



**FINDING AID TO THE
PURDUE GRADUATE DAMES CLUB RECORDS,
1931-1965**

**Purdue University Libraries
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections
Research Center
504 West State Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058
(765) 494-2839**

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Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Purdue University Graduate Dames Club, circa 1932- 1964
Title	Purdue Graduate Dames Club records
Collection Identifier	MSP 146
Date Span	1931-1965
Abstract	The records contain membership information as well as a variety of notes and ephemera documenting the activities of the Purdue University Graduate Dames. Also included are correspondence and programs for the National Association of University Dames.
Extent	0.8 cubic feet (2 mss. boxes)
Finding Aid Author	Virginia Pleasant, 2014
Languages	English
Repository	Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:	ASC
Access Restrictions:	Collection is open for research.
Preferred Citation:	MSP 146, Purdue Graduate Dames Club records, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:	Purdue University
Related Materials Information:	MSP 97, Purdue Women's Club records, Karnes Archives & Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries MSF 343, Carolyn E. Shoemaker collection, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries Earl T. McBee papers, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries (Earl was the

husband of Thelma McBee, the 1936-37 president of
the Graduate Dames)

There are also several University Dames collections at
various university repositories in the United States.

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Carolyn Shoemaker

Organizations

Purdue University Graduate Dames Club
Purdue University Undergraduate Dames Club
Purdue University Dames Club
National Association of University Dames

Topics

Women's clubs
Purdue University--Students--Social life and customs--20th century
Philanthropy
Social groups--United States

Form and Genre Types

Dance cards
Event Programs
Handbooks
Records (documents)
Scrapbooks
Women's studies--Archival resources

History of the Purdue Graduate Dames Club

The Purdue University Graduate Dames Club was a social and philanthropic group for the wives of Purdue graduate students. It included an executive board that met regularly for meetings as well as several special interest groups in which women could electively choose to participate. These groups included bridge, sports, child development, decorating, etc. and changed frequently over the years as interests shifted. The Graduate Dames started in 1932 after the founding members thought it a good idea to separate from the more general University Dames Club which was also inclusive of the wives of undergraduate students. This separation came largely as a result of the large number of participants in the combined club and the resultant inability to function efficiently. The tradition of University Dames at Purdue started much earlier, however; Dean Carolyn Shoemaker was a founding member and sponsor of the Dames from their inception in 1918. Shoemaker remained a strong supporter of and advocate for all University Dames until her death in 1933.

The tradition of University Dames Clubs began with the development of the first such group at Harvard in 1896. As Harvard Dames moved on to other parts of the country they would start new chapters at the next university with which they were affiliated. These clubs were devoted to creating a sense of community between the wives as well as a source of social and intellectual development and philanthropic endeavors. The National Association of University Dames was founded in 1921 to address the growing need to better facilitate transfer of members among chapters and foster a sense of cooperation and communication between them. Due to the fact that individual chapters were quite small and with extremely limited resources, the possibility of annual conventions was unlikely; thus, the founding committee of the national association decided that the responsibilities of the national chapter would be carried out on a rotating basis by the officers of local chapters. Purdue Dames held the national chairmanship for two years (1931-1932, 1933), ostensibly due to the division of the undergraduate and graduate groups.

The Purdue Graduate Dames took on a number of philanthropic projects over the years and contributed significantly to university culture. Some of the groups they supported include: the Agapai, the County Farm, and the Wabash School, among others. They also hosted several events a year, some for members only, others for members and their spouses, and occasionally events that were open to the public. These events were generally formatted around a dinner dance concept or card games, but the Dames were well known for their annual fashion show and crafts bazaars.

The Graduate Dames reverted to their original title of the Purdue University Dames in 1964, when they reabsorbed the Undergraduate group. It is unclear at this time how long the club continued to operate after this since the records end abruptly in 1965 (but with no indication that the club was disbanding). Later records in the collection

indicate that the Dames maintained a cooperative relationship with the Purdue Women's Club as well and it is possible that the two could have merged.

