother-in-law Penny Deans in 1972, Marie Deans began to voice her opposition to capital punishment. In 1976, Marie Deans formed Murder Victims' Families Against the Death Penalty (later called Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation) and, in 1983, established the Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons. Deans worked on legal cases – those of individuals already on death row and individuals on trial for capital crimes, hoping to mitigate their sentences. She visited inmates on the death row, and was present at the executions of almost three dozen individuals in Virginia and South Carolina.
Although the Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons closed after a decade of existence, Marie Deans continued to investigate cases, find inmates attorneys, petition for clemency, call for the abolishment of the death penalty, and advocate for prisoners until her death from lung cancer.

Content Description

The collection includes writings by Marie Deans; clippings about Deans; clippings about death penalty; materials from Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons (founded by Deans); correspondence; reports; subject files; and court documents.

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection is unprocessed and is likely disorganized. Individual items may be difficult to find.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Processing Information

This collection is currently unprocessed.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Robert Deans, son of Marie Deans, donated all materials in this collection to the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives in 2018.
Access

Access to this collection is restricted because it is unprocessed. Portions of the collection may contain recent administrative records and/or personally identifiable information. Please contact an archivist for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

• Death Penalty
• Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons
• Deans, Marie McFadden, 1940-2011
• Capital punishment--United States.
• Death row inmates.