Guide to

Ellen L. Pilcher Collection

MS 74

5 Boxes

2001.210

Prepared by Jerry Veatch
September, 2010

Donor unknown, presumably Ellen L. Pilcher or family

Library and Archives
Arizona Historical Society Museum@Papago Park
SCOPE, CONTENT AND HISTORICAL NOTE

Afflicted with polio at an early age, Ellen L. Pilcher grew up with the use of wheelchairs and crutches. In 1986, at the age of 37, she was selected queen in the inaugural Ms. Wheelchair Arizona Pageant and represented Arizona in the national pageant later that year. Much of this collection chronicles the events and activities of these two pageants. The 1986 Arizona Pageant, conducted in Phoenix, involved many young ladies from various areas of the state and, as with similar contests, the contestants answered questions which were judged by a panel. Winning the state competition qualified Pilcher to participate in the national competition in Williamsburg, Va. later that year, where she placed 2nd runner-up.

Returning to Arizona, Pilcher participated in many events and activities over the next 9 months, representing the state to publicize the expanding roles of disabled individuals. This collection contains numerous photos and related material collected during that period. The highlight of the collection consists of a large scrapbook assembled by Ellen, featuring some of the activities in which she participated; such as, the 1987 St. Patricks’s Day Parade, Rodeo of Rodeos Parade, and participation in Arizona’s 75th Anniversary Parade. An additional personal scrapbook is also present, featuring events and materials from Ellen’s early childhood, leading up to 1987. Several manuscripts are also present, including a lengthy biographical essay, “I Can’t Let Them See Me Cry” and her Master’s Thesis, “An Investigation of Opinions Expressed on First Impressions of a Disabled Person as Measured by the Semantic Differential.” Pilcher wrote several articles in support of individuals with disabilities which are also included in this collection.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

Folders 1 through 9: Wheelchair Pageant Newspaper Articles.

Folder 10: 10 Photos
Ellen L. Pilcher
Pilcher as contestant
Contestants & well-wishers
Pilcher as contestant
Contestants
Contestants
Lady at podium
Singer & musicians
Singer & musicians
Unidentified man

Folder 11: 10 Photos
Young man in wheelchair
Pageant announcer
All pageant contestants
Contestant on stage
Contestant on stage
Ellen Pilcher
Pilcher on stage
Contestant on stage
Pilcher & other contestant
Older lady & contestant

Folder 12: 10 Photos
Pilcher speaking into mic
Pilcher speaking into mic
Pilcher on stage
Contestant answering question
Pilcher and contestants
Pilcher and contestants
Pilcher with flowers
Pilcher awaiting announcement
Pilcher reacting to announcement
Pilcher being crowned

Folder 13: 10 Photos
Pilcher receiving sash
Pilcher with cup
Pilcher with crown
Pilcher receiving crown & sash
Pilcher with host
Pilcher with crown
Pilcher waving
Pilcher with crown
Pilcher with crown
Pilcher with crown

Folder 14: 10 Photos
Pilcher & unidentified man
Pilcher & other contestant
Pilcher & well wishers
Pilcher with crown
Pilcher kissing her husband
Pilcher & unidentified man
Friends eating
Pilcher and well wishers
Pilcher & friends
Pilcher & well wishers

Folder 15: 10 Photos
Pilcher & flowers
Pilcher & unidentified man
Pilcher on sidewalk
Pilcher’s poster
Pilcher & unidentified man in wheelchair
Pilcher & unidentified lady
Pageant announcement poster
Flowers
Pageant workers
Horse cart on Williamsburg, Va. street

Folder 16: 10 Photos
Contestants at Williamsburg, Va.
Williamsburg parade marchers
Pilcher in stocks at Williamsburg
Contestants eating
Pilcher petting Oxen hitched to cart
Lady giving presentation
Pilcher being sung to?
A very pretty contestant
Another contestant
A lady receiving a facial

Folder 17: 10 Photos
Lady speaking to Pilcher
Another pretty contestant
Pilcher’s husband
Pilcher & escort
Pilcher & escort
Several contestants
Contestant & friends
Rehearsal
Pilcher holding up hand
Contestant’s outside on walkway

Folder 18: 10 Photos
Rehearsal
Pilcher & others
Contestants outside pageant center
Pilcher having hair done
Pilcher having hair done
Contestants having hair done
Pilcher having hair done & answering questions
Pilcher’s face in mirror
Pilcher & other contestant
Rehearsal & kids on stage

Folder 19: 10 Photos
Rehearsal
Rehearsal
Rehearsal
Rehearsal
Rehearsal
Pilcher holding escort’s hand & other contestant
Pilcher & escort outside
Pilcher arriving at pageant
Contestant’s preparing
Pilcher outside with friend

Box 2
Folder 20: 10 Photos
Pilcher studying notes
Contestants & children performers
Contestants & escorts on stage
Pilcher addressing audience
Contestants & MC on stage
Contestants and singers on stage
Audience at pageant
Pilcher answering questions on stage
Pilcher & contestants on stage
Pilcher waving to crowd

