FINDING AID TO THE
AVANELLE KIRKSEY PAPERS, 1943-2012

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Processed by: Virginia Pleasant, April 2017
Descriptive Summary

Creator Information  Kirksey, Avanelle, 1926-2016
Title  Avanelle Kirksey papers
Collection Identifier  MSF 502
Date Span  1943-2012, predominant 1975-1995
Abstract  The collection documents the life and career of Dr. Avanelle Kirksey, a prominent researcher and educator in the area of maternal and infant nutrition.
Extent  7.8 cubic feet (19 mss boxes, 1 c.f. box, 1 shoe box)
Finding Aid Author  Virginia Pleasant, 2017
Languages  English
Repository  Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections Research Center, Purdue University Libraries

Administrative Information

Location Information:  ASC-R
Access Restrictions:  Collection is open for research. The collection is stored offsite; 24 hours' notice is required to access the collection.
Acquisition Information:  Collection was donated to the Archives in Fall 2016 by Monica Freeland and Myron Kirksey, Avanelle’s Niece and nephew, respectively. (October 26, 2016; November 7, 2016)
Accession Numbers:  20161026; 20161107
Preferred Citation:  MSF 502, Avanelle Kirksey papers, Karnes Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries
Copyright Notice:  Purdue University per deed of gift
Related Materials Information:  UA 15, College of Health and Human Sciences records
Subjects and Genres

Persons
Kirksey, A. (Avanelle)

Topics
Vitamin B6
Nutrition -- Research
Malnutrition
Lactation -- Nutritional aspects
Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Program
Purdue University. Department of Foods and Nutrition.
Women’s archives at Purdue University
Women in higher education
Women in science

Form and Genre Types
Artifacts
Personal papers
Research papers
Biography of Avanelle Kirksey

Dr. Avanelle (Nell) Kirksey (1926-2016) was born in Mulberry, Arkansas to Odell and Blanche Kirksey. She had two brothers, Ozell (who was killed during WWII) and Joe, a prominent figure in the soybean industry. Her father, Dr. Odell Kirksey, was a noted obstetrician and opened Arkansas' first maternity hospital (the Kirksey Maternity Hospital) where he is estimated to have delivered 4700 babies over the years. Although she was discouraged from practicing medicine, it is likely that Avanelle's later research interests took some inspiration from her father's work.

Kirksey received her B.S. in 1947 from the University of Arkansas, with a major in Home Economics and minors in chemistry and biology. Her M.S. in home economics and dietetics was attained in 1950 from the University of Tennessee. Finally, she received her PhD from Pennsylvania State University in 1961 in the field of Nutrition and biochemistry. Her work at Penn State was supervised by Dr. Ruth Pike whose research focused on Vitamin B6, which was another contributing factor to the trajectory of Kirksey's research. During the course of her postsecondary education, Kirksey taught at a handful of institutions before accepting her position at Purdue University upon the completion of her PhD work.

Kirksey's work in the area of maternal and infant nutrition has left a lasting impact, both directly and through the ongoing legacy of the many graduate students she mentored. Much of her work focused on the role of Vitamin B6 in maternal health and infant development, as well as the impact of mild to moderate malnutrition. Kirksey is perhaps best known for her involvement in and oversight of the multi-institutional Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Program which examined malnutrition in Egypt, Kenya, and Mexico. Kirksey was also involved in a large scale project designed to develop nutrition education programs in Indonesian colleges. Her work is credited with providing a better overall understanding of the role of micronutrients in maternal and infant health and nutrition.

Kirksey was the recipient of numerous awards and honors over the course of career. She was awarded the title of Meredith Distinguished Professor of Foods and Nutrition during her tenure at Purdue (1961-1994). She was the second woman at Purdue to be awarded a distinguished professorship. Purdue also honored Kirksey's research by awarding her an Honorary Doctorate. Additionally, Kirksey was a distinguished Alumna at both the University of Arkansas and Penn State. Other awards and honors of note were the Borden Award (1980), the Lederle Award (1994), and her designation as a Fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition (1994). Upon her retirement in 1994, the annual Avanelle Kirksey Lecture Series was established to honor Kirksey's lasting contributions.

