

**AHS-SOUTHERN ARIZONA DIVISION  
FINDING AID**

**TITLE:** Esther Don Tang Collection

**DATE RANGE:** 1908-2004 (bulk 1950s-1990s).

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1470

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 7.5 linear feet (15 boxes)

**PROVENANCE:** Created by Esther Don Tang and donated to the Arizona Historical Foundation. Donated to the Arizona Historical Society in 2012 by the Arizona Historical Foundation.

**COPYRIGHT:** Owned by Arizona Historical Society.

**RESTRICTIONS:** Unrestricted.

**CREDIT LINE:** Esther Don Tang Collection, MS 1470, Arizona Historical Society-Tucson

**PROCESSED BY:** Jennifer Young, August 25, 2005

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

A community leader and activist, Esther Don Tang was born in Tucson, Arizona on March 5, 1917, the third of ten children. Her father, Don Wah, was a native of San Francisco who arrived in Tucson by way of working as a cook with the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1908, he traveled to China, where he met and married Fok Yut Ngan, the youngest daughter in a wealthy Chinese family. They returned to Tucson and rented a store at the corner of Convent and Simpson streets, which was to become one of Tucson's first bakeries. The store was prosperous and led to a chain of successful grocery stores where, as a child, Ms. Tang would often help her parents in the store with her brothers and sisters.

After graduating from high school, Esther moved to San Antonio, Texas. There she lived with her sister while attending Draughtons Business College and also helping to manage one of her brother-in-law's markets. She returned to Tucson to attend the University of Arizona, where she received a bachelor degree in Nutrition with a minor in Sociology. At this time she met and married David Tang and they raised a family of four children.

Ms. Tang's life work has centered on community activism and leadership. While living in Texas she worked to promote awareness and raise funds for the underprivileged and sold bonds to assist in China's war effort. Ms. Tang was increasingly interested in promoting education and lifelong learning, and was elected to the Pima Community College Board of Governors in 1975, which she served on for ten years. During her tenure there, Ms. Tang engaged in a long and arduous battle to create the Pima Community College East Campus and enable a larger capacity of enrollments into the college.

Ms. Tang has received many awards for her dedication to creating a better community in Tucson, including the Woman of the Year Award, Tucson Woman of the Year in

Administration, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Leadership Award and later received an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from the University of Arizona. Ms. Tang was honored as the first non-Hispanic to be named La Dona de Tucson by Los Descendientes del Presidio de Tucson.

*Sources used for the biographical note:* The Promise of Gold Mountain: Tucson’s Chinese Heritage. Web site: Through Our Parent’s Eyes: History and Culture of Southern Arizona. <http://parentseyes.arizona.edu/promise/esthertang.html>

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:** This collection has 15 boxes of Ms. Tang’s personal papers that include items such as agendas, meeting minutes from boards and committees, speeches, news clippings, correspondence (professional and personal), photos, memorabilia from political campaigns, certificates, and awards. The majority of the collection pertains to Ms. Tang’s involvement in various organizations.

The collection is arranged in five series. Series 1: Personal; Series II: Boards and Committees; Series III: Correspondence; Series IV: Speeches; Series V: News Clippings.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Series I: Personal

Description: Contains invitations, greeting cards, letters, and news clippings to and from Ms. Tang and her family, friends, and acquaintances. Includes publications “Hembra: Enterprising Women in Arizona” and “In Celebration of Women”. Includes original document by the Mayor of Tucson proclaiming “Tucson Boxing Association and David and Esther Tang Day” and a copy of the Mayor’s proclamation of “Esther Don Tang Day”.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically, then chronologically within folders.

