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Barnes, Debra Dene Collection, 1965-2008

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#73 Barnes, Debra Dene, Collection, 1965-2008
1 linear foot and oversized

INTRODUCTION

A collection of materials relating to Debra Dene Barnes, a native of Moran, Kansas and student at Kansas State College of Pittsburg, who was chosen as Miss Kansas 1967 and then went on to win the Miss America 1968 Pageant. The collection consists of newspaper clippings, scrapbooks of news clippings, photographs, various pageant programs, and other papers and photographs relating to the time she spent as a student at Kansas State College of Pittsburg and her tenure as Miss Pittsburg State 1967, Miss Kansas 1967, and Miss America 1968.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Debra Dene Barnes Collection was transferred to the Leonard H. Axe Library of Pittsburg State University from the Office of Public Information and the Alumni Center.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Debra Dene Barnes was born September 6, 1947 to Dwight O. and Emma Verle Barnes. With the exception of two years in the 1950s when her dad was stationed at Forbes Air Force Base (Topeka), Debbie grew up in Moran, Kansas. In 1962 Debbie's mother told them she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and was moved permanently to the hospital in Fort Scott, Kansas.

Debbie came from a musical family. Her father played the cello, violin and trumpet and her mother taught piano to nearly 40 students. At age four, Debbie picked out the tunes on the piano by ear after the students' lessons were over so her mother decided to give her piano lessons also. When her mother could no longer teach anymore, Debbie followed in her footsteps and began to teach piano when she was 12 years old. She also played the organ at the Methodist Church in Moran.

Upon graduation from Marmaton Valley High School, Debbie enrolled at Kansas State College of Pittsburg (KSCP) in the fall 1965 semester with a major in music. She was active in several organizations on campus and held offices in CWENs, a sophomore women's honorary society, in Tau Beta Sigma, a national recognition society for women in college and university bands, and in Sigma Alpha Iota, national professional music sorority. She played baritone in the KSCP marching band and French horn in the concert band.

In April 1967 Debbie entered the second annual Miss Pittsburg State Pageant. She was first runner-up in the event the previous spring. In the 1967 pageant she won all three preliminary competitions of swim suit, evening gown and talent, and then the title Miss Pittsburg State.

She went on to enter the Miss Kansas Pageant in July and won the preliminary swimsuit and talent competitions. The talent competition consisted of her piano arrangement of a jazz, classical, bossa nova, swing style variation of the movie theme, "Born Free." That arrangement was never written on paper. On July 8, 1967, she was named Miss Kansas from among 34 candidates.

Debbie came back to Pittsburg, Kansas, July 15th, where she was honored with "Debbie Barnes Day" that included a parade, interview, and a dinner on campus. From the moment she was crowned Miss Kansas, Debbie began preparing for the Miss America pageant. She celebrated her 20th birthday during that pageant.

She won the preliminary swimsuit competition at the Miss America pageant and went on to be crowned Miss America 1968 on September 9th. As the new Miss America, she received over \$10,000 in scholarship monies and approximately \$45,000 during her tenure in personal appearances.

Gov. Robert Docking proclaimed October 26, 27, and 28, 1967 as “Kansas Days for Miss America.”

Several towns in Kansas hosted receptions and dinners welcoming the new Miss America 1968. More than four thousand people came to Pittsburg when the town hosted Miss America Day (MAD) on Saturday, October 28, 1967. The day included a press conference, a parade with Miss America Debbie Barnes, Miss Pitt State Becky Elliott and the new Miss Kansas Kandee Kae Klein, a public reception at the Student Union, a piano performance in McCray Hall and a banquet.

Barnes received several honors during her Miss America reign such as honorary recruiter for the United States Air Force, the Native Sons and Daughters Kansan of the Year award, and honorary chairperson for multiple sclerosis.

She traveled 250,000 miles throughout 30 states and Canada and also helped the USO entertain troops in South Korea and Japan.

She announced her engagement to Mitchell Miles, a KSCP music student from Arcadia, on her 21st birthday, at the end of her reign as Miss America. They were married January 25, 1969 in Moran.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Debra Dene Barnes Collection consists of newspaper clippings, two scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, photographs, various pageant programs, recital programs and other papers relating to the time she spent as a student at Kansas State College of Pittsburg. The collection is arranged into six series: **Correspondence, Clippings, Scrapbooks, Photographs, Pageant Programs, and Miscellaneous.**

The **Correspondence** series contains a few letters, mostly from the KSCP Office of Public Information and the Alumni Center related to the 1967 Miss Kansas pageant and the Miss America 1968 pageant.

The **Clippings** series is comprised of newspaper clippings, primarily from July 1967 through September 1967.

The **Scrapbook** series includes two oversized scrapbooks with newspaper clippings and magazine articles related to Debbie Barnes and her reign as Miss Kansas 1967 and Miss America 1968 as well as articles pertaining to later pageants and contestants.

The **Photograph** series is arranged in sub-series related to KSCP Marching Band, Miss Pittsburg State, Miss Kansas 1967 pageant, Miss Kansas “Debbie Barnes Day”, Miss America 1968 Pageant, “Miss America Day”, Miscellaneous, and Oversized photos.

The **Pageant Program** series consists of Miss Pittsburg State and Miss America pageant programs.

The **Miscellaneous** series includes press releases, a KSCP September 24, 1966 football program, the November 1967 issue of the KSCP “Alumnian”, programs from music recitals in which Debbie Barnes performed, the 1967-68 KSCP Student-Faculty Directory, other ephemera, and a Kansas-Home of Miss America License Tag Plate.

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Clippings Series

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f. 3 September 1967

f. 4 1969-1985

Scrapbook Series

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f. 6 Vol. 2, 1967, Oversized Scrapbook, Tanner Hall women

Photograph Series

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f. 8 Miss Pittsburg State 1966

f. 9 Miss Pittsburg State 1967

f.10 Miss Kansas Pageant, July 8, 1967

f. 11 Miss Kansas KSCP Student Union Display, July 1967

f. 12 Miss Kansas "Debbie Barnes Day" Parade, July 15, 1967

f. 13 Crowning Miss Pittsburg State 1967, July 15, 1967

f. 14 Miss Kansas "Debbie Barnes Day" News Conference, July 15, 1967

f. 15 Miss Kansas "Debbie Barnes Day" Dinner, July 15, 1967

f. 16 Miss America 1968 Pageant, September 9, 1967

f. 17 Miss America 1968 "Miss America Day" News Conference, October 28, 1967

f. 18 Miss America 1968 "Miss America Day" Parade, October 28, 1967

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