

Finding Aid to the Stephen K. Desroches Papers, 1948-2020

Summary Information

Title: Stephen K. Desroches papers

Creator: Stephen K. ("Steve") Desroches (primary)

ID: 2018.desroches

Date: 1948-2020 (inclusive); 1982-1992 (bulk)

Extent: 5.25 linear feet (physical); 3.81 GB (digital)

Language: The majority of materials in this collection are in English, with some instances of French, German, Polish, and Russian.

Abstract: The Stephen K. Desroches papers provide a unique perspective of male childhood in the 1980s and 1990s. Materials in this collection exhibit creative activities, including homemade books, sticker books, photo albums, scrapbooks, and correspondence to pen pals and holiday characters. Additional items in this collection document events attended by Desroches throughout his life. The bulk of the materials are dated between 1982 and 1992.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

One Manhattan Square

Rochester, New York 14607

585.263.2700

library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, he has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Stephen K. Desroches papers were donated to The Strong at various times as a gift from Stephen Desroches. The papers were received from Desroches in multiple donations and accessioned by The Strong under Object IDs 117.3115, 117.3116, 117.3317, 117.3318, 118.8965, 118.9628, 119.2846, 120.4418, and 121.1320.

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Processed by: Nicole Pease, August-September 2018; Julia Novakovic, August-September 2019, December 2022

Revision Note: This finding aid has been updated from its original iteration to reflect additional accessions received from Desroches in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Desroches, Lisa
- Desroches, Stephen K. ("Steve")
- Desroches, Steve
- Killian, Carol Ann

- Killian, Gail M.
- Killian, Helen

Subjects

- Awards
- Childhood activities
- Children--Societies and clubs
- Clubhouses
- Correspondence
- Drawings
- Early childhood education
- Easter Bunny
- Elementary school students
- Middle school students
- Notes
- Pen pals
- Play
- Québec (Province)
- Santa letters
- School reports
- Scrapbooks
- Sticker books
- Taunton (Mass.)
- Teenagers

Biographical Note

Stephen K. (“Steve”) Desroches spent his childhood in Taunton, Massachusetts, attending Hopewell Elementary School and Parker Middle School in the 1980s and 1990s. He was often the “court jester,” making people laugh, and had an aptitude for writing which was apparent in his school work and play-related activities.

Desroches graduated from Wheaton College and the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University where he received awards for his investigative work on issues facing lesbians and gays seeking political asylum in the United States. Desroches’ work as a journalist has appeared in Provincetown publications as well as *The Advocate*, *The Boston Herald*, and *In Newsweekly*.

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection contains materials relating to Stephen K. Desroches' childhood activities and school work. These include correspondence, writings, photo albums, scrapbooks, articles, publications, awards, realia, photographs, drawings, notebooks, audio cassettes, and sticker books. Also included in this collection are tickets and passes to events throughout Desroches' lifetime. The bulk of the materials are dated between 1982 and 1992. Additional scope and content information can be found in the "Contents List" section of this finding aid.

The Stephen K. Desroches papers have been arranged into seven series. The collection is housed in six archival document boxes and one oversized folder.

Related Materials

The Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play holds a copy of Steve Desroches' 2011 book *My God, My God ... Why Have You Forsaken Me?* (which corresponds to several items in this archival collection). The Strong also houses several dozen objects (including holiday decorations, crafts, pageant trophies, and drag costumes) donated by Desroches in its museum collections.

See also the video oral history recorded in June 2022: "[Play Memories with Stephen K. Desroches.](#)"

System of Arrangement

- Series I: Creative writing and artwork, 1977-1996
- Series II: School, 1981-1992
- Series III: Scrapbooks, 1979-1992
- Series IV: Photographs and photo albums, c. 1980-1992
- Series V: Audiocassettes, 1983-1984
- Series VI: Theater and other events, 1982-2020
- Series VII: Miscellaneous, 1948-2018

Contents List

Series I: Creative writing and artwork, 1977-1996

Scope and Content Note: This series houses correspondence, homemade books, and notes that reflect Steve Desroches' interest in writing. Within this series are correspondence with overseas pen pals and childhood icons (the Easter Bunny and Santa) and documentation of Desroches' club and clubhouse. Other creative output, such as artwork, drawings, and stickers books, are also part of this series.