Folder 21: 10 Photos
111. Pilcher on stage, waving
112. Pilcher answering questions on stage
113. Pilcher & escort on stage
114. Contestants on stage
115. Queen of the 1986 Pageant
116. Contestants on stage
117. Pilcher receiving roses
118. Contestants on stage with MC
119. Contestants on stage with escorts
120. People dancing

Folder 22: 10 Photos
121. Pilcher & friends
121a. Pilcher dancing
122. Pilcher & escort dancing
123. Close up of Ellen Pilcher
124. Pilcher & trophy at gathering
125. Pilcher receiving trophy
126. Pilcher & unidentified man
127. Pilcher & unidentified man outside
128. Four speakers on platform
129. Pilcher & unidentified lady
130. Pilcher seated in helicopter

Folder 23: 10 Photos
131. Pilcher & Miss Arizona & clown
132. Pilcher & clown on stilts
133. View through front window of “chopper”
134. Chopper flight over Phoenix
135. Pilcher in vehicle
136. Balloon over Phoenix, seen from chopper
137. Pilcher & clown
138. Pilcher staffing disability booth
139. Male in wheelchair, speaking at mall
140. Stage at mall

Folder 24: 10 Photos
141. Pilcher meeting people in mall
142. Pilcher in a mall
143. Two men on stage
144. Man speaking on stage, outside
145. Pilcher meeting people
146. Pilcher meeting people
147. Pilcher meeting people
148. Sidewalk and palm trees
149. Pilcher at picnic
150. Pilcher & unidentified man

Folder 25: 10 Photos
151. Pilcher meeting a man
152. Pilcher & 4 people at Bobby McGee’s club
153. Bobby McGee’s club
154. Bobby McGee’s club
155. Pilcher at McGee’s club
156. Pilcher at McGee’s club
157. Pilcher at McGee’s club
158. McGee’s club
159. Two men and Miss Arizona
160. Pilcher dancing with “Pat”

Folder 26: 10 Photos
161. Pilcher with dog (working with Animals Benefit Club of Arizona)
162. Pilcher & dog at her feet
163. Pilcher & dog
164. Pilcher working with South Mountain Optimist Club
165. Pilcher at South Mount. Optimist club gathering
166. Pilcher at South Mount. Opt. gathering
167. Pilcher at Gas Balloon race
168. Pilcher at Gas Balloon race
169. Pilcher at Gas Balloon race
170. Pilcher at Gas Balloon race

Folder 27: 10 Photos
171. Pilcher with kids & dog, balloon race
172. Pilcher with dog, balloon race
173. Pilcher with Miss Arizona
174. Pilcher with cowboy
175. Pilcher with cowboy
176. Pilcher with cowboy
177. Pilcher with Ben Johnson
178. Pilcher & cowgirls
179. Pilcher & cowboys
180. Pilcher & cowboys

Folder 28: 10 Photos
181. Pilcher with actor Richard Farnsworth
182. Pilcher with Santa & dog-working with Humane Soc.
183. Pilcher with dog
187. Pilcher working with Sky 12 Country Station
188. Santa at Festival of Lights
189. Festival of Lights
190. Pilcher at Festival of Lights

Folder 29: 10 Photos
191. Pilcher & Festival of Lights
192. Human tree-Festival of Lights
193. Festival of Lights
194. Festival of Lights
195. Festival of Lights
196. Festival of Lights
197. Festival of Lights
198. Festival of Lights
199. Festival of Lights
200. Festival of Lights

Folder 30: 10 Photos
201. Ellen L. Pilcher
202. Ellen L. Pilcher
203. Fiesta Bowl Parade float
204. Fiesta Bowl Parade float
205. Fiesta Bowl Parade
206. Fiesta Bowl Parade
207. Pilcher on Fiesta Parade float
208. Pilcher on Fiesta Parade float
209. Fiesta Bowl parade
210. Fiesta Bowl parade

Folder 31: 10 Photos
211. Fiesta Bowl parade
212. Pilcher on float
213. Parade float
214. Parade float “Eliminate Polio”
215. Pilcher on float
216. Pilcher’s father?
217. Pilcher speaking with woman at dinner
218. Pilcher shaking hands with woman
219. Pilcher on parade float
220. Pilcher’s parade float

Folder 32: 10 Photos
221. Pilcher on float
222. Fiesta Bowl parade
223. Fiesta Bowl parade
224. Fiesta Bowl parade
225. Fiesta Bowl parade
226. Fiesta Bowl parade
227. Fiesta Bowl parade
228. Fiesta Bowl parade
229. Fiesta Bowl parade
230. Fiesta Bowl parade

Folder 33. 10 Photos
231. Fiesta Bowl parade
232. Fiesta Bowl parade
233. Fiesta Bowl parade
234. Pilcher talking to Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year
235. Pilcher talking to gathering
236. Pilcher talking to gathering
237. Pilcher working with Easter Seal Society
238. Gathering at Easter Seal Society
239. Pilcher works with Easter Seal Society
240. Pilcher’s husband’s vehicle