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Personal, Awards – General (includes publication “Hembra: Enterprising Women in Arizona)	1976-1997
	2	Personal, Awards – “Women Who Helped Build Tucson”	October 2, 1998
	3	Personal, Dedication “Plaza of the Pioneers - Tucson Museum of Art”	November 6, 1982
	4	Personal, Family (includes Photographs)	1908-1998
	5	Personal, Investments	1946-1990
	6	Personal, Resumes – Other people	n.d.
	7	Personal, Resumes – Personal	n.d.
	8	Personal, Tribute to Esther Don Tang 80 <sup>th</sup> Birthday	1976-1997
	9	Personal, University of Arizona (includes Esther Tang Project 2001)	1976-1997

### Series II: Boards and Committees

Description: Contains meeting minutes, plans, speeches, correspondence and memos documenting Ms. Tang's time on boards and committees that Ms. Tang chaired and served on. Photographs have been kept within the folders and are noted on the folder. Notable contents include original memorabilia from the political campaigns of Bruce Babbitt, Carolyn Warner, and Dennis DeConcini and the publication by the city of Tucson, "Tucson's Historic Districts – Criteria for Preservation and Development".

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically, then chronologically within folders.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>2</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Aids Walk 1997 (includes Correspondence)	1997
	2	Boards and Committees, Anne Frank International Exhibit (includes correspondence, news clippings)	August 28-September 22, 1995
	3	Boards and Committees, Arizona State Personnel Board	1982-1986
	4	Boards and Committees, Arizona Town Hall	1990-1998
	5	Boards and Committees, Association of Community College Trustees	1981-1988
	6	Boards and Committees, Catalina Bank of Commerce	1987-1988
	7	Boards and Committees, Catholic Youth Organization	n.d.
	8	Boards and Committees, Democratic National Committee (includes correspondence)	1937-1997
	9	Boards and Committees, Democratic National Committee – 1984 Asian/ Pacific Caucus/Democratic National Convention (includes correspondence, news clippings)	1984
	10	Boards and Committees, Executive Women's Council of Southern Arizona	1985-1989
	11	Boards and Committees, Federation of Home and School Association, Diocese of Tucson	1960-1963
	12	Boards and Committees, Gateway Local Alcoholism and Reception Center (includes correspondence)	1987
	13	Boards and Committees, Kino Learning Center	1982-1985
<b>3</b>	1	Boards and Committees, La Frontera Center (includes news clippings, speech)	1994
	2	Boards and Committees, Leadership Tucson Program (includes correspondence)	1981-1988
	3	Boards and Committees, Marriage and Family Problems Study Committee (includes news clippings)	1961-1962
	4	Boards and Committees, National Conference of Christians and Jews Inc. (includes correspondence)	1961-1962
	5	Boards and Committees, Netwest Development Corporation - General	1989-1997
	6	Boards and Committees, Netwest Development	February 1989

		Corporation – Board Meeting Proceedings	
	7	Boards and Committees, Newman Center Foundation at University of Arizona (includes name badge “Vatican Observatory Foundation”, speech)	1964-1997
	8	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, East Education Center (contained in notebook)	1975-1979
<b>4</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, General (1 of 4)	1963-1975
	2	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, General (2 of 4)	1976-1978
	3	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, General (3 of 4)	1980-1984
	4	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, General (4 of 4)	1985-1994
	5	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Handbook	1984
	6	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Political Campaigns	1984
<b>5</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Program Management Plan	1976
	2	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Site Appraisal Report - Northeast corner Broadway-Pantano, Tucson, Arizona	November 1977
	3	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Site Appraisal Report - Southwest corner Speedway-Pantano, Tucson, Arizona	November 1977
	4	Boards and Committees, Pima Community College Governing Board, Site Appraisal Report - Ur Parcel Pantano Road, Tucson, Arizona	November 1977
	5	Boards and Committees, Pima Council on Aging – General	1977-1988
	6	Boards and Committees, Pima Council on Aging – Handbook	1980-1981
	7	Boards and Committees, Pima County Parks and Recreation Advisory Council (includes correspondence)	1959-1965
	8	Boards and Committees, Pima County Juvenile Court Foundation	1975
<b>6</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Pio Decimo Community Center (includes correspondence, photographs) (1 of 2)	1966-1997
	2	Boards and Committees, Pio Decimo Community Center (includes correspondence, photographs) (2 of 2)	n.d.