Sources:

Materials within the collection
Avanelle Kirksey obituary, swtimes.com/obituaries/avanelle-kirksey-0
Collection Description

Scope

The Avanelle (Nell) Kirksey papers (1943-2012; 7.8 cubic feet) document the life and career of Dr. Avanelle Kirksey, a prominent researcher in maternal and infant nutrition. The collection reflects the impact of Kirksey as an educator and researcher, as well as the continued significance of her research on maternal and infant nutrition. The coverage of her work in Egypt and on vitamin B6 is particularly strong. Additionally, the collection is an indication of Kirksey’s ongoing legacy via the research of her graduate students. These materials could be useful to researchers interested in Kirksey’s career, the NCRSP projects, Vitamin B6 research, maternal and infant nutrition, early studies in lactation and breast milk composition, mixed methods and interdisciplinary research in the health and nutrition field, and women in higher education. Types of materials include: papers, publications, correspondence, clippings, photographs, and artifacts, etc. The collection is organized into three series:

Arrangement

1. Personal papers, 1943-2012 (1.2 cubic feet). This series provides some insight into Kirksey’s personal and family life. It includes many pictures of her travels, miscellaneous clippings, correspondence, materials related to her retirement and the construction of her house, and college transcripts. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically by type.

2. Professional papers, 1943-2007 (4.6 cubic feet). This series includes material related to Kirksey’s career in nutrition research and higher education. It provides insight into her role as an instructor and mentor, the impact and scope of her research, major presentations and publications, and the numerous awards with which she was honored over the years. Also included in the series are course materials from various courses that Kirksey taught (particularly Foods and Nutrition 525 and 601). These materials include course outlines, notes, lectures and presentations, and readings. This portion of the series provides insight into Kirksey’s approach to instruction. Materials in the series are arranged chronologically by type.

3. Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Programs (NCRSP) papers, 1972-2001 (2 cubic feet). This series includes material relevant to Kirksey’s work with and oversight of the Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Programs. Materials included cover the maternal, infant, and child nutrition study in Egypt, Kenya, and Mexico, as well as a later proposed project on cowpeas in Costa Rica. The series is particularly strong in its coverage of the Egypt segment of research (likely because of Kirksey’s direct involvement in data collection there). Materials in the series are arranged chronologically by type.
Descriptive Rules *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*

**Processing Information**

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. All materials have been placed in archival sleeves, folders, and boxes, and metal fasteners have been removed. All newsprint has been photocopied and in most cases original newspaper clippings have been discarded. Some clippings containing images of people or color graphics, or front pages of newspapers, have been preserved for display purposes. In many cases, Kirksey’s original folder labels have been retained, original labels are indicated by the presence of brackets in the detailed inventory and on folders. Widely available books and the dissertations of Kirksey’s students have been separated from the collection; dissertations are now housed separately with the Purdue dissertation collection. Duplicate material in all forms (i.e. slides, photocopies, etc.) has been separated from the collection to better facilitate ease of research.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Series 1. Personal papers, 1943-2012
(1.2 cubic feet)

Box 1  Personal

Folder
1. Family clippings, 1978-2012
2. [Family], 2004-2006
3. [Kirksey], 2007-2008
5. [Recipes], 2002
9. Correspondence [notes to keep], 1964-1991
10. Correspondence [important business], 1990-1996
11. Correspondence [misc. to keep], 1980-1992
14. [Special Events: Salute to Women, Distinguished Alums], 1992-1993
16. Notebooks, ca 1980s-1990s
17. [Diamonds], 1987
18. [Romania-children], 1993-1994
19. [Wallpaper/paint], 2003
20. [Granite], 2003
21. [Bath], 2003
22. [Rugs], 2003
23. [Currents], 2003
24. [Garden lighting], 2003
25. [Flowers], 2003
26. [House plans], 2003

Box 2  Photos and Slides

Folder
1. Personal and family photographs, ca 1959-2003
2. Negatives, ca 1980s
3. [Copenhagen night, Purdue campus, apt. furniture], ca 1968
4. [Norway: Stalheim, hotel interior; Norway: Stave Church, farm house; Oslo: Vigeland Museum], 1966-1968
5. [Norway: Vigeland; Sweden: Stockholm, old town Linkoping; Sweden: Kosta, Orrefors; Denmark: Arhus, Jelling, Odense], 1966
6. [Hamburg: apt., city, S. Lake; Norway, Borgen], 1966
7. [Denmark: Copenhagen, Tivoli & Mermaid], 1966
8. [I. Bogota, Peru], 1978
9. [B. Quebec/ winter ’78], 1977-1978
10. [A. Botanical gardens, Montreal], 1977
11. [II. Peru, torre torre], 1978
12. [III. Macchu Picchu, LaPaz], 1978
13. [IV. Iggarasu Falls], 1978
17. Miscellaneous photographs, ca 1960s-1980s

