

PURDUE

UNIVERSITY



FINDING AID TO THE DOROTHY STRATTON PAPERS, 1935- 2006

**Purdue University Libraries
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections
Research Center
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West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2058
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Processed by: Jonathan McConnell, January 17, 2012

Descriptive Summary

Creator Information	Stratton, Dorothy, 1899-2006
Title	Dorothy C. Stratton papers
Collection Identifier	MSF 366
Date Span	1935-2006
Abstract	This collection contains papers, clippings and photographs documenting Dorothy Stratton's life, especially her role as Purdue Dean of Women and Director of the USCG SPARS.
Extent	1.25 cubic feet (3 mss. boxes and 1 small media box)
Finding Aid Author	Jonathan McConnell, 2012
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.
Acquisition Information:	Donation by Dorothy C. Stratton, Sept. 23, 1979; Donation by Sarah J. Watlington, Mar. 7, 2008
Custodial History:	Sarah J. Watlington inherited several boxes of material relating to Purdue Deans of Women Dorothy Stratton, Helen Schleman, and Beverley Stone after their deaths. Watlington donated that material to Purdue Archives and Special Collections starting in 2008 and relevant material from that donation was added to the existing Dorothy Stratton papers.
Accession Numbers:	20080307, 20081212, 20100702
Preferred Citation:	MSF 366, Dorothy C. Stratton papers, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries

Copyright Notice:

The copyright of some items in this collection may be held by their respective creators. Consult the archivist for details.

Related Materials Information:

Dorothy Stratton had close ties to the three immediately successive Deans of Women: Helen B. Schleman, Beverley Stone, and Barbara Cook. More photos, correspondence, etc. relating to Stratton can be found in those collections.

Subjects and Genres

Persons

Stratton, Dorothy C. (Dorothy Constance), 1899-2006

Organizations

United States. Coast Guard. Women's Reserve

Topics

Purdue University. Dean of Women.

Women—Education

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, Female.

Form and Genre Types

Book

Clippings

Correspondence

Drafts (documents)

Pamphlets

Photographic Prints

Occupations

Women College Administrator

Armed Forces Officer

Biography of Dorothy C. Stratton

Dorothy Constance Stratton (1899-2006) served as Dean of Women at Purdue from 1933 until 1946, at a time in which the enrollment of women students jumped from less than 500 to more than 1,400. During her tenure at Purdue, she oversaw the creation of a liberal science program for women in the School of Science as well as an employment placement center. She helped establish the Housemother Training School that gave intensive training to fraternity and sorority housemothers from across the United States. In 1942, during the Second World War, Stratton took a military leave of absence from Purdue and was commissioned to create and direct the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard, also known as SPARS (an acronym she coined based on the phrase "Semper Paratus, Always Ready"). Upon her retirement from the military in 1946, she was awarded a Legion of Merit Medal for her contributions to women in the armed forces. Stratton went on to serve as the first director of personnel at the International Monetary Fund and then later as an executive director of the Girl Scouts of the America until her retirement in 1960.

Sources:

Purdue Women's Archive website (<http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/womenarc/>)

Materials within the collection

Collection Description

Scope

The Dorothy Stratton papers (1935-2006; 1.25 cubic feet) predominately document Stratton's work as Dean of Women at Purdue and as Director of the United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (also known as SPARS) through correspondence, pamphlets and photographs. Also of interest are a number of speeches and essays by Stratton about the role of women's education in a democratic post-war world. Materials from later in Stratton's life are generally secondary sources such as clippings about her birthdays, legacy, and obituaries. The papers are organized into five series:

Arrangement

1. Biographical Information, 1933 – 2006 (0.15 cubic feet). This series contains documents such as Stratton's curriculum vitae and university placement file, as well as secondary sources such as newspaper clippings.

2. Correspondence, 1943 – 1998 (0.1 cubic feet)

The majority of this series is composed of Stratton's official correspondence as Dean of Women at Purdue and as Director of the SPARS. There is also personal correspondence from later in Stratton's life (1978 – 1998). Also of interest is a note from Eleanor Roosevelt to Coast Guard Admiral Waesche expressing regret at not being able to attend a SPARS event.

3. Speeches and Written Materials, 1943 – 1993 (0.15 cubic feet)

This series includes the texts of official Coast Guard broadcasts and various speeches Stratton delivered after the war. Also of interest is a large folder of material Stratton produced for a book project about the history of certain phrases, called *Lore of Our Language*.

4. SPARS Related Items, 1943 – 1999 (0.15 cubic feet)

Includes SPARS recruiting and reunion pamphlets and copies of *The Reservist* magazine with articles about Stratton and SPARS. There is also a copy of the book *Three Years Behind the Mast*.

5. Photographs, 1935 – 1998 (0.7 cubic feet)

The great majority of photographs in this series are official Coast Guard photos documenting the SPARS during WWII. There are also several photos of Stratton as Dean of Women and a few photos from later in her life.

