



Deacon Maccubbin and Jim Bennett Collection (Series XXVII)

Draft Updated on:

2023 15 August by Iz Klemmer

Title: Deacon Maccubbin and Jim Bennett Collection, aka Lambda Rising

Dates: 1970-2009

Accession number: 2018.041, 2023.032; MS 0764 Series XXVII.

Creator: These records were created by Deacon Maccubbin and Jim Bennett in their role as the proprietors of Lambda Rising Bookstore, and its leadership of the Lambda Literary Report, and as the founding organizers of Gay Pride Week (1975-1979), and of Earthworks, Inc.

Extent: 6 Hollinger boxes and 2 oversize boxes.

Repository: DC History Center, as of August 2018.

Biographical note:

Activist and Lambda Rising bookstore founder L. Page "Deacon" Maccubbin was born in 1943 in Norfolk, VA. After dropping out of his third year at the University of Virginia, he joined the National Guard in 1964, but soon became involved in anti-war activism and, by 1968, decided to resign from the Guard to protest the Vietnam war. After missing monthly drills, he was ordered to active duty but refused those orders in a public demonstration. He submitted to arrest and was sent to a military holding detachment at Fort Belvoir. After eleven months in confinement, he was discharged from the Army and settled in Washington, DC. In 1971, Deacon bought a small consignment shop for \$100 at 1724 20th St NW, turning it into Earthworks, a tobacco and paraphernalia shop. The store was in a building known as the Community Building, which also housed the DC Switchboard, the Washington Area Free University and other counter-culture organizations. Deacon took over management of the building and, over the years,

brought in additional organizations, including the women's newspaper Off Our Backs, the Drug Offenders Rights Committee, the Bread & Roses Music Co-op, the New Playwright's Workshop, the Washington Blade and the Gay Switchboard. In 1974, Deacon rented a 300-square-foot space on the first floor adjacent to Earthworks and opened Lambda Rising bookstore, the first gay bookstore in DC. He started with 250 gay titles, and the bookstore quickly became a LGBTQ+ community hub. Lambda Rising ran the first gay-oriented television commercial ever aired anywhere in the world in February 1975. In 1977, the bookstore moved to a larger 900-square-foot location at 2012 S Street NW and launched a popular mail-order service and catalog called "The Whole Gay Catalog." In 1984, they moved to their final location, a two-story 5,000 square-foot commercial property at 1625 Connecticut Ave. NW. Lambda Rising opened new locations in Baltimore's Community Center in 1984, in Rehoboth Beach in 1993, and in Norfolk, VA in 1996. In 2003, Lambda Rising bought and revitalized Oscar Wilde Bookshop (the world's first gay bookstore) in New York City, saving it from closure. Deacon and his husband, Jim Bennett, made the decision to close all Lambda Rising locations in 2009, citing the rise in both online shopping and the now-wider availability of LGBTQ+ literature.

In addition to his work with Lambda Rising, Deacon was the founder and chair of the Washington Area Gay Community Council (WAGCC). In 1975, WAGCC launched the planning process for the second gay community center and published Just Us, the first guide to DC's gay community. That same year, Lambda Rising hosted the first ever annual Gay Pride Day in DC, a 2,000 person block party that was organized for five consecutive years. In 1979, Deacon turned Gay Pride Day over to a nonprofit, which became the modern-day Capital Pride Alliance. In 1989, Lambda Rising also began publishing a review of LGBTQ+ literature called the Lambda Book Report. The Lambda Literary Awards began in 1989, and control was turned over to the newly-formed Lambda Literary Foundation in 1997.

Deacon met his husband, Jim Bennett, in 1978. Jim became Lambda Rising's assistant manager and played an integral role in bookstore operations for 20 years, rising to Vice President for Retail Operations. On February 26, 1982, they were joined in holy union at First Congregational Church. In 1992, they were the second couple to register as domestic partners in DC, but Congress blocked DC from implementing those registrations. A few years later, Congress having lifted their block, Deacon and Jim re-registered and, on February 26, 2015, following the Supreme Court's Obergefell decision, they finally got their legal marriage license.

