

Bren Ortega Murphy Papers 1976-2013

Preliminary Finding Aid

Creator: Bren Ortega Murphy

Extent: 7 linear feet (8 boxes)

Language: English

Repository: Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago

Administration Information

Access Restrictions: None

Usage Restrictions: Copyright for materials created by Bren Ortega Murphy was retained by the donor.

Preferred Citation: Identification of item, date, box #, folder #, Bren Ortega Murphy Papers, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Provenance: The collection was donated to the WLA by Bren Ortega Murphy in 2020 (WLA2020.13). Additional material was donated by her husband, Chris Murphy in 2022 (WLA2022.26).

Processing Information: This collection is unprocessed. Information in this preliminary finding aid was obtained through an initial inventory. Preliminary Finding Aid created in 2022.

Separations: A small amount of material was removed and placed in the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender (OSCLG) Records.

See Also: The Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender (OSCLG) Records at the Women and Leadership Archives.

Biographical History

Bren Adair Ortega was born in Beaumont, Texas on November 27, 1949. She grew up in Houston, Texas where she attended Mount Carmel High School. Her success in high school debate competitions earned her a scholarship to Northwestern University, where she earned her undergraduate degree. She continued her graduate studies at Northwestern and earned her PhD in Communications Studies.

Dr. Murphy began teaching at Loyola University Chicago in 1979 as a part-time instructor before becoming a professor in the School of Communications in 1984. She later joined the Women's Studies faculty and held a joint appointment in both the School of Communication and the Women's Studies/Gender Studies program in the College of Arts and Sciences until her retirement.

During her 36-year career at Loyola, she served as the Communications Studies Department Chair, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Chair of Faculty Council, interim Graduate Director for Women's Studies, and Director of Women's Studies. She received the Sujack Teaching Award from the College of Arts and Sciences for teaching excellence in 1996.

Murphy's research explored many forms of communication and aspects of gender roles. She wrote, directed and produced two video documentaries and a radio documentary. In the 1990s, Murphy worked with other Communications faculty at Loyola and Mundelein College to make a documentary on the affiliation of the two schools and the issues surrounding women's education, titled *A College of Their Own*. Her 2011 documentary, *A Question of Habit*, explores the real lives of women religious in the United States and their representation in popular culture. The documentary won 2nd Place for Feature Documentary at the Queens International Film Festival, a Remi Award at the 44th Houston International Film Festival, and the BEA Accolade Award for Best Documentary, among other awards.

Murphy and Lee Artz co-authored the book *Cultural Hegemony in the United States*. She was also co-editor of the book *Voices of Strong Democracy* and author of numerous conference articles and book chapters.

Murphy was active in numerous academic, journalism, and nonprofit organizations. She served as historian of the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender (OSCLG) and held leadership roles in the National Communication Association.

Murphy retired from Loyola in June 2020. She passed away on April 26, 2021 at age 71.

Scope and Content

The Bren Ortega Murphy Papers consist of 7 linear feet and span the years ~1976 to 2013. The papers relate primarily to Murphy's research on women religious and the *A Question of Habit* documentary. Materials include correspondence, research files, interview transcripts and notes, copyright information related to *A Question of Habit*. The collection also includes writings by Murphy, nun memorabilia, awards, DVDs, and CDs.