Folder 34. 10 Photos
241. Pilcher speaking to Rotary Club
242. Pilcher speaking
243. Pilcher and Mayor Terry Goddard
244. Pilcher seated with Miss Arizona and Goddard
245. Hall of Fame museum opening
246. Pilcher at booth at hall of Fame opening
247. Hall of Fame opening
248. Pilcher and man dressed like Uncle Sam
249. Hall of Fame opening
250. Pilcher at Hall of Fame opening

Box 3
Folder 35: 10 Photos
251. Pilcher & Gov. Evan Mecham
252. Flowers
254. Rex Allen Jr. in 75th Az. Anniv. parade
255. Rex Allen & Miss Az.
256. 75th Anniv. Parade
257. Parade
258. Parade
259. Pilcher in 75th Az. Anniv. Parade
260. Dancers in parade

Folder 36 10 Photos
261. 75th Anniv. Parade
262. Parade
263. Parade
264. Pilcher in parade
265. Parade
266. Parade
267. Parade
268. 75th Anniv. Fireworks display
269. Fireworks display
270. Pilcher & another girl at Amigo Mobility Club

Folder 37: 10 Photos
271. Pilcher at Mobility Club
272. Pilcher at Mobility Club
273. Rodeo parade
274. Rodeo parade
275. Pilcher at Rodeo Parade
276. Pilcher at Rodeo parade
277. Rodeo of Rodeos
278. Rodeo of Rodeos 1987
279. Rodeo of Rodeos
280. Rodeo of Rodeos

Folder 38: 10 Photos
281. Rodeo of Rodeos parade
282. Rodeo parade
283. Rodeo parade
284. “Hello Phoenix” festival, 1987
285. Pilcher at St. Patrick’s parade
286. Pilcher at St. Patrick’s parade
287. Pilcher at parade
288. St. Pat’s parade
289. Miss Wheelchair Az. pageant, 1987
290. Miss Wheelchair Az. pageant

Folder 39. 10 Photos
291. Pageant staffer
292. Pilcher and contestant
293. Dancers
294. Guests at table
295. Dancer hugging Pilcher
296. Pilcher’s father? Seated a table
297. Pilcher at pageant
298. Pilcher at pageant
299. Pilcher getting makeup
300. Pilcher at pageant

Folder 40. 10 Photos
301. Pilcher at pageant
302. Pilcher applying eye shadow
303. Contestant posters
304. Contestants on stage
305. Contestants
306. Pilcher interviewed on stage
307. Pilcher interviewed on stage
308. Man & woman on pageant stage
309. Pilcher interviewed on stage
310. Contestant being interviewed

Folder 41: 10 Photos
311. Pilcher with stage dancers
312. Pageant speaker
313. Two contestants on stage
314. Pageant dancers
315. Pilcher with dancers
316. Pilcher with new pageant queen
317. Pilcher applauding new queen
318. Pilcher hugging new queen
319. New queen announcement
320. Pilcher and new queen

Folder 42: 11 Photos
321. 1987 pageant contestants
322. Pilcher waves goodbye
323. Pilcher on stage
324. Pilcher on stage
325. Pilcher meeting a man
326. Pilcher and new queen-Pilcher “showing leg”
327. Pilcher and family
328a. Pilcher shaking hands
328. Contestant and family
329. Contestant dancing
330. Pilcher and new queen

Folder 43: 11 Photos
331. Pilcher and new queen
332. Dining room scene
333. Pilcher in dining room
334. Pilcher in parade
335. Unidentified parade
336. Parade
337. Pilcher with group at table
338. John McCain seated, holding child
339. Ellen Pilcher portrait
340. Ellen Pilcher portrait
341. Ellen Pilcher portrait

Folder 44: Miscellaneous pamphlets, brochures, letters and news articles pertaining to Ellen Pilcher and her involvement with disability awareness and Miss Wheelchair Pageant.

Folder 45: More articles, brochures, etc. pertaining to Pilcher and the pageants.

Folder 46: Pilcher’s personal scrapbook, consisting of articles pertaining to the siege of polio in the 50’s, Pilcher’s personal involvement with the disease and advancements in caring for the disabled.

Folder 47: More articles from Pilcher’s personal scrapbook.

**Box 4**
Folder 48: General correspondence
Folder 49: The poem “Me”, by Pilcher
Folders 50 through 55: The original manuscript of Helen Pilcher’s book, “I Can’t Let Them See Me Cry”.


Folder 57: An article, “Aging with a Disability”, written by Roberta B. Trieschmann, which contains a chapter on the life of Pilcher, referred to as “Lisa” in the article.

Folder 58: Momentos and articles about the Ms. Wheelchair Arizona pageant.


Folder 60: Meritorious certificates awarded Pilcher

Folders 61 through 63: Extra Wheelchair Pageant Photos of contestants and Pilcher.

**Box 5**

Item 384: Large color portrait of Pilcher, Ms. Wheelchair Arizona Pageant

Item 385: Large photo of Pilcher as a small child in leg braces.

Item 394: The original Pilcher Poster, used during the Pageant: ‘Disabled Does Not Mean Unable’.