

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. Patrick'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
Picher & 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
184. