

Mary Griffin, Ph.D., Papers
1920-1998, n.d.

Creator: Griffin, Mary, Ph.D. (1916-1998)

Extent: 6.25 l. ft.

Processor: Michael Courtney, 30 March 2001. Updated by Elizabeth A. Myers, April 2007.
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Administration Information

Access Restrictions: None

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Provenance: The papers of Mary Griffin were donated to the Women and Leadership Archives by Sister Mary DeCock, B.V.M. on February 28, 1998. Materials from the Mundelein College Archives were incorporated into the biographical series. Accession number 1998.29. Additional papers were donated by Mary Griffin on February 29, 2012 as WLA2012.13.

Separations: 1.25 linear ft. of extraneous materials and student records discarded.

See Also: Mundelein College Archives.

Biographical History

Agnes Marie Griffin, English professor, feminist, and innovative educator, was the sixth child of Michael and Margaret Griffin, born on December 25, 1916 in Chicago, Illinois. She studied music education at Mundelein College, where she received a Bachelors of Music Education degree in 1939. After graduation, Griffin entered the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (B.V.M), taking her solemn vows in 1942. From 1942 to 1944, she taught English at the Saint Joseph Academy in Dubuque, Iowa. In 1944 she became an instructor of music and English at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa and, while on summer vacations, worked towards a Bachelor's degree in English from Mundelein College which she obtained in 1947. Also in 1947, Griffin became a fully professed member of the B.V.M's, taking the name Sister Mary Ignatia, B.V.M. In 1949, Griffin commenced graduate studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, where she earned a Masters Degree in English in 1951. After graduation, she resumed teaching as an Assistant Professor of English at Clarke College and later Mundelein College. In 1957, Griffin continued her graduate education at Fordham University in New York City, achieving a Doctorate of Philosophy in English.

After completing her doctorate Griffin returned to Mundelein College in 1961, serving as Academic Dean. During her tenure as Academic Dean, Griffin greatly improved Mundelein's curriculum. Introducing a three-term calendar, new majors, interdisciplinary seminars, Basic Study, Early Bird, Inner City, Foreign Study, and Honors Programs, and a freshman- sophomore advising system. Further, Griffin enhanced the national reputation of Mundelein College by increasing the size of the faculty, establishing an affiliation with the Central States College Association, and allowing Mundelein students to cross register in classes at Loyola University Chicago. In 1968, after seven years as Academic Dean, Griffin returned to teaching as a Professor of English.

As a teacher, Griffin taught a variety of subjects in her courses: American Literature, English Literature, Colonial American Literature, American Renaissance Literature, Woolf, Walker, Lessing, Chopin, Joyce, Eliot, and Faulkner. Griffin described her approach to textual analysis by examining a work, “both textually and contextually so that gender, race, and class are inevitably addressed along with the formal literary aspects of the work.” (See Curriculum Vita.)

Griffin was a nationally recognized pioneer for her creative ideas in education. She organized the Weekend College (1974) and Master of Liberal Studies Programs (1983) at Mundelein. The Weekend College Program allowed working adults to complete a degree without having to attend night school. The Master of Liberal Studies Program provided a student with a traditional liberal arts education. Both these programs were emulated at colleges and universities across the country.

Griffin also served on many national and local committees: Consultant/ Evaluator for weekend colleges at Notre Dame College in Baltimore, Alverno College in Milwaukee, St. Catherine College in St. Paul (1975-1989), Commission on Academic Affairs for the American Council on Education (1965-1967), Executive Committee for the Association of Higher Education (1966-1967), Conference Planning Committee of the American Association for Higher Education (1965), and Harvard University Workshop for Academic Deans (1964).

Over the course of her long life, Griffin received many awards and honors: Kappa Gamma Pi (1939), Fordham University Graduate Scholarship (1959-1961), Reader’s Digest Foundation Scholarship, University of London (1960), Post-doctoral fellowship in English, Yale University (1970), induction into the Mark Twain Society of America (1976), and being named by the American Association for Higher Education as one of the top fifty educational leaders among college and university faculty (1986). Loyola University Chicago’s Women’s Studies and Gender Studies Program honored the educator by creating the Mary Griffin Essay Award to recognize excellence in scholarship and writing among the program’s graduate students.

