

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES  
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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

MARY CAROLYN DOBBS (1911- )

PAPERS 1945-2004  
1.2 linear feet

ACQUISITION: The collection was donated by Mary Carolyn Dobbs in 2004.

ACCESS: The collection is open for research.

AUDIOVISUAL: A video of the 2004 Commencement ceremony in box 1.

COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to California State University, Fresno.

PHOTOGRAPHS: In box 2.

PROCESSED BY: Danielle Sherman, 2005.

## **Biography**

Mary Carolyn Dobbs was born in 1911 in New York. She attended high school at night so she would be able to work during the day. Due to health problems, Dobbs decided to move to California where she enrolled at Fresno State College (now California State University, Fresno), and received her Bachelor of Arts degree and a General Elementary Teaching Credential in 1944. She then attended San Francisco State University where she received a Master of Arts degree and Secondary and Special Education certificates in 1953.

Dobbs taught in public schools for thirty-two years, beginning in Fresno County at Biola Elementary School (1944-1947). She later was a master teacher in special education in Berkeley (1947-1966) and an educational specialist for special education in Grass Valley (1966-1976). While Dobbs taught, she became aware of teaching strategies for underprivileged children raised in poverty, broken homes, cultural gaps and language difficulties. This led her to further research that resulted in numerous publications and professional recognition at state, national, and international levels.

In 1969, Dobbs was given the Lane Bryant Award for Volunteer Service to the Community. In 1971, she received the National Volunteer Award and in 2000, she was given the National Teachers Hall of Fame Exemplary Teacher Award. Dobbs served for fifteen years on the United States President's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped and for ten years on the California Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped.

In 1952, she established *The Pointer*, which became one of the most well-known national and international journals for special education. She served as the editor for twenty-six years until 1978. The *Pointer* placed emphasis on assistance and support for teachers of the mentally ill and handicapped. The *Pointer* used teacher-oriented materials, classroom projects and workable ideas for ways to reach students effectively. Dobbs also provided consulting services in special education in other countries including India, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, West Indies, South Africa and Uganda.

Teachers continue to go to Dobbs for guidance with classroom problems, and parents still write and phone her for help. She currently lives in Grass Valley.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Mary Carolyn Dobbs papers measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1945 to 2004. The collection is arranged in seven series: Awards, Committees, Correspondence, Diplomas, the *Pointer*, Publications and Photographs.

In the Awards series (1967-2004) there are many awards that were given to Dobbs, along

**Scope and Content Note (cont.)**

with three certificates of recognition that Dobbs sponsored to honor three of her colleagues with a brick for each on the Teachers Honor Wall in front of the Education Building at California State University, Fresno.

In the Committee series (1965-1986) there are invitations to the annual meeting of the President's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped at the White House for ten years in a row.

In the Correspondence series (1945-2003) there are personal letters from Pearl S. Buck, who was a close friend of Dobbs throughout her life. They shared a deep concern for handicapped children. There are also letters from the White House, a few of which are from Patricia Nixon.

In the Diplomas series (1944-1953) there are two of Dobbs' diplomas from California State University, Fresno and San Francisco State University.

In the *Pointer* series (1958-1978), there are regular volumes of this journal as well as those that were translated into Japanese. There are also articles that were reprinted for other journals as well as business correspondence.

The Publications series (1956-2004) includes articles about Dobbs and many publications written by Dobbs.

The last series, Photographs (1957-1976), contains pictures of many of her students. Also within this series are photos of Dobbs receiving awards and photos of her during her travels.

**Related Collection**

*The Pointer*, vol. 1 (November 1956) to 5, 9 to 33 (Summer 1989) at the Education and Psychology Library at University of California, Berkeley (LC4001 P6)

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**Box no.   Description**

Box 1

**Awards**

CSUF Certificates of Recognition, 2001  
Hall of Fame award and correspondence, 2000  
Honorary doctorate  
    Award and correspondence, 2004 and undated  
    Video, 2004  
Lane Bryant Award  
    Awards, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1971  
    Correspondence, 1967-1971  
Nominations for awards, 1966-2000 and undated  
Special Education Teacher of the Year correspondence, 1971, 1974 and undated  
Women of Distinction from Soroptimist International of Grass Valley  
    correspondence, 1989 and 2000

**Committees**

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1965-1969  
Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped, 1966-1986 and undated  
President's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped  
    Correspondence, 1969-1978 and undated  
    Invitations to annual meeting, 1971-1981  
President's Committee on Mental Retardation, 1967, 1975

**Correspondence**

Congressional, 1966-1991  
Departments of Education, 1959-1974  
Pearl S. Buck, 1952-1965 and undated  
Personal, 1951-2003 and undated  
Schools, 1945-2000  
White House (visitor passes included), 1970-1977

**Diplomas**

California State University, Fresno, 1944  
San Francisco State University, 1953

**Box no.   Description**

Box 1 (cont.)

**The Pointer**

Copyright forms, 1958-1969

Correspondence, 1961-1978

*The Pointer* in Japanese

Correspondence, 1962-1963 and undated

Issues

1961-1963, 1968-1969, 1971

Undated (3 folders)

Loose articles, undated

Newspaper articles, undated

*Pointer* articles for other journals

Correspondence, 1963-1968

*Journal of Rehabilitation in Asia*, 1962-1968

*S.A. Cerebral Palsy Journal*, 1965-1968

Volumes

Winter 1960- Fall 1972

Spring 1972- Spring 1973

Winter 1973- Fall 1975

Winter 1975- Fall 1976

Fall 1977- Spring 1978

Box 2

**Publications**

About Carolyn Dobbs, 1962-1989 and undated

Written by Carolyn Dobbs

1956-1965

1968-2004

Undated

**Photographs**

Book of photographs, 1973-1974

Miscellaneous, 1957, 1966, 1972-1974, 1976