

Guide to the Claudine Williams Papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Williams, Claudine B.
Title:	Claudine Williams Papers
ID:	MS-00094
Date [inclusive]:	1956-2009
Date [bulk]:	1970 to 2007
Physical Description:	15.20 Cubic Feet (25 boxes, 3 oversized boxes, 1 flat file, and 1 shared box)
Physical Description:	19.09 Linear Feet
Physical Description:	7 Digital Files (3.784 GB) M4V
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Claudine Williams Papers (1956-2009) contain awards, contracts, personal and business correspondence, newspaper clippings, and photographs pertaining to Las Vegas, Nevada businesswoman and philanthropist, Claudine Williams. The collection also includes extensive information on her hotel and gaming properties, including the Silver Slipper Gambling Hall, Holiday Casino, and Harrah's Hotel and Casino, as well as her honorary doctoral degree, medals, and audiovisual materials of interviews, news reports, and events.

Preferred Citation

Claudine Williams Papers, 1956-2009. MS-00094. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Biographical Note

Claudine Barbara Williams was born on March 17, 1921 in Mansfield, Louisiana. Her family later moved to Dallas, Texas, where at the age of fifteen she began working at a casino nightclub

operated by Benny Binion. At the age of twenty-one, Williams bought a Houston steakhouse and casino, paid back the loan ahead of schedule, and used the profits to launch her business empire. In the 1940s, Claudine met her future husband, Shelby Williams. They were married on February 19, 1950 and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada in 1964. They purchased the Silver Slipper Casino, which they operated until 1969, when they sold it to Howard Hughes. The couple took over the River Queen Casino 1973, renaming it the Holiday Casino. After Shelby's death in 1977, Claudine became the first woman casino president and general manager in Nevada gaming history. In 1983, the Holiday Inn Corporation acquired full ownership of the casino and hotel, as well as its subsidiary, Harrah's. Harrah's Entertainment, no longer a subsidiary of Holiday Inn, took over the property in 1992.

Claudine, along with several others, created the American Bank of Commerce. She became the first woman in Nevada history to chair a bank's board of directors. She also served on several government, business, and charity boards throughout her lifetime. In 1989, she helped establish a scholarship fund in her husband's name at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) College of Hotel Administration. She also personally donated funds to UNLV for a dormitory construction project. To honor Claudine, UNLV named the residence hall after her, and in 1994, UNLV bestowed an honorary doctoral degree upon her. Claudine Williams passed away on May 13, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Sources:

"Claudine Williams." Women in Nevada History. Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://womennvhistory.com/portfolio/claudine-williams/>

"Casino Owner, Philanthropist Claudine Williams dies at 88." Las Vegas Sun. May 13, 2009. Accessed March 12, 2019. <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2009/may/13/casino-owner-philanthropist-claudine-williams-dies/>

"Dreaming the Skyline. Holiday/Harrah's." UNLV University Libraries. Digital Collections. Accessed March 28, 2019. <https://digital.library.unlv.edu/skyline/hotel/holidayharrahs>

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Scope and Contents Note

The Claudine Williams Papers (1956-2009) contain awards, contracts, personal and business correspondence, newspaper clippings, and photographs pertaining to Las Vegas, Nevada businesswoman and philanthropist, Claudine Williams. The collection also includes extensive information on her hotel and gaming properties, including the Silver Slipper Gambling Hall, Holiday Casino, and Harrah's Hotel and Casino, as well as her honorary doctoral degree, medals, and audiovisual materials of interviews, news reports, and events.

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Arrangement

This collection is organized into four series:

- I. Personal papers, 1956-2009;
- II. Civic and community activity papers and photographs, 1967, 1978-2005;
- III. Hotel and casino property records, 1961-2004;
- IV. Audiovisual materials, 1982-2007.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research with the exception of some materials, which are closed in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 463.120 and to protect personally identifiable information. Restrictions are noted at the file level of this inventory, and some will be open for research use January 1, 2069.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Material was donated in 2007 and 2009 by the Claudine Williams estate; accession numbers 2007-09 and 2009-19.

Processing Note

Material was partially processed by Wendy Halford in 2010 and completed by Joyce Moore in 2014. In 2017, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Joyce Moore revised and enhanced the collection description and entered the data into ArchivesSpace. In 2019, as part of an archival backlog elimination project, Christina Lamoureux rehoused part of the collection and revised the collection description to bring it into compliance with current

professional standards. In 2024, Tammi Kim and Sarah Jones updated the finding aid to include digital files transferred off of legacy media by patron request.

