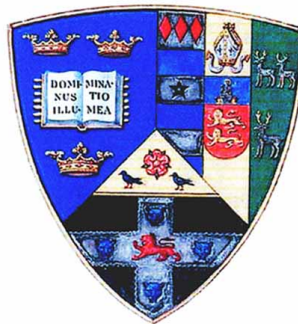


**Guide to the Velma Jean  
(Jeanne) Barnett Personal Papers**  
1947-2006



**DREW**



## Velma Jean (Jeanne) Barnett Papers

1947-2006

4.49 cubic feet

drew.ms.gcah4402

The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers, followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear. The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection. To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

### Biographical Note

Velma Jean (Jeanne) Barnett (1930-2003), United Methodist layperson, was born to Earnest I. and Faye Ann Hudson Barnett on May 28, 1930 in Waynoka, Oklahoma. Barnett grew up in a Southern Methodist home and became active her local church's ministries. Church responsibilities included vice president of the Methodist Youth Fellowship during high school, leading Sunday evening worship, overseeing various discussion groups as well as an adult coordinator and teacher for Sunday School adult classes. Barnett continued to serve in important leadership positions in later local churches, California-Nevada Annual Conference and general church levels.

Eventually her family moved to Phoenix where Jeanne graduated from North Phoenix High School in 1948. Upon graduation she attended Phoenix College, Stockton College, College of the Pacific in Stockton and finally graduating in 1952 from the University of Tulsa with a B.A. degree. Sports, especially basketball, were an important part of her life. She played first string on both her high school and the University of Tulsa varsity teams. Barnett's love of sports continued well beyond her playing days by enthusiastically followed California based professional teams.

Barnett's career in the California Employment Development Department spanned thirty-two years. She started as a trainee in 1959 and would retire in 1991 as Chief of the Labor Market Division. Her responsibilities included areas of employment, unemployment insurance and labor market. Barnett supervised the work of thousands of employees while overseeing multimillion dollar operational budgets by with each subsequent promotion. Her real talent at work manifested itself in motivating, understanding and mentoring staff members.

By 1969, Jeanne joined St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Sacramento, California. During her time at the church she served as chair or member of the Education Committee, Council on Ministries, Administrative Board, Staff-Parish Relations Committee and Lay Member which automatically made her a delegate to Annual Conference. At the age of fifty-one, Jeanne realized she was a lesbian and was accepted as such in St. Mark's, a reconciling congregation and part of the California-Nevada Annual Conference. Barnett would later serve as a leading member of the 1988 General Conference Committee to Study Homosexuality. She was the only lesbian to serve on the committee. At the next General Conference in 1992 Jeanne personally presented the committee's findings report to the body.

Ellie Charlton, Barnett's partner, recognized her own lesbianism later in life as well. Like most young women during the 1950s she married right out of high school. The marriage produced three children.



By 1982, Ellie separated from her husband and three years later they would divorce. Ellie joined the Rancho Cordova Methodist Church in 1962 and became active by holding various leadership positions. True to form Ellie later held leadership positions as a member of St. Mark's. Charlton was also active in United Methodist Women and served as both president and district officer. Eventually St. Mark's church elected her as one of their lay leaders which automatically qualified her as a delegate to California-Nevada Annual Conference meetings.

Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton would fall in love after meeting at a potluck dinner in 1982. Together they would buy a house in Sacramento two years later. Both were active in the United Methodist Church's Affirmation Caucus. Jeanne would serve as one of the official spokespersons for Affirmation between 1993 and 1994 while Ellie served as committee treasurer from 1991 to 1995. The couple also worked with similar organizations to educate and promote full inclusion and identity within the denomination and larger society.

For United Methodists they are best known for their Holy Union ceremony on January 16, 1999. The service would serve as a visual statement on same sex fidelity and commitment. More than one hundred and fifty lay and clergy members participated in the ceremony. Of the one hundred and fifty officiants, sixty-eight were California-Nevada United Methodist clergy. The Holy Union service became a firestorm in the ongoing homosexuality debate within the denomination. Because of the large attendance, and unable to use St. Mark's sanctuary for their ceremony due to restrictions against gay union services in local church buildings as set forth in The Book of Discipline, the event took place at the Sacramento Convention Center. Those who were unable to get tickets to witness the ceremony encircled the building's perimeter by holding hands in order to protect the couple from interference by anti-gay protestors.

The event would eventually be covered by worldwide media outlets. As a result the participating California-Nevada Annual Conference clergy would face a Committee on Investigation as a precursor for trials to strip their clergy credentials. The committee decided against such trials which caused conservative United Methodists to become more vocal condemning homosexuality and breaking church laws as set forth by the Book of Discipline. Other United Methodist clergy from additional annual conferences who either attended or gave absentia support would face similar charges. Barnett and Charlton would go on to become the faces of LGBTQIA+ Methodists in the fight for full inclusion.

Barnett died on October 1, 2003. Her funeral was held at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. Jeanne's life and death document her and Ellie's prophetic voices within United Methodism and the larger community.