Throughout her life, Griffin was deeply concerned with and involved in social justice issues. During the 1960s, she brought students from Mundelein College to Selma, Alabama to participate in the Civil Rights Movement and taught for three years (1970-1973) Alcorn College in Mississippi, an historically black college. In the 1970s, she became involved in the nascent Feminist Movement, serving on the National Task Force Board of the Equal Rights Amendment and the Legal Defense Fund of the National Organization of Women.

Influenced by the social and cultural changes of the 1960s and 1970s, Griffin chose to leave religious life in 1973. Writing a well-received book, entitled *The Courage to Choose*, she explained her decision to leave the order, “what matters is not that we never change a commitment but that it remain meaningful, growth-producing. When this is no longer the case, we must have the courage to move on.” (See Obituary.)

After her retirement, Griffin continued to teach at Mundelein College and later Loyola University Chicago as a Senior Professor of English, until her death on April 3, 1998. Griffin never married. Her family included two nieces and a nephew and the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scope and Content

The Mary Griffin Papers fill 8.5 linear feet and span the period 1961-1998. The papers are arranged in eight series: biographical information, correspondence, Mundelein College, Publications, Graduate Courses, Undergraduate Courses, photographs, and awards and certificates.

Series 1: Biographical Information, 1938-1998, n.d., Boxes 1-2 is arranged chronologically and includes genealogical information, curricula vitae, newspaper clippings, diary, personal mementos, and personal reflections on books.

Series 2: Correspondence, 1974-1998, Box 2 is arranged alphabetically by folder title and consists of both incoming and outgoing correspondence.

Series 3: Mundelein College, 1979 – 1996, Box 2 consists of records relating to the Weekend College Program, Master of Liberal Arts Programs, Mundelein/ Loyola Transition Team and the Emeritus Connection.

Series 4: Publications, 1962- 1997, n.d., Boxes 2-3 consists of eight file folders. The first three folders are comprised of one copy of three books written by Griffin: *The Trial of Midas II or Congress of Musicians by Charles Burney, 1777*, *Strategies for Learning*, and *Courage to Choose*. Each work is housed individually. The fourth folder contains book reviews and personal responses to the *Courage to Choose*. The fifth folder holds three volumes of the journal *Listening* (volumes 13-15). The theme of the three volumes relates to women's issues. Volume 15 is edited by Griffin; Volume 13 has two published articles by Griffin entitled "A Society of Equals" and "Founding Mothers;" and Volume 14 contains articles authored by professors at Mundelein College. The sixth and seventh folders hold unpublished articles and an unpublished manuscript with comments by Griffin. The final folder contains two works by Louis Vaccaro entitled *Reshaping American Higher Education* and *Notes from a College President*. The later volume is autographed by Vaccaro.

Series 5: Graduate Courses, 1978 – 1995, n.d., Boxes 3-7 dates predominantly from the late 1980s and 1990s, and is arranged topically by folder title. It contains syllabi, student papers, lecture notes, newspaper clippings, a book review, articles and maps. The last folder holds a forty-five minute video of Griffin teaching a graduate course on T.S. Eliot's poem the "Waste Land" dating from the late 1980s.

Series 6: Undergraduate Courses, 1991 – 1998, n.d., Boxes 8-10 is arranged topically by folder title and includes student papers, syllabi, lecture notes, newspaper clippings, and articles. Course evaluations, however, are arranged chronologically and by folder title. The last folder holds a copy of the journal *Voiceprint* with an article written by a student of Griffin's, Susan Biszewski.

Series 7: Photographs, 1920 – 1996, n.d., Box 11 is arranged chronologically and includes individual photographs of Griffin, her early childhood, retirement party, and eightieth birthday celebration as well as photos of Griffin at Mundelein and Alcorn Colleges and in Selma, Alabama.

Series 8: Awards and Certificates, n.d., Boxes 12-13 includes Griffin's awards, certificates, and diplomas.