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Related Materials

Related Collections

The following resources may provide additional information related to the materials in this collection:

Claudine Williams Photograph Collection. PH-00351. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Williams, Claudine. Interview, 1997 October 20, 2005 October 09. OH-03386. Transcript. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Names and Subjects

- Casinos -- Management
- Casinos -- Marketing
- Casinos -- Laws and legislation
- Tourism -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- Gaming -- Las Vegas (Nev.)
- photographs
- Women
- Women
- Silver Slipper Gambling Hall and Saloon
- Holiday Casino (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Riverboat Casino
- Holiday Inns, Inc.

Collection Inventory

Personal papers, 1956-2009

Physical Description: 4.44 Cubic Feet (6 boxes, 2 oversized boxes, and 1 flat file)

Physical Description: 8.48 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents Note: The personal papers series (1956-2009) contains awards, newspaper clippings, photographs, correspondence, event information, and ephemera pertaining to Claudine Williams' career and her honorary doctoral degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in rough alphabetical order.

Title/Description	Containers
Awards and certificates of achievement, recognition, and appreciation, 1973-2008 Physical Description: 3 Files	box 01
Biographical information, 1996-2006	box 01
Brannan, Johnny and Lillie murder case report, 1958	box 01
Business Hall of Fame correspondence and newsletters, 2003	box 01
Commission on Governmental Reorganization State of Nevada report, undated	box 01
Correspondence, 1956-2004	box 01
Event invitations, 2000-2005	box 01
Event programs, 1999-2007 Physical Description: 3 Files	box 01 box 02
Facility name application documents and correspondence for proposed Claudine Williams Elementary School, 1999, 2004-2005	box 02
Gaming Hall of Fame Dinner committee documents, correspondence, and memorabilia, 1992, 1998-2000 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 02
"A Gathering of Gamblers" documentary information, 1996	box 03
John Voss Drilling Company correspondence and photographs, 1963	box 03
Newspaper clippings, 1960-2009 Physical Description: 8 Files	box 03
Papers about Claudine Williams written by students, 1992, 2004	box 04
Photographs of Claudine Williams and family, undated	box 04
Photographs of Claudine Williams with dignitaries, 1979, 1988-1998, undated	box 04
Photographs of UNLV Commencement, 1994	box 04
Political correspondence, 1988-2006	box 04
Publications pertaining to Claudine Williams, 1975-2009 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 04
Thank you correspondence to Claudine Williams, 1987-2005	box 04

UNLV Foundation, 1986-2007	box 04
UNLV Honorary Doctorate correspondence and memorabilia, 1994	box 05
UNLV oral history transcript, 2007	box 05
Williams, Shelby, 1967-1974	box 05
Doctoral hood and Holiday Casino jacket, 1990s	oversized box 23
Awards, honorary doctorate degree, medals, and business card holder, 1996-2004	oversized box 24
Oversized photographs, awards, and ephemera, 1981-2008	oversized box 25
Blueprints of Williams' personal residence, 1991-1992	flat file 27

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Civic and community activity papers and photographs, 1967, 1978-2005

Physical Description: 2.07 Cubic Feet (5 boxes)

Physical Description: 1.88 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents Note: The civic and community activity papers and photographs series (1967, 1978-2005) contains materials pertaining to Claudine Williams' civic and community work including speeches, conference documents, and legislative papers. The series also includes photographs of events and dignitaries.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in rough alphabetical order.

Title/Description	Containers
Correspondence and documents pertaining to assorted chair positions, 1978-2003	box 06
California Nevada Super Train information, 1989, 1991	box 06
Inaugural Ball invitation for Ronald Reagan, 1985	box 06
Inaugural Ball invitation and other documents pertaining to Bill Clinton, 1991-1994	box 06
Heritage Tourism information packet, undated	box 07
Legislative briefing papers: Southern Nevada Water Facilities, 1989-1996	box 07
National Judicial College papers, March 1995	box 07
Nevada video lottery termination legislation papers, May 1993	box 07
Overview of legislation on property assessment papers, 1993	box 07
Photographs of events and dignitaries, 1987-2005, undated	box 07
President's Economic Conference registration packet, 1992	box 07
Speeches for engagements, 1983-1994, undated	box 08

