



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI RESEARCH CENTER-KANSAS CITY

K1166

Rose Evelyn Kurs Sporn (1919-2011) Papers

[Jewish Community Archives]

1952-2011

17 folders

Sporn was an educator, poet, playwright, and essayist. Includes material concerning B'nai B'rith Women Heart of America Chapter 527 activities, such as the Dolls for Democracy program initiated by the Chapter with Fellowship House. Also Jewish Community Center event programs and her personal remembrances, writings, and photographs.

BIOGRAPHY:

Rose Evelyn Kurs was born at Research Hospital, Kansas City, Missouri, in 1919. Her parents were Max Kurs and Lena Friedman. She grew up in the area of 18th and Lydia, and attended Irving school. She married David Sporn (1917-2005) on December 31, 1941, and was the mother of daughters Wendy Sporn and Debbie Sporn Warden.

A lifelong advocate for children and their education, she graduated from Kansas City Teacher's College in 1940, and from Emporia State University, with a M.A. in Early Childhood Education, in 1982. She is an award-winning poet, playwright, and essayist, and is the recent recipient of the 2008 International Society of Poets award.

She was a member of the Beth Shalom Synagogue of Overland Park, Kansas, for over fifty-eight years, and taught Sunday school there for forty-seven years. She retired from the Jewish Community Center as Director of Early Childhood Programs after a twenty-seven year career there in various capacities, including grant fund writing and grant administration, and supervising innovative programs such as "Fun with Music;" creating concerts for preschool age children, "Mornings with Music;" and for the B'nai B'rith Women, "Kiddie Kapers" plays (for which she was the playwright and sometimes director and publicist). Rose Evelyn Sporn was president of the B'nai B'rith Women Heart of America Chapter 527 from 1952-1953. She was instrumental in the development and administration of its remarkable "Dolls for Democracy" program which taught thousands of

school children about democracy and tolerance in a program that operated throughout the United States and Canada for over fifty years.

Rose Evelyn Sporn passed away on Wednesday, September 21, 2011.

PROVENANCE:

This gift was received from Rose Evelyn Sporn as accession KA1651 on June 11, 2008. An addition, KA1671, was received on January 5, 2009. Accession KA2006 was received from Sunie Levin on December 7, 2011.

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Specific item; folder number; *Rose Evelyn Kurs Sporn (1919-2011) Papers (K1166)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Kansas City [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-KC].

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DESCRIPTION:

This collection consists of a leather bound scrapbook of B'nai B'rith Women Heart of America Chapter 527's activities from 1952-1953, including a description of, and newspaper clippings about, the Dolls for Democracy program initiated by the Heart of America Chapter 527 with Fellowship House in 1952. Also included is a brief history of the Dolls for Democracy program (which expanded to other B'nai B'rith Women chapters and was active for over fifty years throughout the United States and Canada), and Jewish Community Center event programs from 1974, 1976, and 1978-1979.

Additional materials include personal remembrances, writings, and photographs.

RELATED MATERIALS:

The Jewish Women International "Dolls for Democracy" Collection (KA1615) has fifty-five original "Dolls for Democracy" dolls and a wooden

carrying case designed to carry a maximum of three dolls at one time. Fifty-one of the dolls were hand-made and signed by artists J.S. and Cecil Weeks (or by Cecil Weeks alone) of Independence, Missouri.

The Congregation Beth Shalom Records (KA1317) collection has photographs of Rose Evelyn Sporn's first grade Sunday school classes for 1980-1982.

INVENTORY:

BOX 001

Folder 1. Leather covered spiral bound scrapbook (11 5/8" x 9 3/4" x 1/2"), labeled "Scrapbook" of the activities of B'nai B'rith Women Heart of America chapter 527 from 1952-1953. Assembled by collection donor, Rose Evelyn Sporn, during her term as president of the chapter, the scrapbook contains notes, newspaper clippings, photographs, and memorabilia of the chapter's activities and members.

Of particular interest are the newspaper clippings related to the chapter's "Dolls of Democracy" program.

Folder 2. "Dolls for Democracy" history written by former "Dolls ladies" Joan Kort (March 2008) and Joyce Koch (June 2008).

Folder 3. Jewish Community Center event programs:
 March 12, 1974 – "Prizes and Penalties: Behavior Modification in the Young Child"
 1976 – "With Liberty and Justice for All: Have We Secured These Rights? A series of three programs to explore our rights as American citizens during our bicentennial year." Registration form.
 1978 – "American's Third Century: Dilemmas and Decisions." Registration form.
 1979 – "America Today: The Challenge of Change." Registration form.

(KA1671)

Folder 4. Kiddie Kapers, 1958- ca. 2000

Folder 5. Newspaper clipping retrospective on 1950 KC centennial essay contest, 2000

Folder 6. Published poems from poetry concerts, 2007-2008

Folder 7. Photographs- Kiddie Kapers, poetry award, 1970s-2008

(KA2006)

- Folder 8. Biographical information- Rose Evelyn Sporn
- Folder 9. "First Person, Kansas City" or "Growing up Jewish and Poor", Rose Evelyn Kurs Sporn, re. childhood at 18th & Lydia
- Folder 10. "My Father, Max Kurs", Rose Evelyn Sporn
- Folder 11. Correspondence: Gershon Hadas; Hy Vile; Bill Yearout; Randall Jessee; Harry Truman (photocopy)
- Folder 12. "Peter Pan", Kiddie Kapers show by R.E. Sporn, Heart of America Chapter BBW, November 1971
- Folder 13. "Introduction to Teaching", class at Beth Shalom schools, Mrs. David Sporn, teacher, 1972
- Folder 14. "Alice in Wonderland", Kiddie Kapers script by Rose Evelyn Sporn, 1976
- Folder 15. "A Pair of Candlesticks" by Rose Evelyn Sporn, Beth Shalom Sisterhood, November 1982
- Folder 16. Poetry, writings, music by Rose Evelyn Sporn
- Folder 17. Photographs