Box 1

- Folder 1 Clubhouse papers and photos, 1982
- Folder 2 Letter from Santa, n.d. [c. early 1980s]
- Folder 3 "Dear Easter Bunny" letter with response from Easter Bunny, c. 1983
- Folder 4 Pen pal letters, 1982-1996
- Folder 5 Homemade books, c. 1980-1984
- Folder 6 "Four Stars Atlas," 1985
- Folder 7 "Sticker Collection" sticker book, c. 1983
- Folder 8 "Stuck on Stickers" sticker book, c. 1983
- Folder 9 "My Out-of-this-World" sticker book, c. 1984
- Folder 10 "My Sticker Collection" sticker book, c. 1984
- Folder 11 Drawings, c. 1980s
- Folder 12 Handmade cards created by Steve, Lisa, and Aunt Gail, 1977-1985 and n.d.
- Folder 13 "My Book About Me," designed by Dr. Seuss and Roy McKie, filled out by Steve (age 5), c. 1980

Series II: School, 1981-1992

Scope and Content Note: This series contains early schoolwork, school reports on a variety of subjects, notes, ephemera, and awards reflecting Desroches' school activities during middle and high school. Publications including school newsletters, literary magazines, and yearbooks are also part of this series, as well as high school graduation ephemera. (See also the scrapbooks in Series III and photographs/photo albums in Series IV.)

Box 2

- Folder 1 Early school spelling and math work, c. 1981
- Folder 2 School reports, 1984-1989
- Folder 3 English Honors I and II work [Mrs. Kerwin and Mrs. Tripp], 1989-1991
- Folder 4 School reports, 1990-1992
- Folder 5 Notes and school reports, n.d.
- Folder 6 26th Annual Massachusetts Science Fair program, 1987
- Folder 7 Awards, 1982-1986
- Folder 8 High school newsletters, *Tauntonian*, 1991-1992
- Folder 9 Massachusetts Newspaper in Education Council High School Journalism Contest submission, Stephen Desroches, 1992
- Folder 10 High school literary magazine, *as you like it*, 1992
- Folder 11 Parker Middle School yearbooks, 1987-1988
- Folder 12 Taunton High School diploma and graduation exercises program, 1992

Box 4

- Envelope 1 Parker Middle School “Honor Roll, 4 Terms 1984-1985” plaque, 1985
- Envelope 2 Parker Middle School “Science Fair 1987” plaque, 1987
- Envelope 3 Parker Middle School “Science Fair 1988, 8th Grade, 1st Overall” plaque, 1988
- Envelope 4 Taunton High School “1991-1992 Indoor Track, Most Dedicated” plaque, 1992
- Envelope 5 Parker Middle School “1984 Co-Champions” soccer trophy, 1984

Box 5

- Envelope 1 Award ribbons, 1981-1983
- Envelope 2 Award ribbons, 1984-1991
- Envelope 3 Award ribbons, n.d.
- Envelope 4 AAU Junior Olympics award ribbons, 1984-1986 and n.d.
- Envelope 5 Medals, 1990 and n.d.
- Envelope 6 Graduation tassels, 1988, 1992
- Envelope 7 Halloween parade ribbons, 1982-1983

Box 6

- Enclosure 1 Class rings, c. 1988, 1992

Series III: Scrapbooks, 1979-1992

Scope and Content Note: The series houses scrapbooks created and maintained by Desroches and his family members. (Some loose materials have been separated from the original scrapbook in Folder 1 and separated into folders by topic.)