## Scope and Content Note

The Barnett papers revolve around the couple's 1999 Holy Union ceremony. The documents related to the ceremony are the touchstone for the entire collection. Records cover the planning, financing, the actual ceremony, subsequent anniversaries, media coverage, correspondence which triggered a greater polarization on the issue of gay rights within United Methodism.

The collection also provides a narrative on how Barnett came to this point in her life and how it changed the couple's lives afterwards. The documents trace Barnett's life from birth, education, professional career, church work, gay rights advocacy and death. The researcher will also discover how much Ellie was an equal partner with Jeanne in advancing full inclusion of gays within the United Methodist Church.

Paper files make up most of the physical documentation. There are a few audio and a video recording which deals directly with the Holy Union. Additional documentation includes newspaper and printed digital born clippings, the Affirmation caucus, and printed CORNET listserv posts. It should be noted that Affirmation created CORNET to address unjust practices within The United Methodist Church



concerning same gender covenant services through education and dialogue. The clippings file give insight to the how far the news coverage traveled in both secular and church media outlets.

Special attention should be focused on the California-Nevada Annual Conference's Committee on Investigation folder which document the process of resolving charges against sixty-eight clergy members who participated in the Holy Union service. Also recorded is how Bishop Melvin Talbert handled these charges in light of prior Judicial Council rulings coupled with his theological viewpoint on gay covenant services and full inclusion of gays within the denomination. There is also documentation on the couple's work for the annual conference as well.

Individuals such as James Creech, Gregory Dell, Donald Fado, and Jean Audrey Powers have their own folders but also appear prominently in other records. Support by Reconciling congregations and individual churches in sympathy to the Holy Union and larger gay issues can be found in the collection. There is documentation from of support for the couple from educational or advocacy groups that Barnett and Charlton intersected with over time. Artifacts represent Barnett's urging for gay rights along with personal and professional life interests. The most important artifact is a paper banner from the Holy Union which attendees wrote on to express their thoughts and prayers for the couple.

The collection documents Barnett's personal life including a personal testimony about realizing she was gay late in life. Additional materials illustrate the life and love Jeanne and Ellie shared with each other up to Barnett's death.

Finally, the Barnett's career files bring to light her successful professional life. Recognition of her work is encapsulated by three awards during her career: The Commissioner's Award for Eminent Achievement from the United States Department of Labor, Toll Trust Award from the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security and Resolution from the California State Job Training Coordinating Council. Jeanne was able to harness those talents church leadership roles throughout the United Methodist connection.

## Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner. Arranged by folder title or genre.

## Related Material

Records of the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

Records of the Council of Bishops.

Minutes and General Administrative Records of the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church.

Records of Affirmation: United Methodists for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Concerns.

Records of the Order of Saint Luke.

Leontine Tupeau Current Kelly Collection.

Paul Abels Collection.

Records of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Administrative records of the Division of Ministry of God's Human Community of the General Board of Church and Society.



Nashville Area Episcopal Records.

Records of the Kansas Episcopal Area.

Records of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Records of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

United Methodist Church (U.S.). General Board of Global Ministries. Mission Education and Cultivation Program Department.

John Vanlandingham Moore Papers

Mississippi Episcopal Area Records.

Position Papers for the Committee to Study Homosexuality.

Records of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

John M. Swomley Papers.

## **Access Restrictions**

There are no restrictions regarding this collection.

## **Use Access**

Detailed use restrictions relating to our collections can be requested from the office of the archivist at the General Commission on Archives and History. Photocopying is handled by the staff and may be limited in certain instances. Before using any material for publication from this collection a formal request for permission to publish is expected and required.

## **Preferred Citation**

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, Jeanne Barnett Papers, Drew Methodist Collection - GCAH, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the item's call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

## **Index Terms**

### ***Subject Terms***

Church work with gays  
Homosexuality  
Lesbians  
Reconciliation  
Social justice

### ***Geographic Terms***

California

### ***Added Names - Persons***

Dell, Gregory  
Fado, Donald



Powers, Jeanne Audrey  
Talbert, Melvin George

***Subject Names - Corporate Bodies***

United Methodist Church (U.S.). California-Nevada Annual Conference

***Genre Terms***

Announcements  
Articles  
Audio-visual materials  
Audiocassettes  
Bibles  
Certificates  
Church bulletins  
Clippings  
Correspondence  
Email  
Minutes  
Newsletters  
Newspapers  
Pins (Jewelry)  
Videocassettes