Box 3  
Clippings and Correspondence, Education

Folder
1. Clippings and correspondence: [A-B], 1959-1986
2. Clippings and correspondence: [E-I], 1981-1995
5. Clippings and correspondence: [S-V], 1975-1982
8. University of Arkansas, 1943-1954
9. University of Tennessee, 1950
12. Penn State University, 1957-1959
13. Awards and Honors at Penn State, 1958-1960
14. Purdue University hiring, 1960
15. Vita: [Newest, 1997], 1997

Series 2. Professional papers, 1943-2007
(4.6 cubic feet)

Box 4  
Awards and Honors

Folder
1. ILSI Future Leader Award, 1965-2007
2. Borden Award, 1980
3. Borden Award congratulations, 1980
4. Penn State Alumni Recognition Award, 1985
5. Penn State speech, 1985
6. Meredith Distinguished Professor Award, 1985
7. IHEA Award, 1989
8. Penn State Alumni Association membership, 1989
10. Penn State Distinguished Alumni, 1992
11. AIN Fellow Nomination materials, 1993-1994
12. AIN awards congratulations, 1994
13. Retirement reception, 1994
14. Purdue honorary doctorate congratulations, 1997

Box 5  Instruction

Folder
1. Foods and Nutrition lab notes, ca 1980
2. Talk to students: original figures and tables, 1982
3. Instruction: chemistry review, 1992
4. [Vitamin B-6 references for class discussion], 1993
5. INP Seminar, Fall 1993
6. [F&N 601: vitamin B-6], 1994
7. Lectures and seminars, 1993-1995
8. Dr. Nargis seminar: original figures and tables, 1986
10. [Marlene’s chapter], ca 1990s
11. Speech to alumni, 1982
13. Miscellaneous photographs, ca 1960-2000s

Box 6  Courses: Foods and Nutrition 525

Folder
1. F&N 525 Maternal: General, 1994

Box 7 Courses: Foods and Nutrition 601

Folder
1. F&N 601: General, 1994
3. F&N 601: Vitamin E, 1994
10. F&N 601: Vitamin B-6, 1994
12. F&N 601: Vitamin B-12, 1994
15. F&N 601: Pantothenic Acid, 1994

Box 8 Publications

Folder
3. Article reprints: second author (2 of 2), 1971-1990
5. Draft publication, 1976
7. Penn State Seminar presentation, 1977
8. Timberline figures and tables, 1980
Box 9  

*Presentations*

**Folder**
1. B-6 Timberline slides, 1980
2. Timberline evaluation, 1980
3. Wisconsin: original figures and tables, 1981
4. National Academy of Science: original figures and tables, 1981
5. Florida symposium slide originals, 1981
6. Florida symposium: original figures and tables, 1981
7. Paris talk: original figures and tables, 1982
8. Indiana Diatetic Association; original figures, 1983
9. Indiana Teachers: adolescent pregnancy original figures, 1984
10. Meadowridge conference: original figures and tables, 1984
11. Egypt project talk: original figures and tables, 1983
12. Berkley: original tables and figures, 1984
13. BANFF Conference: original tables and figures, 1984
14. Brighton, Mexico, Penn State: original figures, 1985
15. [Vitamin B-6], 1987
16. B-6 Talks, ca 1980s
17. Austria: original tables and figures, 1986
18. Philadelphia: original figures and tables, 1989
19. AID presentation, 1989

Box 10  

*Presentations*

**Folder**
1. [Vitamin B-6 Dr. Kirksey], 1989
2. [NYAS reprints], 1989
5. FASEB: original figures and tables, 1992
6. Penn State Distinguished Alumni Seminar, 1992
7. Adelaide paper, 1993
8. XV International Congress of Nutrition Adelaide, Australia, 1993
9. [Vitamin B-6], 1993
10. Soon Ah Yoon: Vitamin B-6 adequacy in neonatal nutrition, 1995
12. Conference slides, 1989