Subjects:

Griffin, Mary

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mundelein College

Weekend College

Master of Liberal Studies Program

Commission on Academic Affairs for the American Council on Education

Kappa Gamma Pi

Mark Twain Society of America

Civil Rights Movement

Selma, Alabama

Social Justice

Equal Rights Amendment

National Organization of Women

The Courage to Choose

The Trial of Midas II or Congress of Musicians by Charles Burney 1777

Strategies for Learning

Women educators, American

Women College Administrators

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Loyola University Chicago

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Series 1: Biographical Information, 1938-1998, n.d.			
1	1	Personal Data	1961-1998
	2	Family Data	1998, n.d.
	3	Personal Mementos	1938-1973
	4	Newspaper Clippings	1938-1939
	5	Newspaper Clippings	1961-1998
	6	Newspaper Clippings	1980-1989
	7	Diet of Great Books, Newspaper Article	1987
	8	Diary	1969-1973
	9	Reflections on Books	1987-1998
	10	Wills	1978
	11	Alcorn State Magazine	[1970]
	12	Retirement Party	1987
	13	Commencement Address	1991
	14	Eightieth Birthday Celebration	1996
	15	Obituaries	1998
2	1	Sympathy Cards	1998
	2	Memorial Service	1998
Series 2: Correspondence, 1974-1998			
	3	Elsa Copeland	1996-1997
	4	Gannon Center	1994-1995
	5	Helen Schultz	1974-1998
	6	Chris Scofield	1996-1997
	7	Louis Szathmary	1987
	8	Ying Zhenhua	1991-1995
Series 3: Mundelein College, 1979-1996			
	9	Weekend College Program	1979-1984
	10	Masters of Liberal Arts Program	1983-1994
	11	Mundelein/Loyola Transition Team	1991-1994
	12	Emeritus Connection	1996
		Barbara Van Cleve material	2000, n.d.
Series 4: Publications, 1962-1997, n.d.			
13		<i>The Trial of Midas or the Congress of Musicians By Dr. Charles Burney 1777</i>	1962
14		<i>Strategies for Learning</i>	1965

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3	1	<i>Courage to Choose</i>	1975
	2	Reviews and Personal Responses to <i>Courage to Choose</i>	1975
	3	<i>Listening</i>	1978-1980
		“The Operative Goals of Catholic Higher Education”	1967
	4	Edited Manuscript	n.d.
	5	Unpublished Articles/Poems	1976-1997, n.d.
	6	Works by Louis Vaccaro	1976-1977

Series 5: Graduate Courses, 1978-1995, n.d.

	7	Graduate Syllabi	1979-1992
	8	Eliot Courses: Student Papers	1978
	9	Eliot Courses: Student Papers	1989
4	1	Eliot Class Notes	n.d.
	2	Published Articles on Eliot	n.d.
	3	“Waste Land” Lecture Notes	n.d.
	4	“Hollow Man” Lecture Notes	n.d.
	5	“Four Quarts” Lecture Notes	1995
	6	“Better Black Smith” Lecture Notes	n.d.
	7	Eliot Classes Lecture Notes	1989-1995
	8	Poets of the Inner Event Syllabi	1980
	9	Poets of the Inner Event Lecture Notes	1980
	10	Poets of the Inner Event Student Papers	1980
	11	Articles on Eliot	n.d.
	12	Between the Past and Future (MLS 5200) Lecture Notes	n.d.
	13	Between the Past and Future (MLS 5200) Lecture Notes	n.d.
	14	Between the Past and Future (MLS 5200) Lecture Notes	n.d.
5	1	<i>Great Issues of Politics</i> (MLS 5200)	n.d.
	2	<i>Brave New World</i> Lecture Notes (MLS 5200)	n.d.
	3	Between the Past and Future (MLS 5200)	1991
	4	Notes on Seminar Techniques	n.d.
	5	Feminist Critique notes	n.d.
	6	<i>Yellow Wall Paper</i>	n.d.
	7	<i>Critical Essays on Woolf</i> (GLS 740)	n.d.
	8	Chopin, Lessing, and Woolf (GLS 470)	1994
	9	Chopin, Lessing, and Woolf	1984-1991
	10	Chopin, Lessing, and Woolf Bibliography	n.d.
	11	Paper Topics on Chopin, Lessing, and Woolf	n.d.
	12	Lessing, Woolf, and Feminist Critique Lecture Notes	n.d.
	13	Bibliography Woolf	1992
	14	<i>The Summer Before</i> Lecture Notes	n.d.
	15	Chopin Bibliography	1993
	16	Martha Quest Lecture Notes	n.d.
	17	Lessing Bibliography	n.d.

