

# MILDRED SPEISER PAPERS

1946-2013

Finding Aid



*Archives and Special Collections*



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 03-13

Size:  $\approx$ 4.12 cu. ft.

Provenance: Mildred Speiser

Restrictions: None

Location: Range 4 Section 5 Shelf 28-29

Project Archivist: Yingwen Huang

Date: February 2014

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mildred Speiser was born in New York City. As the oldest child of the family, she is five and a half years older than her younger brother, Kenneth Speiser. Her family is of Hungarian origin. Her mother, Bertha Weiss, left Hungary after the First World War and traveled to the United States; she arrived in New York on July 4th, 1921. Her father, Irving Speiser, who studied engineering in Hungary, also left the country after the First World War. He later traveled to Canada and was working in the fur trade. Through a mutual connection in New York, Bertha and Irving met and were later married in 1930. After their marriage, the family lived together in New York while Bertha deemed herself the "house-executive" and Irving founded a fur company.

Mildred grew up in a brownstone house on the fourth floor with her family during the depression. As a child, Mildred had always had great interest in both mathematics and rhetoric due to the influence of her father's expertise in mathematics, engineering, and geography. In addition, she has always preferred to participate in intellectual discussions with others rather than adopting the typical feminine role in a traditional household. Her early development was later reflected in her enthusiastic involvement in various organizations.

Mildred attended P.S. 166 Elementary School and Joan of Arc Junior High School. While she was attending Hunter College High School, she founded the History Club and actively participated in the General Organization, G.O. Cheering Squad, Campaign Committee, Publicity Committee, Assembly Committee, Constitution Revision Committee, Term Central Project Committee, Math Club, Hunter Forum, etc. She was also the Treasurer and Representative for her class. Her highly outspoken and assertive personality contributed to her zealous involvement in many student activities. As the advertising manager of the Hunter College High School Publications, she received support from advertising companies for the Annals and the Argus. With Mildred's help, her graduating class was able to produce the most inexpensive yearbook. In January 1949, Mildred graduated from high school.

Mildred continued her education at Hunter College. Even though she was working part-time while enrolled in the part-time sessions, she continued to be active in various extracurricular activities. She was a member of the Political Science Club, Nite Lites, House Plan, SING, Upper Sophomore Class Day Show and Dance Committee, Staff-Student Social Committee, Board of Trustees for Graduate Scholarship, and the Treasurer of the Young Democrats. She was also involved in student government matters where she served as the Publicity Chair, Vice President of the Junior Class, and Council Representative of the Class of January 1953. She also participated in the Model Congress where she presented a proposal with her team. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Political Science in January 1953.

After Mildred received her Bachelor's degree, she began her teaching career at P.S. 166 as a daily substitute while she was working towards her Master's degree. In June 1955, she received her Master's in Education from Hunter College. In addition, she also did additional graduate work at Cornell University, New York University, University of Montana, and University of Colorado. As a person who prefers the challenge of changing, she later continued her teaching career in various junior high schools teaching art and mathematics; she also lectured in graduate mathematics, business, and teacher training courses at Hunter College and Marymount Manhattan College as well as Adult Education at the Board of Education despite the fact that she had no academic background in the fields she taught in. As an educator, Mildred believed that her duty was to bring diversity together to enhance the students' academic as well as social experience.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

However, Mildred was not only an educator. She was also a sales lady at Macy's and Bloomingdale's, a camp counselor, a group leader at private and girl scout camps, a travel consultant, a wedding planner, an entrepreneur, a cast teacher, an editor, and a writer. As an entrepreneur, she founded Arthur Farms Inc. and manufactured gourmet pickles with customers such as Bloomingdale's, Altman's and Zabar's. In the past, she also worked with Robert Goulet, a famous actor, and she taught Macauley and Kieran Culkin in the cast of the "Home Alone" series. She was also the public relations consultant and a Board Member of the Shadow Box Theatre. The diversity in Mildred's career choices mirrors her impressive character.

Moreover, Mildred was the founder and a Board Member of the Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association. After her graduation from the Hunter College High School, she became highly involved in organizing alumni reunions for her class. She kept in touch with her classmates and held on to all the letters she received from them. She proudly proclaims that she has collected 98% of the information for her class with only 2 people missing. At the 1975 Alumni Association Reunion, Mildred, as one of the first Officers who passed the by-laws, was elected to be the President. She served as the President from 1973 to 1983. In 1983, she was elected to the Hunter College Hall of Fame. She is the President Emerita of the Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association, a member of the Campus Schools Building Committee, the Search Committee for Campus Schools Director, and the Campus Schools Advisory Committee for the President of Hunter College. She was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Hunter College Alumni Association and the Sylvia & Danny Kaye Playhouse. She is also a distinguished advisor for students in the Hunter College Public Service Scholars Program.

