

C Paxson, Marjorie B. (1923-2017), Papers, 1844-2008
4078 7.25 cubic feet, 2 volumes, 27 audio cassettes, 2 video cassettes, 2 computer discs

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of Marjorie B. Paxson, a journalist and newspaper publisher who established the National Women and Media Collection, include news articles, correspondence, material on national and international women's conferences, and miscellaneous personal and professional papers.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Marjorie B. Paxson on 10 December 1987 (Accession No. 4811). An addition was made on 17 November 2011 by Marjorie B. Paxson (Accession No. 4811.01).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Marjorie "Marj" Bowers Paxson was born on August 13, 1923, in Houston, Texas, to Roland Brubaker and Marie Bowers Paxson. Paxson graduated from Mirabeau B. Lamar High School in Houston in 1940. Paxson attended Rice University in Houston for two years, where she worked on the student newspaper, the *Thresher*. In 1942 Paxson then transferred to the University of Missouri and graduated in 1944. While there she worked on the *Columbia Missourian*.

After graduating, Paxson went to work for United Press in Lincoln, Nebraska. After World War II ended, Paxson, like many other female journalists at the time, was forced out of her job to make room for a returning veteran. She then landed a job with the Associated Press in Omaha, Nebraska, before returning to Houston, where she worked for both the *Houston Post* and the *Houston Chronicle*. At the *Post*, Paxson served as the society editor and worked to get more feature stories in the Sunday women's section. In 1952, Paxson became the women's editor at the *Houston Chronicle* where she oversaw a staff of seven.

In search of a new challenge, Paxson moved to Florida in 1956 to work as a copy editor for the *Miami Herald's* women page. During her time at the *Herald*, wide-ranging social and political changes were taking place across the world. Paxson and her colleagues lobbied for new topics such as birth control, the sexual revolution, and women's health issues to be featured in the women's section.

In 1963, Paxson was elected president of Theta Sigma Phi (now known as the Association for Women in Communications). She transformed the organization from a sorority into a professional organization. During her presidential tenure, the organization established a national headquarters in Austin, Texas; membership increased; and professional programs were offered at the national conference.

Paxson unexpectedly received an offer to become the women's editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* in 1968 and decided to take the job. After the *Times* replaced its women's section with a style section in 1969, Paxson went from women's editor to assistant features editor and a man was given her position as editor of the new section.

Shortly thereafter she was notified that the *Times* had won a J. C. Penney-University of Missouri Journalism Award which recognized the nation's top reporters and editors working in women's page journalism. Six weeks later, when her employers discovered Paxson was looking for a new job, she was fired from the *Times* in 1970.

That same year Paxson landed her next job at the *Philadelphia Bulletin* which still had a women's section. Within a short time, the *Bulletin* also eliminated its women's section, and Paxson became the associate editor of the Sunday magazine before being reassigned as an assistant metropolitan editor. While at the *Bulletin*, Paxson was named editor of *Xilonen*, an eight-page daily newspaper published for the United Nations World Conference for International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975. She hired the staff, edited copy, supervised page make-up, and oversaw distribution.

Paxson then joined the Gannett Company in 1976 as the assistant managing editor at the *Idaho Statesman* in Boise. That same year Paxson won the Women in Communications Headliner Award for her work as the editor of *Xilonen*. Two years later she became publisher and editor of the *Public Opinion* in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. In 1980 Gannett Company named Paxson publisher of the *Muskogee (OK) Phoenix* where she stayed until she retired in 1986. Paxson remained in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and continued to write a column for the *Phoenix* until 2004.

In 1987, Paxson donated \$50,000 and her personal papers to help establish the National Women and Media Collection at the University of Missouri's Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia (now administered by the State Historical Society of Missouri). She died on June 17, 2017.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Marjorie B. Paxson Papers have been arranged into the following eight series: **Articles; Professional; Women's Conferences and Organizations; Correspondence; Personal; Family; Photographs; and Audiovisual.**

The **Articles** series contains news articles and drafts written by Paxson for a variety of newspapers and other publications throughout her journalistic career. The series is arranged alphabetically.

The **Professional** series consists of material concerning Paxson's professional activities at newspaper organizations for which she worked as well as her involvement in professional organizations and conferences. Included in the series are numerous speeches given by Paxson, many of which were given during her time as president of Theta Sigma Phi. The series is arranged alphabetically.

The **Women's Conferences and Organizations** series consists of material pertaining to Paxson's involvement and work for various women's conference and organizations, including her work on *Xilonen*, the newspaper published for the U.N. Conferences for International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975, and *Forum 80*, the newspaper of the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women which was held in Copenhagen in 1980. The series is arranged alphabetically.

The **Correspondence** series contains both personal and professional correspondence arranged chronologically. Of particular note is the extensive correspondence written by Paxson to her family while she was working in Nebraska from 1945 to 1948.