Physical Description: 2 Files

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Foundation papers, 1980-1983	box 08
Travel and Tourism Industry Advisory Council papers, 1990-1992	box 09
Physical Description: 6 Files	
Annual Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism documents, 1998-1999, 2001	box 10
Physical Description: 3 Files	
Documents pertaining to the Nevada Commission on Tourism, 1984-2001	box 10
Harris Soil and Water Conservation District Outlook brochure, 1967	box 10
Photographs and newsletter pertaining to tourism in Nevada and the West, 1990, undated	box 10

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Hotel and casino property records, 1961-2004

Physical Description: 7.83 Cubic Feet (12 boxes and 1 oversized box)

Physical Description: 7.69 Linear Feet

Scope and Contents Note: The hotel and casino property records series (1961-2004) contains materials pertaining to properties owned or operated by Claudine Williams and her husband. The Silver Slipper Casino materials contain correspondence, dealer and gaming course descriptions, profit and loss statements, and accounting regulations. The Holiday Inn Hotel and Holiday Casino materials include contracts, log books, photographs, legal papers, signage and parking agreements, and purchase agreements. Other casinos and investment properties represented in the series include the Gold Rush Inn, Nob Hill Casino, Harrah's Hotel and Casino, and Riverboat Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada; the Holiday Casino and Nob Hill Casino in Reno, Nevada; and the Westward Ho Casino in Tahoe, Nevada.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in rough alphabetical order.

Title/Description	Containers
Silver Slipper Casino records	
Accounting regulations, 1967	box 11
Correspondence, business documents, and newspaper clippings, 1965-1969, 1984	box 11
Physical Description: 2 Files	
Dealer and gaming course information, undated	box 11
Photocopies of newspaper clippings and a placemat pertaining to Minsky's Burlesque, 1966	box 11
Profit and loss statements, earning statements, and other financial documents, 1965-1973	box 11
Receipts, 1961-1969	box 11
Holiday Inn Hotel and Holiday Casino records	

Billboards and outdoor signs: correspondence and photographs, 1973-1976	box 12
Capital Expenditure Request, 1985	box 12
Carnaval Connection and American Bank of Commerce newsletters, 1995-2003	box 12
Casino log book, 1974	box 12
Centel Telephone Company PABX switchboard information, 1977	box 12
Correspondence: operations, 1977-1983	box 12
Correspondence: memorandums, 1977-1978	box 12
Correspondence: interoffice, 1984-1988	box 12
Physical Description: 10 Files	box 13
Correspondence: casino and residence construction, 1973-1976	box 14
Deposition of Shelby Williams in James Phil Long estate case, 1974 March 08	box 14
Donation records, 1985-1989	box 14
Physical Description: 4 Files	
Entertainment contracts, 1978-1980	box 15
"Fun Book" certificate requests, 1977-1980	box 15
Gathering Band promotional materials, 1973	box 15
Heath and Company: correspondence and photographs pertaining to casino sign, 1978-1979	box 15
<i>Houston Post</i> newspaper clippings and correspondence, 1976	box 15
Legal papers and correspondence, 1972-1982, 1997	box 15
Parking structure correspondence, 1978	box 15
Photographs of the Holiday Inn Casino building, events, and entertainers, undated	box 15
Publicity agreements and releases and monorail correspondence, 1974-1976, undated	box 15
Purchase agreement correspondence and legal documents, 1979-1983	box 15
Physical Description: 2 Files	
Purchase agreement, promissory note, and other legal documents pertaining to the River Boat and Holiday Casinos, 1982	box 15
Purchase of Summa parking lot, 1977	box 16
Sale shares and voting trust agreements and correspondence, 1979	box 16
Security reports, direct mail promotion, and "Summerlaunch" itinerary, 1973, 1979, 1990	box 16

Stockholder and financial correspondence and documents, 1975-1985 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 16
Secret survey report, 1983 June	box 16
Secret survey report, 1987 March	box 16
Suggestion and complaint letters, 1978, undated	box 16
Telephone directory, 1991 July	box 16
Menus from Claudine's Restaurant, undated	oversized box 26
Other casinos and investment property records	
Accounting regulations, 1968	box 17
Bathtub Races memorabilia, 1974-1978	box 17
Correspondence: Harrah's Casino, 1985-2004	box 17
Customer and employee complaints, 1973-1983	box 17
Economic study of the gaming industry, 1996	box 17
Employee information, undated	box 17
Gaming in Nevada Status Report, 1991 April 27	box 17
Gaming licenses and related documents for Holiday Casino, Nob Hill Casino, and Harrah's Casino, 1972-1999 Restricted: Materials are closed in accordance with NRS 463.120.	box SH-044
Gold Rush Inn	
Appraisal report with photographs and blueprints, escrow documents, and correspondence, 1981-1988	box 18
Bank statements, invoices, and other financial documents, 1983-1989 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 18
Documents pertaining to the sale of the Gold Rush Inn, 1987	box 18
Harrah's Casino surveillance reports, phone logs, and incident log books, 1994 Restricted: Materials are restricted to protect personally identifiable information and will be open for research use on January 1, 2069.	box 28 box 29
Holiday Casino, Reno: financial records, 1968-1969	box 18
H&M Films "Hughes and Harlow: Angels in Hell" limited partnership documents, 1977 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 19
Nob Hill Casino gaming license application, 1978	box SH-044