**Table of Contents**

## Container List

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2152-5-3:1	Camp Waluhila - Camp Fire Girls	1957
2152-5-3:2	Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies - Pacific School of Religion	2000-2006
2152-5-3:3	Newsletter: CORNET, Folder 1	1999
2152-5-3:4	Newsletter: CORNET, Folder 2	1999
2152-5-3:5	Newsletter: CORNET, Folder 3	1999
2152-5-3:6	Newsletter: CORNET, Folder 4	1999
2152-5-3:7	Creech, James	1998-1999
2152-5-3:8	Declaration of Domestic Partnership	2000
2152-5-3:9	Dell, Gregory - Broadway United Methodist Church	1999
2152-5-3:10	Education	1948-1992
2152-5-3:11	Equal Partners in Faith	1999
2152-5-4:1	Fado, Donald	1998-2006
2152-5-4:2	Funeral and Death	1974-2004
2152-5-4:3	General Conference	2000
2152-5-4:4	General Correspondence	2000
2152-5-4:5	General Council on Ministry: Committee to Study Homosexuality, Folder 1	1987-1991
2152-5-4:6	General Council on Ministry: Committee to Study Homosexuality, Folder 2	1991-1993
2152-5-4:7	Good News, Confessing Movement	1999-2006
2152-5-4:8	Hanaoka, Nobuaki: The Scriptural Authority and Homosexuality	1999
2152-5-4:9	Holy Union Anniversaries	1999-2004
2152-5-4:10	Holy Union Correspondence	1998-2004





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Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2152-5-5:1	Holy Union Event	1998-1999
2152-5-5:2	Holy Union Expenses	1999-2000
2152-5-5:3	Holy Union Event - Supporting Documents, Folder 1	Undated
2152-5-5:4	Holy Union Event - Supporting Documents, Folder 2	1998-1999
2152-5-5:5	March on Washington	1993
2152-5-5:6	Miscellaneous	1975-2005
2152-5-5:7	National Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders	1996-1997
2152-5-5:8	Newsletters	1987-2006
2152-5-5:9	Pearsall, Cordelle	Undated
2152-5-5:10	Powers, Jeanne Audrey	1995-2000
2152-5-6:1	Professional Career, Folder 1	1971-2003
2152-5-6:2	Professional Career, Folder 2	1975-1991
2152-5-6:3	Reconciling Congregations/Ministries	1983-2003
2152-5-6:4	Retirement	1981-1991
2152-5-6:5	St. Mark's United Methodist Church	1991-2004
2152-5-6:6	Shalom Ministries	2003
2152-5-6:7	Sophia Controversy	1995
2152-5-6:8	Soulforce	1999-2000
2152-5-6:9	Trips	1972
2152-5-7:1	Cassette: Reconciling Congregations Celebration	1994
2152-5-7:2	Cassette: Thursday Afternoon Plenary Session	1994
2152-5-7:3	Cassette: "The State of the Church", Bishop Melvin Talbert	1999
2152-5-8:1	Bible	1939
2151-6-1:1	Newspaper Clippings, Folder 1	1952-1998



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Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2151-6-1:2	Newspaper Clippings, Folder 2	1999
2151-6-1:3	Newspaper Clippings, Folder 3	1999
2151-6-1:4	Newspaper: Gay in America	1989
2151-6-2:1	Artifact: Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points Tote Bag	Undated
2151-6-2:2	Artifact: Affirmation Bay Area T-shirt	1988
2151-6-2:3	Artifact: The Stones Will Cry Out! T-shirt	Undated
2151-6-2:4	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 1	Undated
2151-6-2:5	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 2	Undated
2151-6-2:6	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 3	1992-1993
2151-6-2:7	Artifact: Los Angeles Lakers Pin 1	Undated
2151-6-2:8	Artifact: Sacramento Monarchs Pin 1	2001
2151-6-2:9	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 4	Undated
2151-6-2:10	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 5	Undated
2151-6-2:11	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 6	Undated
2151-6-2:12	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 7	1994-1995
2151-6-2:13	Artifact: Sacramento Monarchs Pin 2	2002
2151-6-2:14	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 8	1985
2151-6-2:15	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 9	Undated
2151-6-2:16	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 10	1996-1997
2151-7-1:1	Artifact: Yarn Banner	1999
2151-6-2:18	Artifact: NBA Pin	Undated
2151-6-2:19	Artifact: Hawaii Pin	Undated
2151-6-2:20	Artifact: Los Angeles Dodgers World Series Patch	1977
2151-6-2:21	Artifact: Sacramento Monarchs Pin 3	Undated



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Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2151-6-2:23	Artifact: Reconciling Ministries Network California-Nevada Annual Conference Name Tag and Ribbon	2000
2151-6-2:24	Artifact: Sacramento Monarchs Pin 4	2000
2151-6-2:25	Artifact: Reconciling Congregation Name Tag	Undated
2151-6-2:26	Artifact: Reconciling Congregation Name Tag and Ribbon	Undated
2151-6-2:22	Artifact: Los Angeles Dodgers Pin	Undated
2151-6-2:17	Artifact: Sacramento Kings Pin 11	1993-1994
2151-7-2:1	Certificates and Awards	1975-1997
2151-7-2:2	Photographs	Undated
2151-7-3:1	Artifact: Holy Union Banner with Guest Signatures	1999
2151-6-1:6	VHS Tape: Holy Union Reunion	2004