The **Personal** series includes clippings, scrapbooks, a diary written while Paxson was attending the University of Missouri in the early 1940s, educational material, and other miscellaneous personal material. Included in the series are several cartoons and caricatures of Paxson done by cartoonists on newspapers for which she worked.

The **Family** series contains genealogical and family papers for the Bowers, Brubaker, Dinkelberg, and Paxson families. Included are the papers of Paxson's father, Roland B. Paxson.

Part of the **Photographs** series is arranged chronologically and the other part is arranged alphabetically by topic. The photographs are both personal and professional in nature and include photographs of family and friends.

The **Audiovisual** series consists of 27 audio cassettes, two video cassettes, and two computer discs. The audio cassettes are arranged chronologically and include audio messages between Paxson and her parents, as well as speeches Paxson gave and an oral history she participated in with the Washington Press Club Foundation. The video cassettes contain an interview given by Paxson at Penn State University and her Washington Press Club Foundation oral history. The video cassette of the Penn State University interview is also available on two computer discs.

FOLDER LIST

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- f. 1 1947-1987
- f. 2-3 Drafts, 1950s-1980s, n.d.
- f. 4-8 *Houston Chronicle*, 1953-1956
- f. 9 *Idaho Statesman*, 1976-1977
- f. 10 *Miami Herald*, 1957-1960, n.d.
- f. 11-20 *Muskogee Phoenix*, 1986-2004
- f. 21 *Public Opinion*, 1979-1980
- f. 22 Women in management story file, 1982

Professional Series

- f. 23-27 General, 1950s-1980s, n.d.
- f. 28 AMA Supervisory Management Course, 1970
- f. 29 AP Women's study, 1960-1962
- f. 30 API seminar, 1959
- f. 31 Asian-American Women Broadcasters Conference, 1966
- f. 32-33 Asian-American Women Journalists' Conference, 1965
- f. 34 "The Evolving Status of Newspaperwomen," Thesis by Zena Beth McGlashan, 1978 (Paxson interviewed for thesis)
- f. 35 A Food Editor's Seminar, 1972
- f. 36-40 Gannett Company
 - f. 36 General, 1976-1981
 - f. 37 *Gannetteer*, 1979-1985
 - f. 38 Michigan Conference on Research and Writing, 1976

- f. 39 Retirement, 1986
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- f. 42-44 *Miami Herald*, 1957-1969, n.d.
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 - f. 81 Seminar on Women's Pages, 1963
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Women's Conferences and Organizations Series

- f. 83 Conference on the U.N. Decade for Women, Washington, DC, 1979
- f. 84-88 International Women's Year, World Conference and Tribune, Mexico City, 1975
 - f. 84 General, 1975
 - f. 85 Articles by Paxson, 1975
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- f. 89-92 National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year
 - f. 89 General, 1976
 - f. 90 *American Women Today and Tomorrow*, 1977
 - f. 91 Press releases, 1976
 - f. 92 "...To Form a More Perfect Union...": *Justice for American Women*, 1976
- f. 93-96 National Women's Conference, Houston, Texas, 1977
 - f. 93 General, 1977
 - f. 94 Clippings, 1977

- f. 95 *Daily Breakthrough: Where Women Are News*, 1977
- f. 96 Idaho delegation, 1977
- f. 97-109 World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 1980
 - f. 97-100 General, 1979-1980
 - f. 101 Articles and writings by Paxson, 1980
 - f. 102 Clippings, 1980
 - f. 103 Correspondence, 1979-1981
 - f. 104 *Forum 80*, July 1980
 - f. 105 International Women's Tribune Centre, Newsletter, 1979-1980
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 - f. 108 Programme of Action, 1980
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- f. 149 Travel, Journal, New England, 1947

- f. 150 Travel, European Tour, 1952
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- f. 153 Dinkelberg, Celia, Autograph book, 1879-1880
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- f. 155 Paxson and Brubaker families, Papers and genealogical material, 1853-1972
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- f. 173 Camping trip, 1969
- f. 174 Engagement and wedding of Marie Bowers and Roland B. Paxson, 1918-1922, 1972
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- a.c. 1-2 "Christmas Memories and Daddy's Reminiscences," 1974
(Reminiscences by Roland and Marie Paxson)
- a.c. 3 Side A – "Squirrel," c. 1975 (Audio message from Paxson to her parents);

- Side B – “From Us,” c. 1975 (Audio message from her mother to Paxson)
- a.c. 4 “Easter-Cross,” c. 1975 (Audio message from Paxson to her parents)
- a.c. 5 Side A – Altrusa Club speech, Oct. 21, 1975;
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- a.c. 6 “New Year’s,” Jan. 3, 1976 (Audio message from Paxson to her parents)
- a.c. 7 Audio message from her parents to Paxson, Jan. 19, 1976
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