



**FINDING AID TO  
the Barbara (Babs) Elsbury papers, 1957-2001**

**Purdue University Libraries  
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections  
Research Center  
504 West State Street  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058  
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Processed by: Trevor Burrows, July 2016

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator Information</b>	Barbara Elsbury
<b>Title</b>	Barbara (Babs) Elsbury papers, 1954-2001
<b>Collection Identifier</b>	MSF 501
<b>Date Span</b>	1954-2001, predominant 1954-1970
<b>Abstract</b>	This collection contains scrapbooks and papers documenting the academic and professional life of Barbara Elsbury, as well as the academic and social activities of Purdue University.
<b>Extent</b>	1 cubic foot
<b>Finding Aid Author</b>	Trevor Burrows, 2016
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Repository</b>	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

## Administrative Information

<b>Location Information:</b>	ASC-R
<b>Access Restrictions:</b>	Collection is open for research.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	Donated by Sara Morgan, November 16, 2015
<b>Accession Number:</b>	20151116.1
<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	MSF 501, Barbara (Babs) Elsbury papers, 1954-2001, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
<b>Copyright Notice:</b>	Purdue University per deed of gift
<b>Related Materials Information:</b>	Panhellenic Association records, 1956-2002 Dean of Students records, 1974 – 2000 Dean of Women records, 1960-1974

Carol Pyle collection of  
Dean of Women and Dean of Students Memorabilia,  
1980-1989  
*Quest for Equality: Celebrating the Leadership,  
Advocacy, and Commitment of Five Purdue Women*  
[online exhibit]

## **Subjects and Genres**

### **Persons**

Elsbury, Barbara, 1936-2000

### **Organizations**

Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils (Purdue University)

Panhellenic Association of Purdue University

Women's Archives at Purdue University

### **Topics**

Women in higher education

Purdue University--Students--Social life and customs--20th century

Student activities--United States

Student Organizations

### **Form and Genre Types**

scrapbooks

### **Occupations**

Deans of women--United States

## Biography of Barbara (Babs) Elsbury

Barbara Ann “Babs” Elsbury was born in Greenfield, IN, on October 16, 1936. After graduating from Greenfield High School, she earned a bachelor of science degree at Purdue University in 1958. While a student at Purdue, Elsbury was active in numerous social and academic groups, including her sorority Alpha Xi Delta and several related organizations, as well as the Exponent and Mortar Board. Following graduation, Elsbury completed a Masters degree in Counseling at Indiana University.

Elsbury returned to Purdue University in 1962 as a member of the Dean of Women’s staff. She worked with the Dean of Women’s and Dean of Students’ staffs for thirty-five years, holding the title of Assistant Dean from 1967 until her retirement in 1997. In addition to counseling students, she was a notable advisor to the Panhellenic Association, and she administered the Dean of Students Emergency Loan and Gifts fund. She was also a persistent advocate for women in higher education and an active member of the National Association for Women in Education, American Association of University Women in Education, and Indiana Association of Women in Education (IAWE).

Elsbury received many awards and tributes throughout her career. In 1989, Elsbury was awarded the Helen B. Schleman Gold Medallion award, an annual award that highlights a faculty or staff member’s support for women in Purdue’s student body and leadership. In 1993, the Panhellenic Association hosted a tribute banquet in her honor for her many years of dedicated service. And in 1997, Governor Frank O’Bannon named Elsbury a Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest award distributed by Indiana’s governors, and highlighted her work on behalf of Purdue’s Panhellenic Association and sororities. In 1997, a series of annual awards was established in her name, the Dean Elsbury Awards, which rewards individual sorority chapters for a variety of accomplishments. Elsbury died on December 26, 2000, from complications of multiple sclerosis.

## Collection Description

### Scope

The Barbara Ann (Babs) Elsbury papers (1957-2001, 1 box) document various aspects of the student and faculty careers of Barbara Elsbury. The collection features a range of materials concerning the life and culture of Purdue's students and community throughout the mid-twentieth century.

The bulk of the collection is contained in four scrapbooks. A personal scrapbook documents Elsbury's time as an undergraduate at Purdue, gathering materials from roughly 1954-1959. Two additional personal scrapbooks document the early years of her professional life, including the first eight years of her career on the Dean of Women's staff. These three scrapbooks contain a range of materials, from memorabilia such as event programs and ticket stubs to personal grade reports, correspondence, and newspaper clippings. A fourth scrapbook compiles materials that were sent to a banquet honoring her service to Purdue's Panhellenic Association. It includes many photos, notes from former students and colleagues, and a range of memorabilia, much of which pertains to sorority life and greek organizations. Of particular interest is a folder of papers related to Elsbury's death and memorial service, including condolence notes and personal memorial remarks from several of the Deans with whom she served, as well as the Helen Schleman Gold Medallion that she received in 1989.

### Processing Information

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. Some newsprint has been photocopied and in most cases original newspaper clippings have been discarded.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

### **Box 1**

#### Folder

1. Memorial Service, 2001  
Includes a memorial service program, condolence notes, and memorial remarks from Barbara Cook, Betty Nelson, and others.

#### Item

1. Undergraduate scrapbook (green scrapbook), 1954-1959
2. Scrapbook documenting professional activities (black cover), 1960-1964
3. Scrapbook documenting professional activities (white cover), 1964-1970
4. Scrapbook honoring retirement celebration and Panhellenic activities (yellow felt cover), c. 1969-1993
5. Helen B. Schleman Gold Medallion award and related clipping, 1989