Her hobbies include reading, theater, sports, ping pong, writing poetry and humorous short stories, and traveling. She spent forty years traveling abroad to different countries in each continent; she has been to Africa, Asia, Australia, Central and South America, Europe, Middle East, Canada, the Pacific and Caribbean Region, and 48 states in the U.S. including Alaska and Hawaii. The most interesting places she has visited were the Easter Islands, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Tasmania. Moreover, she developed her writing in her later years. She edited *Math Skills by Objectives* (1988) and published *Our '76 Founding Sisters* (1976). Her poems and short stories were published in *Seeds in the Wind - Ethical Workshop Poets 1968*, *Echo, the Bloomingdale Poets*, and *Reflections in Poetry & Prose* by the United Federation of Teachers (Retired Teacher's Chapter). Led by her passion in poetry, she founded a poetry club called Poetry in the Park. She is also the Stalwart Block Association collaborator. Mildred also appeared in multiple international documentaries, such as the "LAPIS EXILLIS- Lost Secrets of the Illuminati" (2011) and "Awaking the Latent Energies of the Master Building from New York" by Leonardo O. Amaral (2010).

After Mildred's retirement, she continues to participate in various community activities. She is currently the longest resident in the Master Apartments, a landmark building in New York City, where she has been living for at least 52 years since 1961. She is knowledgeable in all aspects regarding the building and she maintains the archives of the Master Apartments. In addition, she also gave presentations at various events such as the Women's History Month and Leadership Conference at Hunter College. She is also a computer teacher at the Jewish Community Center, a conductor at the Poetry Workshops in New York, lecturer at the Block & Hexter Elderhostel and Kislak Adult Center in Pennsylvania, and a speaker at the Israeli Humanitarian Foundation.

Yingwen Huang

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Mildred Speiser Papers, 1946-2013, mainly document her academic life at Hunter College and its High School as well as her involvement as the Founder and a Board Member of the Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association. The bulk of her papers extend from as early as her high school career at the Hunter College High school to as recent as 2013. Her papers consist of correspondence, class materials, minutes, by-laws, contracts, surveys, contacts, reports, flyers, invitations, news clippings, publications, poems, short stories, speeches, and photographs. The collection has little information about her teaching career whereas the collection consists mostly of records about her contributions to Hunter College and its High School. However, one can inquire to the United Federation of Teachers for detailed information about her teaching career.

The most informative sections from her collection that would attract the interest of researchers are Series II and III, Hunter College High School and Hunter College, all of which relates to her critical roles at the high school and the college. Within the Hunter College High School Series, one can find her papers dated from her high school days to the establishment of the HCHS Alumnae/i Association. One of the highlights is the incoming correspondence from her classmates that she kept from as early as her high school days to as recent as 2013. The collection also includes detailed records of Mildred's graduating class before and after the founding of the Alumnae/i Association. Series III, Hunter College, consists of records related to her activities at the college during her undergraduate years as well as her involvement in various organizations.

The Mildred Speiser Papers will be of interest not only to Hunter College alumni and alumni of the Campus Schools, but also educators, writers, and poets, as well as the general population of students and researchers who wish to learn more about the establishment of the Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association. Mildred's collection reveals her endless efforts and devotion that she has contributed to Hunter College. One could say that her greatest contribution to Hunter College was the founding of the HCHS Alumnae/i Association.

Yingwen Huang

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### **Series I – Biographical**

Series I consists of Mildred Speiser's curriculum vitae, profiles from various organizations, and articles about Mildred. All papers are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically within each folder.

### **Series II - Hunter College High School**

Subseries 2.1 - Class of 1949

Subseries 2.2 - Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association

Subseries 2.1 consists of materials related to Mildred's high school class (Class of 1949) from 1946 to 2009. Such materials consist of advertising contracts, class materials, contact information, correspondence, examinations, quizzes, minutes, information regarding her extracurricular activities, reunion preparations, surveys, reminiscence materials, and her class yearbook. Incoming correspondence is organized by decade, then by the maiden names of the classmates who she received abundant letters from.

Subseries 2.2 is related to the Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association from 1949 to 2012. It consists of records kept before the official establishment of the Alumnae/i Association. It includes by-laws, correspondence, memoranda, event flyers, invitations, financial reports, newspaper clippings, reports, minutes, and publications after the creation of the Alumnae/i Association. All papers are arranged alphabetically by category and then chronologically within each category.

### **Series III - Hunter College**

Subseries 3.1 – Class of 1953

Subseries 3.2 – Alumni Activities

Subseries 3.1 consists of assignments, exams, grades, and other papers relevant to Mildred's extracurricular activities during her undergraduate days at Hunter College. All records are organized alphabetically and then chronologically within each folder.

