

Williams, Danny diaries

Danny Williams diaries
1975-1995

Title Statement

Williams, Danny diariesGuide to the Danny Williams diaries MSS.16950

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Publication Statement

Publisher: Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library
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Profile Description

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Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS.16950

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1902

Unit Date

1975-1995

Language

English

Creator

Williams, Danny

Extent

.2 Cubic Feet One letter-size file box, half-width

Condition Description

Good

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Access restrictions apply.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Michael Brown Rare Books by the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 15 July 2025.

Content Description

This collection contains four diaries written by Danny Williams, a gay African American man and theater student from Robbins, Illinois, and Chicago. The diaries are bound volumes, the smallest measuring about 6 inches and the largest measuring 11 inches, including a total of 637 manuscript pages, with entries written in pencil and various colored inks. Williams kept the diaries from 1975 to 1979, while a student at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago, and his time immediately after graduating. The diaries provide a look at the experience and struggles of being a Black and gay man in late twentieth-century Chicago. Williams' diaries chronicle his struggles with his multiple identities, racial, sexual, and personal, as he made his way in theater school and life. Williams sought a way to accept and love himself for who he was, but struggled with shame and guilt because of his sexual orientation. He was only out in the African American gay community, not in school, and not with his mother and siblings. These struggles resulted in bouts of depression, panic attacks, and substance abuse. Williams describes his efforts to overcome these issues, improve his craft as an actor, and find roles in the Chicago theater world.

Keywords

African American actors
African American gay men
Chicago (Ill.)
Diaries

Description of Subordinate Components

Diary

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/293637

Unit Date 1975-1975

Mixed Materials [X032762944] 1 (box)

Language English

Diary

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/293638

Unit Date 1976-1995

Mixed Materials [X032762944] 1 (box)

Language English

Diaries

Unit ID [Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID /repositories/3/archival_objects/293639

Unit Date 1977-1979

Mixed Materials [X032762944] 1 (box)

Language English