	3	Boards and Committees, Plaza Club (1 of 2)	1985-1987
	4	Boards and Committees, Plaza Club (2 of 2)	n.d.
	5	Boards and Committees, Political Campaigns – Bruce Babbitt	1968-1987
	6	Boards and Committees, Political Campaigns – Carolyn Warner (contained in notebook, includes correspondence, news clippings, speech) (bulk 1986)	1983-1988
	7	Boards and Committees, Political Campaigns – Dennis DeConcini (includes speech)	1977-1994
<b>7</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Roots and Wings, Inc.	1990-1997
	2	Boards and Committees, Salpointe Mother's Club – Benefit, Frederic Balazs Concert (includes news clipping)	1965
	3	Boards and Committees, Salpointe Mother's Club – General (1 of 2)	1960-1961
	4	Boards and Committees, Salpointe Mother's Club – General (includes magazine fundraiser documents, 1963-1964, photographs) (2 of 2)	1962-1997
	5	Boards and Committees, The Salvation Army	1985-1988
	6	Boards and Committees, Sino-American Club	n.d.
	7	Boards and Committees, Soroptimist International of Desert Tucson (includes correspondence)	1986-1987
	8	Boards and Committees, State Board of Directors for Community Colleges – Handbook	1981
	9	Boards and Committees, Tucson Airport Authority	1975-1997
	10	Boards and Committees, Tucson Bicentennial Committee – General (includes publication "Tucson's Historic Districts – Criteria For Preservation and Development, City of Tucson, Arizona) (1 of 3)	1972-1974 (bulk 1974)
<b>8</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Tucson Bicentennial Committee – General (2 of 3)	1975
	2	Boards and Committees, Tucson Bicentennial Committee – General (3 of 3)	1976-1977
	3	Boards and Committees, Tucson Bicentennial Committee – Report	August 20-24, 1975
	4	Boards and Committees, Tucson Commission on Human Relations	1962-2001 (bulk 1962)
	5	Boards and Committees, Tucson Community Chest	1947-1955
	6	Boards and Committees, Tucson Community Council	1956-1967
	7	Boards and Committees, Tucson Sister City Committees	1983-1997
	8	Boards and Committees, Tucson Symphony Women's Association	1962-1963
	9	Boards and Committees, University of Arizona Humanities National Advisory Board	1991-1997

<b>9</b>	1	Boards and Committees, Young Women's Christian Association – General (1 of 2)	1951-1955
	2	Boards and Committees, Young Women's Christian Association – General (2 of 2)	1956-1982
	3	Boards and Committees, Young Women's Christian Association – Youth Committee	1951-1959
	4	Boards and Committees, Young Women's Christian Association – Youth Committee	1960-1961
	5	Boards and Committees, Young Women's Christian Association – Twenty-fifth National Convention papers	1963-1972
	6	Boards and Committees, Women at the Top	1985-1987

### Series III: Correspondence

Description: Contains letters and notes received and sent by Ms. Tang. Correspondence includes such enclosures as news clippings, programs, photographs, brochures, greeting cards, and invitations. The majority of the correspondence is of a professional nature. There is correspondence congratulating Ms. Tang for awards and some correspondence from family. The series contains personal correspondence from the DeConcini family, whom Ms. Tang is close to, and an invitation to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Presidential Inauguration for President Clinton.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically then chronologically within folders.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>9</b>	7	Correspondence, Address Lists	n.d.
	8	Correspondence, Awards – General	1943-1999
	9	Correspondence, Awards – Honorary Doctorate of Humanities, University of Arizona	1991-1993
	10	Correspondence, Awards – Jefferson Award	1987
<b>10</b>	1	Correspondence, Awards – Pima Community College Foundation Fourth Annual Recognition Dinner	1988
	2	Correspondence, Diocese of Tucson	1953-1997
	3	Correspondence, Family – Emery Tang	1972-1987
	4	Correspondence, Family – General	1959-1962
	5	Correspondence, General – A-F	1960-2001
	6	Correspondence, General – G-M	1947-1997
	7	Correspondence, General – N-Z	1935-1997
	8	Correspondence, Kino Learning Center	1980-1986
	9	Correspondence, Personal – Chia-lin Pao T'ao	1975-1988
	10	Correspondence, Personal – DeConcini Family (includes news clippings)	1950-1990
<b>11</b>	1	Correspondence, Pima Community College Governing Board (	1969-May 1977 (bulk 1977)
	2	Correspondence, Pima Community College Governing Board (2 of 3)	June 1977-December 1977