Box 3

- Folder 1 Scrapbook, 1983-1990
- Folder 2 Scrapbook material: Baseball/Cub scouts, 1982-1984
- Folder 3 Scrapbook material: College Academy, 1983-1986
- Folder 4 Scrapbook material: Awards, 1983-1989
- Folder 5 Scrapbook material: Church [and various cards], 1982-1989
- Folder 6 Loose material from scrapbook, 1979-1992
- Folder 7 Newspapers and clippings from scrapbook, 1984-1992 and n.d.
- Folder 8 “School Years” scrapbook, 1979-1992

Series IV: Photographs and photo albums, c. 1980-1992

Scope and Content Note: Within this series are photographs taken by Desroches (both loose and in photo albums) and photos inscribed to him from classmates at Taunton High School in 1992. The photo albums depict middle school class trips to Canada and were annotated by Desroches.

Box 3

- Folder 9 Photographs taken by Desroches, c. 1980-1986
- Folder 10 Senior portraits with inscriptions to Desroches, c. 1992

Box 4

- Folder 1 “Canada Trip” photo album, volume 1, 1987
- Folder 2 “Canada Trip” photo album, volume 2, 1987
- Folder 3 “Canada Trip” photo album, volume 3, 1987
- Folder 4 “Parker Middle School Quebec Trip” photo album, 1988

Series V: Audiocassettes, 1983-1984

Scope and Content Note: In this series are audiocassettes of recordings by Steve Desroches, Lisa Desroches, and friends.

Box 4

- Object 1 “Def Leppard” songs, audiocassette, 1984
- Object 2 “You Can’t Do That on TV”/ “Lost in Space,” audiocassette, c. 1983

Series VI: Theater and other events, 1982-2020

Scope and Content Note: This series holds a script, program, and prop relating to a Catholic school play in which Desroches acted as a child in Massachusetts. (See Desroches’ book, *My God, My God ... Why Have You Forsaken Me?*) Also in this series are programs, ticket stubs, and passes to various sporting events, pageants, concerts, comedy shows, plays, drag shows, and other events from Desroches’ childhood through adulthood. (Some tickets and passes are in French, German, and Russian.)

Digital video recordings in this series include “The Peter Donnelly and Aunt Steve Musical Comedy Variety Hour” (performed on Facebook Live between March and June 2020), as well as a Provincetown, MA spontaneous street celebration following the 2020 presidential election.

Box 3

- Folder 11 Script, program, article, and card relating to *A Passion Play of Jesus Christ*, 1985, 2011
- Folder 12 Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular program, 1989

Oversized

- Folder 1 “Veil” from Passion play, 1985

Box 6

- Envelope 1 Event tickets and passes, 1982-1989
- Envelope 2 Event tickets and passes, 1990-1999
- Envelope 3 Event tickets and passes, 2000-2018

Digital-VI

- Folder 1 **Folder 01_Sunday Show** [contains 15 .mp4 recordings of “The Peter Donnelly and Aunt Steve Musical Comedy Variety Hour,” March 22 through June 14, 2020; orig. streamed on Facebook Live]
- Folder 2 **Folder 02_November 7 2020 celebration** [contains 8 .mp4 recordings of spontaneous street celebration in Provincetown, November 7, 2020; also 2 .jpg photographs]

Series VII: Miscellaneous, 1948-2018

Scope and Content Note: This series contains miscellaneous related information, including correspondence from Desroches to museum staff about materials in this archival collection, cards and letters to Desroches from family members, and a baby book for Steve Desroches’ mother, Carol Ann Killian, created by Desroches’ grandmother, Helen Killian. Also in this series are hand-colored geometric patterns done by Desroches’ aunt Gail Killian.

Box 3

- Folder 13 Correspondence re: accession and information about collection materials, 2015, 2017-2018
- Folder 14 Cards and letters to Desroches from family members, c. 1980s-1991 and n.d.

Box 5

- Folder 1 Baby book for Carol Ann Killian (Desroches’ mother), c. 1948
- Folder 2 Hand-colored geometric patterns, created by Desroches’ Aunt Gail, n.d. [c. 1970s-1980s?]