

Guide to the Gwen Fountain Collection

Special Collections and Rare Books, Irwin Library, Butler University



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Summary

Volume of Collection

1 Manuscript Box

Collection Dates

1977–2001

Provenance

Gwen Fountain

Copyright

Gwen Fountain

Citation

Gwen Fountain Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books,
Irwin Library, Butler University

Related Material

University Archives Biographical Files, 2 folders

Biographical Sketch

Gwen Fountain was born on March 22, 1946, in Hart, Michigan. She grew up in Hart as the only child of Harold and Marjorie VanDomelen. Harold was Hart's prosecuting attorney and then a circuit judge for the surrounding counties. Marjorie had college degrees in English and Social Studies, but remained a stay-at-home mom who continually battled mental illness. In high school, Fountain established herself as a student leader involved in community and athletics, but soon she felt the intellectual confines of a small town and left home after graduation for Kalamazoo College.

At Kalamazoo, Fountain earned her B.A. in economics ('68) and met her future husband, Jim. She went on to earn her M.A. ('69) and Ph.D. ('72) in economics from the University of Michigan. Fountain later earned an M.A. ('01) in educational administration while working at Butler University.

The Fountains had their first child, Matthew, in 1972. Following Matt were two more children, Kristen and Steven. Fountain spent much of her time between 1972 and 1976 caring for her children. Fountain was especially devoted to teaching her eldest son Matt, who was diagnosed as profoundly deaf when just a toddler, to speak, and to educating herself on child and language development. Fountain's commitment to education and community service continued as she cofounded SPARCS for Learning Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to teacher education and development, and served as: a board member of the Indiana Association for Hearing Impaired Children; a chair of the Education and Training Committee of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana; a member of the Indianapolis Children's Museum Board of Trustees; and a member of the Orchard Country Day School Board of Governors.

Fountain began her teaching career at Butler in 1975 as a lecturer in economics. By 1984 she was teaching full-time, and in 1986 she was put on tenure track as an assistant professor of economics. In 1992, she was named an associate professor of economics and management. Fountain then started on an administrative track when she served as Director of Undergraduate Programs for the College of Business and Administration and as the Assistant Provost for Student Learning before becoming the Dean of Academic Affairs. The height of her career at Butler came in 2000, when she was selected to serve as the Interim President after the retirement of President Bannister. Fountain was the first female to serve as president in the history of Butler University. Her historical interim term ended with the instatement of Bobby Fong as the new university president in 2001.

In 2001, Fountain decided to leave Butler for the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, where she currently (2004) serves as the Director of Investment Management.

Scope and Content

The bulk of this collection is Fountain's dissertation, "The Learning Initiative at Butler University," written as a partial requirement for completion of the Ed.S. degree at Butler University. The dissertation re-examines the educational endeavor of former Butler president Geoffrey Bannister, titled "The Learning Initiative." In the dissertation Fountain describes this initiative as a "[challenge] to the University community to ask what it truly wants Butler students to know and be able to do when they complete their Butler education. . . . The Learning Initiative is intended to focus campus dialogue toward carefully defining Butler learning goals and objectives; and then designing effective learning activities with students using the best known educational practices. . . . The Learning Initiative is intended to assist the Butler learning community in continuously examining the quality and effectiveness of our educational practices with these goals clearly in mind."

Fountain's dissertation also includes thirty-eight appendices, of which many may be of interest: an Associate Provost for Student Learning job description, reports and presentations on the Learning Initiative, two Lilly grant proposals, and several "Strengthening Institutions" grant reports.

Container List

Location

Contents

Manuscript Box:

Folder 1
Folder 2
Folder 3
Folders 4-14

"The Learning Initiative at Butler University"
pgs. 1-41
pgs. 42-84, References List, Bibliography
Appendices Index, Appendices 1-3
Appendices 4-38