



Giovanni's Room records, circa 1975-1991 : Ms.Coll.17

Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by staff of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia on

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Summary Information

Repository:	John J. Wilcox, Jr. LGBT Archives, William Way LGBT Community Center
Creator:	Giovanni's Room (Bookstore).
Title:	Giovanni's Room records
ID:	Ms.Coll.17
Date:	circa 1975-1991
Physical Description:	27 Linear Feet
Physical Description:	27 boxes
Physical Location:	Collections 10.5, Collections 15, and Collections 16
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Giovanni's Room, the oldest LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) bookstore in the United States, was founded in Philadelphia in 1973 and is still in operation as of 2012. The bulk of the Giovanni's Room records, circa 1975-1991, are financial in nature.

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Biographical/Historical Note

Giovanni's Room, among the oldest gay and lesbian bookstores in the United States, was founded in 1973 at 232 South Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by three Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) members, Tom Wilson, Bernie Boyle and Dan Sherbo. In 1974 they sold the business to lesbian activist Pat Hill. In 1976, when the South Street building was sold, Pat sold out to Arleen Olshan and Ed Hermance, and they relocated the shop to 1426 Spruce, and finally to its present location [as of 2012] at 12th and Pine in 1979.

Paralleling the growth of Philadelphia's "out" community and the expansion of publishing in its subject areas, the store doubled three times from its beginning on South Street to its present two buildings (one a double trinity from the 1820s, the other a mom-and-pop store and house from the 1880s) on the corner of South 12th and Pine Streets. Olshan left the partnership in 1986.

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Scope and Content Note

The bulk of the records in this collection are financial in nature (sales receipts, expense invoices, and cancelled checks). There are also a small number of employment applications, inventory lists, and other records. The Archives has more Giovanni's Room materials in its ephemera files.

Box 1: Pre-1980 Records Box 2: Inventories -- late 70s Box 3: Bookkeeping, Cancelled Checks 1983 Box 4: Bookkeeping, Cancelled Checks 1984 Box 5: Sales Receipts 1983-87 Box 6: Sales Receipts 1983-87 Box 7: Sales Receipts 1983-87 Box 8: Sales Receipts 1988-89 Box 9: Sales Receipts 1988-89 Box 10: Sales Receipts 1991 Box 11: Expense Invoices, Petty Cash Receipts 1983-84 Box 12: Expense Invoices 1981-85 Box 13: Expense Invoices 1985-86 Box 14: Expense Invoices 1985-86 Box 15: Expense Invoices 1987-88 Box 16: Expense Invoices 1987-88 Box 17: Expense Invoices 1987-88 Box 18: Expense Invoices 1987-88 Box 19: Expense Invoices 1988-90 Box 20: Expense Invoices 1989-90 Box 21: Expense Invoices 1991 Box 22: Expense Invoices 1991 Box 23: Expense Invoices 1991 Box 24: Expense Invoices 1991 Box 25: Taxes pre-1987 Box 26: Employment Applications -- rejected Box 27: Miscellaneous

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access Note

Contact John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2011-2012 as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR), using data provided by the John J. Wilcox Jr. LGBT Archives of Philadelphia. The HCI-PSAR project was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was done in the HCI-PSAR project.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Bookstores
- Gays
- Independent bookstores
- Mass media and gays
- Philadelphia (Pa.)
- Sexual minorities
- Giovanni's Room (Bookstore).