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	18	Woolf Miscellaneous Lecture Notes	n.d.
	19	“Woolf A Room of One’s Own: A Note of the Essay”	n.d.
	20	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> Lecture Notes	1992
	21	<i>Lighthouse</i> Lecture Notes	1994
	22	Woolf Lecture Notes	n.d.
6	1	James Joyce Lecture Notes	n.d.
	2	Publications on Joyce	n.d.
	3	Maps of Joyce’s Dublin	n.d.
	4	James Joyce and <i>Ulysses</i> (MLS 5303)	1991
	5	Publications on Joyce	n.d.
	6	Student papers on Joyce	1991
	7	<i>Ulysses</i> Lecture Notes	1991
	8	Maps of Dublin	n.d.
	9	Lestrygonians	n.d.
	10	<i>Four Gated City</i> Lecture Notes	n.d.
	11	James Joyce and <i>Ulysses</i> Class	n.d.
	12	Faulkner Lecture Notes	n.d.
	13	English 312A -340: Student Papers	1991
7	1	<i>Abslum, Abslum</i> Lecture Notes	n.d.
	2	<i>Sound and the Fury</i> Lecture Notes	n.d.
	3	Publications on Faulkner	n.d.
	4	Book Review on Zora Neale Hurston	n.d.
	5	Newspaper Clippings on Emily Dickinson	1979-1980
	6	<i>The Twentieth Century</i>	n.d.
	7	Student Papers	1994
	8	Student Papers	1994
	9	“The Valley of Mexico”	1993
	10	Video of Mary Griffin Teaching	[1980s]
Series 6: Undergraduate Courses, 1991-1998, n.d.			
8	1	Undergraduate Syllabi	1991-1995
	2	Course Evaluations English 298-17	1998
	3	Course Evaluations English 273-203	1997
	4	Course Evaluations Victorian Period	1997
	5	Course Evaluations English 273-614	1996
	6	Course Evaluation English 271-616	1995
	7	Course Evaluation English 271-616	n.d.
	8	Course Evaluation Women’s Studies	1994
	9	Course Evaluation English 273-Y04	1994
	10	Course Evaluation English 273-Y04	1994
	11	Course Evaluations English 273-Y04	1992
	12	Course Evaluations MLS	1992
	13	Teaching Aids	n.d.

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	14	Chief British Writers Lecture Notes	1997
	15	Chief British Writers Lecture Notes	1997
	16	Chief British Writers Syllabi	1997
	17	Intro to Fiction English 273	1993-1996
9	1	Women in Literature Syllabi	n.d.
	2	Women in Literature Lecture Notes (backup notes)	n.d.
	3	Bibliographies for Women in Literature (backup notes)	n.d.
	4	Victorian Period Literature	1993
	5	Victorian Period Literature Lecture Notes	n.d.
	6	Introduction to Poetry Lecture Notes	1995
	7	Introduction to Poetry Syllabi and Test Questions	1995
10	1	Introduction to Fiction	1995-1996
	2	Materials on Sandra Cisneros	n.d.
	3	Helping Aids	n.d.
	4	Modern American Fiction	1994
	5	Susan Biszewski, "Liberation of Edna Pontellier: An Open Ending," <i>Voiceprint</i> (1991): 108-115	1991
Series 7: Photographs, 1920-1996, n.d.			
11	1	Individual Pictures of Mary Griffin	[1960s-1990s]
	2	Early Childhood Pictures	[1920s-1930s]
	3	Mundelein College/T.V. Appearances	[1960s]
	4	Selma, Alabama	[1960s]
	5	Alcorn College	1970-1973
	6	Weekend College	[1980s]
	7	Retirement Party	1987
	8	Dedication of Griffin Fortune Art Gallery	1988
	9	Eightieth Birthday Celebration	1996
Series 8: Awards and Certificates, n.d.			
12		Awards and Certificates	n.d.
13		Diplomas, Large Photos of Mary Griffin and a High School Class Picture	n.d.