Scope and content of collection:

This collection documents the activities of L. Page "Deacon" Maccubbin, the founder of

Lambda Rising, Washington DC's first gay bookstore, and his husband, Jim Bennett. Materials include papers, records, newspaper clippings, and correspondence for Lambda Rising, in addition to records and press releases on Maccubbin's other projects. Papers related to Lambda Rising comprise event flyers and promotional materials, awards received by Maccubbin and Lambda Rising, several folders of correspondence from incarcerated people to Lambda Rising, business and financial records, contracts, employee handbooks, court files, newspaper clippings, and photographs of the bookstore. Lambda Rising materials span from their opening in 1977 to their closure in 2009. Other formats include a small number of negatives, photo discs, and artifacts such as license plates, holiday cards, and sketches.

Additional topics include the origins of Capital Pride; the founding of the Lambda Literary Awards and Lambda Literary Foundation; and the opening of Lambda Rising stores in Baltimore, Rehoboth Beach, DE, and Norfolk, VA. The collection also includes periodicals, advertisements, newspaper clippings, drawings, and photographs concerning general LGBTQ+ history in DC and nationwide.

System of arrangement:

Series I: Event Files, Promotional Materials, Awards, Prison Letters and other organizational papers, 1977-2009

Series II: Correspondence, 1970-2009

Series III: Business and Employee Records, 1976-2000

Series IV: News Clippings and Artifacts, 1977-2008

Series V: Photographs, 1975-2009

Series VI: Oversize Periodicals, Artifacts, Terry Woll Drawings, Certificates, Photographs, and Clippings, 1974 - 2008

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is available by appointment, at the DC History Center.

Reproduction and use: All material is believed to be under copyright, and available for fair use purposes.

Acquisition information: The material was donated to RHP by Deacon Maccubbin and Jim Bennet, date unknown; transfer paperwork has yet to be identified.

Processing history:

2017. 01.29 Vincent Slatt with Nathan Avant and Sarah Avant sorted materials.

2022.05.15 Series 3 Ephemera: 3 boxes of slides have been digitized and are

available from the Google Drive "[Deacon Maccubbin and Jim Bennet \(2022 digitization\)](#)."
2023.06.03. 1 Folder, "[Photos of Lambda Rising Opening, 1625 CT Ave](#)," has been scanned, sleeved, and ready for transfer.

CONTAINER LIST--INITIAL INVENTORY

BOX 1:

Folder 001: SPECIAL EVENTS 1991-2009
Folder 002: "GAY?" NEWSPAPER AD NOVEMBER 1977
Folder 003: OVERLOOKED OPINIONS SURVEY AUG 1991
Folder 004: CLOSING 2009
Folder 005: FLOOR PLANS 1974
Folder 006: PRISON LETTERS 2005

BOX 2:

Folder 007: PRISON LETTERS 2006
Folder 008: PRISON LETTERS 2007-2009
Folder 009: LAMBDA RISING PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS (*EXHIBITIONS VALUE*)
Folder 010: EVENT POSTERS & ADVERTISEMENTS
Folder 011: POCKET BOOKS DISCRIMINATION CASE
Folder 012: BOOKSTORE WARS
Folder 013: 1997 THAT BOOK SIGNING KEVIN DREWERY
Folder 014: LAMBDA RISING PROMOTIONAL FLYERS AND BUSINESS CARDS
Folder 015: AWARDS AND INVITATIONS, LAMBDA RISING
Folder 016: LAMBDA RISING / GAY PRIDE
Folder 017: DEACON MACCUBBIN WRITES LAMBDA'S HISTORY
Folder 018: GAY MEN'S EROTICA CATALOG C. 1990's
Folder 019: CHARITABLE DONATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2002-2003
Folder 020: ALAMO SQUARE CORRESPONDENCE WITH BERT HERMAN
Folder 021: LAMBDA LITERARY AWARDS

BOX 3:

Folder 022; CORRESPONDENCE 1970-1979
Folder 023: CORRESPONDENCE 1980 - 1989 (1 of 3)
Folder 024: CORRESPONDENCE 1980 - 1989 (2 of 3)
Folder 025: CORRESPONDENCE 1980 - 1989 (3 of 3)