Source(s):

MSP 146, Graduate Dame records, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Board of Trustees Minutes, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Collection Description

Scope

The Purdue Graduate Dames Club records (1931-1965; 0.8 cubic feet) documents the membership and activities of the Dames, as well as the activities of the National Association of University Dames. The collection primarily reflects the general activities of the club and its board, with less information on the individual special interest groups. It also documents changes in the club's relationship with the university and in the club's scope. Unfortunately, there is no information from 1955-1960, and some years are more complete than others. The collection would be useful to researchers interested in social customs of the mid twentieth century, gender roles and women's lives in the same era, social or philanthropic groups, material culture, the non-academic lives of past students and faculty, and the role of Purdue University in the community. Types of materials include: treasury records, meeting minutes, scrapbooks, club publications, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and ephemera. The Records are organized into chronologically by type into three series:

Arrangement

1. National Association of University Dames Yearbooks, 1932-1952 (2 folders)

The NAUD yearbooks were produced annually by the dames affiliated with the school that held the chairmanship. Due to limited funds and the inability to host national conferences, this chairmanship was held on a rotating basis that was determined by the order that schools joined the national association. Each chapter contributed information about their activities and contributions to the community over the past year; this record is often incomplete as it appears that there were frequently chapters that failed to send in their information. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically.

2. Yearly Programs, 1933-1953, (1 folder)

These programs document the annual schedule for the Graduate Dames as well as past and present officers; some years also include the mission and constitution of the Dames. Additional programs have been affixed to the pages of the president's records for some of the years and can help fill in the gaps for those years that are missing from this folder. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically.

3. President's Records, 1931-1955, 1960-1964, (0.7 cubic feet).

The president's records include membership and treasury information, meeting minutes, and a diverse assortment of correspondence and ephemera. The records for 1931-1932 and 1932-1933 are relatively formal and focus primarily on membership and treasury records and meeting minutes. Of note in these years is correspondence between the Dames and the University acknowledging their

contributions to the Dean Carolyn Shoemaker Scholarship Fund, copies of the newsletters that the Dames produced while they held the chairmanship of the National Dames Association, and the reasons for their separation from the undergraduate dames. Later years more closely resemble a scrapbook than official records, and they contain a vast assortment of correspondence and ephemera relating to the club's contributions and activities. After a five year gap in the records, they resume a more formal style (1960-1964); these records note the existence of a club scrapbook, but it was not included with the collection. Also noted in 1964 is the reunification of the undergraduate and graduate sections of the Dames. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically.

Descriptive Rules Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Processing Information

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. Publications of the Purdue Graduate Dames and the National Association of University Dames have been grouped together chronologically when they were not attached to the Presidential scrapbooks. All materials have been housed in acid-free folders and acid-free boxes. Metal clips have been removed when it would interfere with the integrity of the collection. Some portions of the collection are in extremely fragile condition and should be handled with care. Due to the wide variety of materials used in the composition of the scrapbooks, there are some instances of acidification and other deterioration. However, removing these items would severely reduce the research value of the records and jeopardize original order. As a result, pages displaying discoloration or other signs of deterioration have been interleaved with acid free paper.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. National Association of University Dames Yearbooks, 1932-1952 (2 folders)

Box 1

Folder

1. National Association of University Dames Yearbooks, 1932-1940
2. National Association of University Dames Yearbooks, 1940-1952

Series 2. Yearly Programs, 1933-1953

(1 Folder)

Box 1

Folder

3. Yearly Programs, 1933-1953

Series 3. President's Records, 1931-1955, 1960-1964

(0.7 cubic feet)

Box 1

Folder

4. President's Records, 1931-1932
5. President's Records, 1932-1933
6. President's Records, 1933-1934
7. President's Records, 1934-1935
8. President's Records, 1935-1936
9. President's Records, 1936-1937
10. President's Records, 1937-1938
11. President's Records, 1938-1939
12. President's Records, 1939-1940
13. President's Records, 1940-1941
14. President's Records, 1941-1942
15. President's Records, 1942-1943

Box 2

Folder

- 16. President's Records, 1943-1944
- 17. President's Records, 1944-1945
- 18. President's Records, 1945-1946
- 19. President's Records, 1946-1947
- 20. President's Records, 1947-1948
- 21. President's Records, 1948-1949
- 22. President's Records, 1949-1950
- 23. President's Records, 1950-1951
- 24. President's Records, 1951-1952
- 25. President's Records, 1952-1953
- 26. President's Records, 1953-1954
- 27. President's Records, 1954-1955
- 28. President's Records, 1960-1963

The records for 1960-1963 were grouped and bound; they have been left in this format to preserve original order instead of being arranged annually like the rest of the collection.

- 29. President's Records, 1963-1964