Descriptive Rules

Processing Information

The papers relating to Purdue Deans of Women Dorothy Stratton, Helen Schleman, Beverley Stone and Barbara Cook, have had a unique history. Although Stratton personally donated an album of WWII photographs to Purdue University Library in 1979, most of the materials in the Stratton papers were transferred from Dorothy Stratton to Helen Schleman to Beverley Stone to Barbara Cook before finally coming under the stewardship of Sarah J. Watlington and Betty Nelson, who donated the combined materials to the Karnes Archives and Special Collections. The close friendships between these women and their shared histories as Deans of Women/Deans of Students at Purdue make determining the intended recipient of photographs, letters and other shared documents difficult. The archivists have attempted to restore the provenance of these materials and arrange them into appropriate individual collections to the extent possible. However, due to the intertwined histories of the women on professional and personal levels, the organization may not show exact provenance. Researchers studying Dorothy Stratton may want to also examine the papers of Helen Schleman, Beverley Stone, and Barbara Cook for additional insight into Stratton's life and career.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. Biographical information, 1933 – 2006

(0.15 cubic feet)

Box 1

Folder

1. Certificates, citations, placement file and c.v., 1941-1993
2. Manuscript, "Semper Paratus," Skipper of the SPARS, circa 1943
3. Correspondence and other materials, 100th birthday celebration, 1999
4. Clippings, 1943 – 2005
5. Funeral information and obituary clippings, 2006
6. Manuscript, "Guinea Pigs: The Experimental Curriculum for Women at Purdue, 1939 – 47," by Sara Barnes, 1997
7. Coast Guard ID Bracelet, Legion of Merit Ribbon, medal authorization card, 1945
8. Various keepsakes, circa 1944 – 1945
Includes Presidential Inauguration invitation and program
9. Miscellaneous Dorothy Stratton materials compiled by Beverley Stone, circa 1990s
Includes greeting cards from DCS and clippings

10. Purdue Student Handbooks, 1936 – 1940
11. “Purdue News” Student Handbooks, 1941 – 1946
Includes “Liberal Science for Women at Purdue,” 1946
12. Transcript, “Conversation with 3 Generations of Deans,” circa 1985

Series 2. Correspondence, 1943 – 1998

(0.1 cubic feet)

Folder

13. Correspondence, Purdue, 1944 – 1947
14. Correspondence, SPARS, 1943 – 1946
15. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1978 – 1995
16. Correspondence to Sally Watlington, 1989 – 1998
17. Note, Eleanor Roosevelt to Admiral Waesche, 1943

Box 2

Series 3. Speeches and written material, 1943 – 1993

(0.15 cubic feet)

Folder

1. Schleman, Helen and Dorothy Stratton, *Your Best Foot Forward*, 1940
Inscribed with a note to “Papa and Mama Stratton”
2. *Mortar Board Quarterly* articles written by Stratton and Schleman, 1938 - 1939
3. Notes for Bob Topping's book, Mildred McAfee obituary, 1993 – 1994
4. Speeches, 1940s – circa 1950s
5. Notes for “Lore of our Language,” 1961 – 1963
An unrealized book or magazine column project about the mythical roots of popular phrases
6. Notes about Deans of Women history, circa 1980s
7. Coast Guard PR broadcasts, articles, and interviews, circa 1940s

Series 4. SPARS related items, 1943 - 1999

(0.15 cubic feet)

Folder

8. SPARS Recruiting and Anniversary Material, circa 1943 – 1997
9. Program, Calendar, and Pamphlet relating to Women in Military, 1983 – 1997

- Pamphlet from the Military Women's Corridor dedication ceremony has an 8x10 and a 3x6 photo with it
10. Reservist Magazine, 1992, 1999
 11. Lyne, Mary C. and Kay Arthur, *Three Years Behind the Mast*, 1946

Series 5. Photographs, 1935 – 1998

(0.7 cubic feet)

Folder

12. Dorothy Stratton at Purdue, 1935 – 1987
13. Miscellaneous photos, 1940 – 1998
14. Autographed photos of other people, circa 1940s
Including Lillian Gilbreth, Coast Guard officers, and Ginger Rogers

Box 3

1. Field photos, Alaska and Hawaii, 1943 – 1945
2. Captain ceremony and Legion of Merit, 1944 – 1947
3. Dorothy Stratton in Uniform, circa 1943
4. Miscellaneous SPARs photos, circa 1942 – 1945
5. SPARs photos with provenance note, circa 1942 – 1946
6. Inspection trips, 1943 – 1944
7. Admiral R. Waesche, 1943 – 1944
8. Palm Beach Training Station, circa 1943 – 1944
9. U.S. Coast Guard Academy, 1943 – 1945
10. U.S.C.G. Headquarters and Washington D.C., 1942 – 1946
11. Ranking women officers, 1943 – 1951
12. Coast Guard: Normandy and Okinawa, 1945
Includes the famous photo "Into the Jaws of Death"
13. Eleanor Roosevelt reviews SPARs, Washington D.C., 1944

Box 4

Home video, SPAR 50th Reunion, Washington D.C. Nov. 1992 (VHS and DVD copy)