Folder 026: CORRESPONDENCE 1990-2009
Folder 027: CUSTOMER SERVICE ARTICLES 1990-2009
Folder 028: BOOK REPORT CONTRACT 1996
Folder 029: REBECCA WOLFINGER DISCRIMINATION CASE 1999
Folder 030: EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK DRAFTS 2000

BOX 4:

Folder 031: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 1977-1987
Folder 032: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 1988-1989
Folder 033: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 1990-1992
Folder 034: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 1993-1996
Folder 035: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 1997-2003
Folder 036: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: 2004-2008
Folder 037: News Clippings, Lambda Rising: Undated

BOX 5:

Folder 038: News Clippings, General LGBTQ+ History
Folder 039: News Clippings, Lambda literary awards
Folder 040: News Clippings, Oscar Wilde Acquisition
Folder 041: News Clippings, Oscar Wilde
Folder 042: News Clippings, Television
Folder 043: Artifacts
Folder 044: Maccubbin Business cards
Folder 045: Maccubbin domestic partnership

BOX 6:

Folder 046: PHOTOS OF LAMBDA RISING OPENING 1625 CT AVE (Scanned June 2023: See [“Photos of Lambda Rising Opening, 1625 CT Ave.”](#))
Folder 047: PHOTOS OF LAMBDA RISING 1970S AND 1980S (NB: Includes photos taken by Patsy Lynch)
Folder 048: PHOTOS OF LAMBDA RISING STORES (BALTIMORE AND DC) 1990S
Folder 049: PHOTOS OF LAMBDA RISING STORES (BALTIMORE, DC, NORFOLK, REHOBOTH) 2000S
Folder 050: INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES; LAMBDA RISING (1 OF 2)
Folder 051: INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES; LAMBDA RISING (2 OF 2)
(NB: Most, if not all, photos taken by Leigh H. Mosley)

Folder 052: PRINT PHOTOS OF JIM AND DEACON + PHOTOS OF LAMBDA RISING
EMPLOYEE

Folder 053: 1981 GAY PRIDE NEGATIVES AND CDS

BOX 7 - Oversize:

Folder 054: PHOTOS AND CERTIFICATES REMOVED FROM FRAMES.

Folder 055: "LAMBDA" LICENSE PLATE (*EXHIBITIONS VALUE*)

Loose publications; single issues from various LGBT outlets or special LGBT editions;
Lambda Rising "newspaper" collection (black binder)

BOX 8 - Oversize:

Folder 056: TERRY WOLL BIOGRAPHY AND ARTWORK; Robert Terence "Terry" Woll, 12
Nov 1937-26 July 1991. The artist's obituary from 2 Aug 1991 Washington Blade is
included.

Loose publications; Pride promotional posters; single issues from various LGBT outlets or
special LGBT editions

Processing Notes and Assorted Materials NOT at DCHC

- 2 BOXED COLOR SLIDES [1979 NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON](#) (at storage)
- 1 BOX COLOR SLIDES [1990s LAMBDA PROMOTIONAL](#) (at storage)
- 4 [AUDIO CASSETTES](#) (at VES, Digitized 3 June 2023)
 - [Lambda Rising WHFS Radio Commercial](#)
 - [Lambda Rising WZHF Radio Commercial](#)
 - [Public Interest with Kojo Nnamdi. WAMU 6-10-02](#) Talk with Activists: Chris Crane, executive editor of the Washington Blade, Deacon Maccubbin of Lambda Rising, Cheryl Spector at-large RHP.
 - [Metro Connection Derrick McGinty Show. WAMU 1996 March.](#)
- 11 BUTTONS MOVED TO BUTTON COLLECTION

- 3 BUTTONS AND ONE SASH 1986 WOMEN'S MARCH MOVED TO BUTTON COLLECTION
- LAMBDA RISING NEON SIGN (At storage facility)
- 4 T-SHIRTS MOVED TO SHIRTS COLLECTION ("GUERRILLA QUEER BAR WASHINGTON DC", "FANTASIES", "DO IT WITH FRIENDS WPFW", WANDA ALSTON YOUTH HOUSE")
- SET OF SUBJECT FILE FOLDERS TO BE RETURNED TO FILING CABINET IN STORAGE SHED
- FOLDERS OF RHP BOARD MATERIAL MOVED ELSEWHERE