	3	Correspondence, Pima Community College Governing Board (3 of 3)	1978-1997
	4	Correspondence, Pima Council on Aging	1976-1988
	5	Correspondence, Pio Decimo Community Center	n.d.
	6	Correspondence, Political Campaigns – Bruce Babbitt	1981-1986
	7	Correspondence, Political Campaigns – Dennis DeConcini	1977-1993
	8	Correspondence, Political Campaigns, James McNulty	1983-1984
	9	Correspondence, Presidential Inauguration Invitation	January 18-20, 1997
	10	Correspondence, Salpointe Mother’s Club	1952-1965
	11	Correspondence, Tucson Sister City Committees	1984-1999
	12	Correspondence, University of Arizona	1951-1997
	13	Correspondence, Young Women’s Christian Association	1955-1988

#### Series IV: Speeches

Description: Contains speeches that Ms. Tang gave throughout her life relating to boards and committees Ms. Tang participated in, as well as individual events. The speeches are handwritten as well as typed with original notes in the margins and throughout.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically, then chronologically within folders.

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
12	1	Speeches, Chinese Heritage History (contained in notebook)	1967-1995
	2	Speeches, General (1 of 2)	1968-1989
	3	Speeches, General (2 of 2)	1990-1996
	4	Speeches, Pima Community College Governing Board	1971-1984
	5	Speeches, Pima Council on Aging	1986-1990
	6	Speeches, Pio Decimo Community Center	1969-1978
	7	Speeches, Roots and Wings	1989-1991
	8	Speeches, Tucson Sister City Committees	1987-1991
	9	Speeches, Young Women’s Christian Association	1955-1988

#### Series V: News Clippings

Description: Contains news clippings documenting events and political campaigns Ms. Tang was involved in. This series also contains writings by Ms. Tang that were published in newspapers and journals, including editorials.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically, then chronologically within folders.

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
-----	--------	-------	-------

<b>13</b>	1	News Clippings, Award Presentations	1955-1997
	2	News Clippings, Family	1949-1997
	3	News Clippings, General (1 of 2)	1939-1988
	4	News Clippings, General (2 of 2)	1989-2001
	5	News Clippings, Legislative Digest, Twenty-fifth Legislature, Second Regular Session	1962
	6	News Clippings, Newman Center Foundation at University of Arizona	1960-1964
	7	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – General (1 of 5)	1970-1978
	8	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – General (2 of 5)	1980-1983
	9	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – General (3 of 5)	1987-1988
	10	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – General (4 of 5)	January-March 1989
	11	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – General (5 of 5)	April-December 1989
<b>14</b>	1	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – Political Campaigns (1 of 2)	1979
	2	News Clippings, Pima Community College Governing Board – Political Campaigns (2 of 2)	1984
	3	News Clippings, Pima Council on Aging	1987-1992
	4	News Clippings, Pio Decimo Neighborhood Center	1966-1984
	5	News Clippings, Political Campaigns – Dennis DeConcini	1960-1981
	6	News Clippings, Salpointe Mother’s Club	1937-1965
	7	News Clippings, Tucson Sister City Committees – Taichung, Taiwan	1984-1985
	8	News Clippings, Writings of Esther Don Tang	1984-2001
	9	News Clippings, Young Women’s Christian Association	1949-1969

**Oversize Box:** Contains an original scrapbook that includes news clippings of interest and correspondence, original artwork of the Cochise County Courthouse in Tombstone, Arizona, and a program and publication of the event “In Celebration of Women” by the Southern Arizona Women’s Fund.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>15 OV</b>		Contents: Leather book cover, Birthday card and poem, Artwork of Cochise County Courthouse, Tombstone, Arizona, 1990; Luncheon Program, “In Celebration of Women”, 1996; Publication “In Celebration of Women”, 1997; Scrapbook containing news clippings of various topics, correspondence	1963-1997