Restricted: Materials are closed in accordance with NRS 463.120.

Nob Hill Casino legal documents pertaining to Lillian Cripps lawsuit, 1979	box 19
River Boat Casino	
Cash flows, 1972 December 26	box 19
Financial report, 1982	box 19
Legal and financial documents, correspondence, and agendas, 1972-1976	box 19
Loan proposal, 1980	box 19
Purchase agreement, 1979	box 20
Sales kit, undated	box 20
Stock purchase agreement and correspondence, 1982	box 20
Salary and benefit comparison by property, 1982 November	box 20
Vegas Frontier stockholder reports and newspaper clippings, 1966	box 20
Westward Ho Tahoe, Nevada pro forma financial documents and lease agreement, 1969	box 20
Physical Description: 2 Files	

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Audiovisual materials, 1981 to 2006

Physical Description: 0.86 Cubic Feet (2 boxes)

Physical Description: 1.04 Linear Feet

Physical Description: 5 Digital Files (3.600 GB) M4V

Scope and Contents Note: The audiovisual materials series (1981-2007) contains optical discs, VHS tapes, and a DVD. Included in the materials are interviews, casino promotional advertisements, news reports, and award ceremonies.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged alphabetically by box.

Title/Description	Containers
Black and White Ball, 1994 January Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"Boys Hope", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes TRT:00:08:00	box 21
"A Gathering of Gamblers", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"A Gathering of Gaming Greats" broadcasted on Channel 10/PBS, 1996 March 19 (MS_00094_007) Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21 digital file 00

Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.885 GB) M4V	
Governor's Conference of Nevada Tourism "Shecky Green Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
Harrah's and New Orleans "An Unbeatable Pair", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
Harrah's Claudine Williams plaque dedication, 1998 January 14 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"It's a New Beginning" Harrah's Las Vegas employee video, 1997 June Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"Nevada Week in Review", 1998 April 10 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"Perspectives on Las Vegas: A Conversation with Claudine Williams", 1998 (MS_00094_006) Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.618 GB) M4V	box 21 digital file 00
"Preview '97 The Future of Las Vegas...Today!", undated Physical Description: 4 VHS Tapes	box 21
Reports on Columbia Sunrise Hospital broadcasted on ABC, 1997 September 26 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
St. Jude's Ranch for Children "The Heartbeat of Hope", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
St. Jude's Ranch for Children "A Tribute to Claudine William", 1989 December 07 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:07:00	box 21 box 22
"State of the District", undated Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes	box 21
"Transrapid-International", 1998 July 07 Physical Description: 1 VHS Tapes TRT: 00:20:00	box 21
48 Hours Las Vegas, undated (MS_00094_003) Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:58:00 Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.980 GB) M4V	box 22 digital file 00
AM Bank, undated Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:07:00	box 22
Campus Connections "Episode 2", 2005	box 22

Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs

Channel 3 News interview, 1983 October (MS_00094_002)	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:30:00	digital
Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.428 GB) M4V	file 00
Channel 10 Interview Holiday Casino, 1982 May 04	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:30:00	
Claudine Williams and Burton Cohen photographs, 2006	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs	
Days of Wine and Roses, undated	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:03:00	
Harrah's Las Vegas Claudine Williams Scholarship Awards Banquet, 2007 May 17	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:05:40	
Las Vegas Special, undated (MS_00094_004-005)	box 22
Physical Description: 2 Optical Discs TRT: 3:11:00	digital
Physical Description: 2 Digital Files (2.150 GB) M4V	file 00
National Committee on Tourism (NCOT) Claudine Williams Tribute, 2003 December 23	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:12:23	
News report: Lady Casino Boss, 1981 October 12 (MS_00094_001)	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:04:00	digital
Physical Description: 1 Digital Files (0.046 GB) M4V	file 00
Woman of the Year, undated	box 22
Physical Description: 1 Optical Discs TRT: 00:01:00	

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