FINDING AID TO
THE DOROTHY STRATTON PAPERS, 1935-2006

Purdue University Libraries
Virginia Kelly Karnes Archives and Special Collections
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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
3. Correspondence and other materials, 100th birthday celebration, 1999
5. Funeral information and obituary clippings, 2006
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
   Includes "Liberal Science for Women at Purdue," 1946

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

Folder
13. Correspondence, Purdue, 1944 – 1947
14. Correspondence, SPARS, 1943 – 1946
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
4. Speeches, 1940s – circa 1950s
   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
Pamphlet from the Military Women’s Corridor dedication ceremony has an 8x10 and a 3x6 photo with it


(0.7 cubic feet)

#### Folder
12. Dorothy Stratton at Purdue, 1935 – 1987
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
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)