Subseries 3.2 includes documents related to the Alumni Association and other organizations within Hunter College. The papers include event booklets, flyers, invitations, by-laws, remarks, minutes, memoranda, correspondence, news clippings, publications, reports, and resumes of faculty members. All records are organized alphabetically and then chronologically within each folder.

### **Series IV - General Files**

Series IV consists of materials that are not relevant to Hunter College or the Hunter College High School. These include incoming correspondence, newspaper clippings, and materials related to the other organizations she was involved in. They are organized in alphabetical order and then chronologically within each category.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### **Series V - Writings**

Series V consists of a book that she edited, poems, and short stories she published from 1985 to 2012. There are also drafts of the speeches she gave at the Alumni Reunions. They are organized in alphabetical order.

### **Series VI - Photographs**

Series VI consists of her high school graduation photos in black and white as well as her profile pictures in color from later days, undated.



## CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I - BIOGRAPHICAL

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Biographical Curriculum Vitae
	2	Profiles on Mildred Speiser Hunter College Alumni Association Hall of Fame, 1983 Class Reunion Brochure, 1994 Block Association Honors Residents of Long Standing, March 31, 2011 The Red Harlem Readers, February 6, 2011 Block and Hexter Vacation Center, n.d. Leadership Conference, n.d. Hunter College Reunion booklet Addendum, 1953 - 2003  Somerville, Barbara. "History's Women Brought to Light: Schoolteacher Unearths Data Presents It in Capsule Form". <i>Palm Beach Post</i> . 10 April 1977. B1+.  Blau, Jon. "Where are you, Ethel?" <i>Queens Chronicle</i> . 7 May 2009.

### SERIES II - HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

#### Subseries 2.1 - Class of 1949

1	2	Advertising Contracts, 1946 - 1949
	3	Class Materials, circa. 1946
	4	Contact Information, 1949 – 2009 (Oversize List in <b>Box 7</b> , Index Cards in <b>Box 11</b> )
		Correspondence, Incoming
	5	1940s
	6	1950s
	7	1960s
	8	1970s
	9	1980s
	10	1990s
2	1	2000s
	2	n.d.

## SERIES II - HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

### Subseries 2.1 - Class of 1949

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
2	3	Correspondence, Incoming
	4	Corrigan, Lillian
	5	Davis, Dorothy
	6	Freier, Sybil
	7	Gamson, Alice
	8	Kanner, Eva
	9	La Ferriere, Dolores
	10	Marvis, Helene
	11	Rosenfeld, Marilyn Eslofsky
	12	Schneider, Joan
	13	Sturken, Eleanor
		Weissman, Miriam
		Beltway Belles, group of classmates who resides in the Metropolitan D.C. area
14	1940s - 1960s	
15	1980s	
16	1990s	
17	n.d.	
3	1	Urbas, Joan, 1952 - 2009
	2	Class of 1951, 1949 - 1950
	3	Correspondence, Outgoing, n.d.
	4	Examinations, 1940 - 1948
	5	Extracurricular Activities, 1945 - 1948
	6	Reminiscence Materials, 1947 - 1948
		Reunions
	7	Anonymous Surveys, 1999
	8	Bills and Receipts, 1950 - 1989
	9	Brochures, 1965 - 2009
	10	Invitations, 1959 - 2009
11	RSVP Cards, 1959, 1965 <b>(Box 11)</b>	
	Statistical Information Survey, 1955 - 1970	
4	1	"Things & Stuff" from the Class of C4, 1949
	2	Yearbook Production, 1949
		Yearbook in Scrapbook format, 1949 <b>(Box 7)</b>

## SERIES II - HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

### Subseries 2.2 - Hunter College High School Alumnae/i Association

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
4	3	Alumni Dues, 1949 - 1952
	4	Bylaws, circa. 1997
	5	Correspondence, 1952 - 2009
	6	Events, 1922 - 2012
	7	Financial Reports, 1949 - 1977, 1990, 1995 - 1996, 1998
	8	Minutes, 1989, 1990, 1995 - 1997
5	1	Miscellaneous, n.d.
		News Clippings about Hunter College High School/Alumni, 1968 - 2011 ( <b>Oversize, Box 7</b> )
	2	People of HCHS (Newspaper Clippings, profiles, etc.), 1951 - 2011
	3	Poems and Writings by Poetry Group, Authors, & Other Creative Female Alumnae (Organized alphabetically by last name)
	4	Policies and Plans, 1986, 1996 - 1998
		Publications
	5	<i>AlumNotes</i> , 1981 - 2011
	6	<i>Hunter HiLites</i> , March 2005
		<i>Observer</i> 1986, 1994, 1996, 2004, 2009, 2012 ( <b>Box 7</b> )
	7	<i>That's What</i> , 1953 - 1959
	8	<i>What's This</i> , April 1949 - December 1951
	9	<i>What's What</i> , 1939 - 1950, 1975, 1990, Oversize issues, 1980, 1985 - 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 2004, 2008 ( <b>Box 7</b> )
6	1	<i>Early Identification of the Gifted and Talented: A Community Forum</i> , 31 October 1987. (PowerPoint Presentation)
	1 - 2	Stone, Elizabeth. <i>The Hunter Campus Schools for the Gifted: The Challenge of Equity and Excellence</i> , March 1992.