Box 11  

*Presentations*

**Folder**
1. Slide tray/ presentation with notes, 1961-1996
2. Pediatric Update Conference, 1995
3. Lectures and seminars, 1995
Box 12  
*Research: Nutrition and Development*

**Folder**
1. B-6 and nausea, 1942-1991
2. “Philosophy of Scientific Investigation,” 1943
3. [History Nutrition], 1945-1977
4. Infant nutrition, 1954-1973
5. B-6: Research of others, 1966-1976
6. Fetal growth and development, 1968-1969
7. Depression, B-6, and contraceptives, 1970-1981
8. [Dubowitz/gestational age], 1970-1985
9. W.O. Atwater lecture, 1974-1978
11. [Karyl Rickard data], 1981
12. [Paarlburg- food supply and population control], 1982
13. Research notes, ca 1986
14. [Hunger], ca 1988
15. Delta monograph draft for review, 1996

Box 13  
*Indonesia*

**Folder**
1. [Trip details: Kirksey/Liska], April 1987
2. [Indonesian directors USA site visit], August 1987
3. [Travel to Indonesia], 1988
4. [Trip report], 1988
5. [Travel Expenses: Seoul, Jakarta], 1989
6. [Indonesia trip report], August 1989
7. [A: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
8. [B: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
9. [C: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
10. [D: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
11. [E: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s

Box 14  
*Letter File Photos*

**Folder**
1. [F: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
2. [I: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
3. [J: Indonesia] photographs, ca 1980s
4. [K: Bangkok] photographs, ca 1980s
5. [L: Hong Kong] photographs, ca 1980s
6. [M: Bangkok] photographs, ca 1980s
7. [N: Korea] photographs, ca 1989
8. [O] photographs, ca 1980s
9. [P: Pechak] photographs, ca 1980s
10. Miscellaneous letter file photographs, ca 1980s

Box 15  

*Artifacts*

<table>
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<th>Item</th>
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<td>Photo album, ca 1980s</td>
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<td>Photo album, ca 1980s</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rolodex, ca 1980s</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Research card file, ca 1980s</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Pet rock, ca 1980s</td>
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**OS S9, 1 Folder**

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<td>2</td>
<td>Card, ca 1990s</td>
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**Series 3. Nutrition Collaborative Research Support Program (NCRSP) papers, 1972-2001**

(2 cubic feet)

Box 16  

*CRSP Summaries*

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<th>Folder</th>
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<tr>
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<td>CRSP Data, ca 1990s</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><em>CRSP Revised Research Design- Phase II</em>, 1983</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><em>Proceedings of the CRSP Policy Workshop</em>, 1992</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><em>Functional Implications of Malnutrition Across CRSP Projects</em>, 1992</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><em>Functional Implications of Malnutrition Mexico Project Final Report</em>, 1992</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><em>Functional Implications of Malnutrition Egypt Project Final Report</em>, 1992</td>
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Box 17  

*Egypt CRSP research*

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<td>CRSP Egypt project narrative, 1982-1987</td>
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<td>Travel forms and personnel, 1982-1986</td>
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<td>Egypt: Avanelle Kirksey trip reports, 1982-1985</td>
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<td>Egypt: staff trip reports, 1983-1985</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Field notebooks, 1985-1988</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Map of Kalama, ca 1988</td>
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<td>Egypt: Telexes originals and notes, 1982-1983</td>
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<td>Egypt: incoming Telexes, 1982-1984</td>
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<td>Correspondence, 1994</td>
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<td>Egypt clippings, 1972-1992</td>
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Box 18  *Egypt CRSP research*

Folder
2. [Egypt project final report- Appendix], 1988
4. Work citing Egypt data, 2001
5. Egypt research summary presentation, 1990
6. Egyptian nutrition study presentation, 1992
7. Egypt project presentation references, ca 1983-1991
8. Egypt morbidity transparencies, ca 1988
10. Maternal nutrition figures, 1988
11. Infant nutrition figures, 1988
12. Miscellaneous figures, 1988

Box 19  *Egypt photographs*

Item
1. Photo file: Egypt CRSP fieldwork, 1980s

Box 20  *Other CRSP projects*

Folder
1. CRSP public information packet, 1991
5. CRSP correspondence, 1980-1988
8. [Future models], 1994
9. [Infant weight and weight change colloquium], 1992
10. [FASEB colloquium], ca 1990s
11. CRSP transparencies, ca 1990s
12. Research maps, ca 1988