## SERIES III - HUNTER COLLEGE

### Subseries 3.1 – Class of 1953

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
6	3	Assignments, Exams, and Grades, circa. 1950
	4	Student Activities, 1949 – 1952
	5	Model Congress, 1950 - 1954

### Subseries 3.2 – Alumni Activities

6	6	Alumni Activities, 1953-1968
		Alumni Association
	7	Birthday Celebration Booklets, 1969, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1989, 1991 - 1993, 1995 - 1996, 2009
	8	By-laws, Organizational Charts and Remarks, 1972 - 1973, 1988, 1998
	9	Class Reunions, 1968, 1997, 2002 - 2003
7		Oversize Box for various files
		Series II, Subseries 2.1
		Contact Information Oversize List, 1949 – 2009
		Yearbook in Oversize Scrapbook format, 1949
		Series II, Subseries 2.2
		News Clippings about Hunter College High School/Alumni, 1968 - 2011
		Publications:
		<i>Observer</i> , 1986, 1994, 1996, 2004, 2009, 2012
		<i>What's What</i> , 1980, 1985 - 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 2004, 2008
		Alumni Association
8	1	Correspondence, 1963 - 1987, 1996
	2	Hall of Fame Booklets, 1988, 1998, 2000, 2009 - 2013
	3	Minutes, circa. 1973 – 1998
	4	Commencements, 1933, 1989, 1997
		Correspondence
	5	1952 - 2011

## SERIES III - HUNTER COLLEGE

### Subseries 3.2 – Alumni Activities

		Correspondence
		Hunter College Alumni
8	6	1949 - 1952
	7	1979 - 1989
	8	1990 - 2010
	9	n.d.
	10	DiPerna, Mary
	11	Drucker, Terry
	12	Kossoy, Joan
	13	Newman, Arlene
	14	Sol, Francine
9	1	Event Invitations, Flyers, and Programs, 1973 – 2011
	2	Friends of Hunter College Art Galleries, 1992 - 2013
	3	Friends of Hunter College Libraries, 1991 - 2002
	4	Hunter College Foundation, 1993 - 2010
	5	Hunter College Public Service Scholar Program, 1987 - 2011
		Hunter College Publications
	6	<i>Alumnae News</i> , 1957 - 1958
		<i>At Hunter</i> , Winter 1996, 2001
		<i>Firescapes</i> , 1977
		<i>Hunter News</i> , n.d.
		<i>NewsHunter</i> , 1973
		<i>Pneuma</i> , 1978
		<i>Renazette</i> , Spring 1982
		<i>The Asterisk</i> , 1988
	7	<i>Hunter Arrow</i> , 1949 - 1957
	8	<i>Hunter Envoy</i> , 1976 - 1993
	9	Hunter Student Profile, 1987 - 1992
	10	Hunter Symphony, 1992 - 1993, 2001 - 2002, 2007 - 2008
	11	News Clippings about Hunter College, 1950 - 2009
10	1	Normal College Examinations, 1887 - 1894
	2	Resume of Professors, n.d.
	3	Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 1993 - 2011

#### **SERIES IV - GENERAL FILES**

- 10 4 American Women's Economic Development, 1985 - 1990
- Incoming Correspondence
- 5 General Correspondence, 1980 - 2006
- 6 Joan of Arc Junior High School Alumni, 1992

#### **SERIES V - WRITINGS**

- 10 7 Miscellaneous, 1965 – 1996
- 8 *Math Skills by Objectives*, 1985
- 9 Poems and Short Stories from *Reflections*, by the United Federation of Teachers (Retired Teacher's Chapter), 2000, 2002 - 2004, 2012
- 10 Writings and Speeches, n.d.

#### **SERIES VI - PHOTOGRAPHS**

- 10 11 Photographs of Mildred Speiser, n.d.
- 12 Photographs of the Graduates from the HCHS Class of 1949, 1949
- 11 Small Card box
- Series II, Subseries 2.1
- Contact Information, 1949 – 2009, Index Cards
- Reunions RSVP Cards, 1959, 1965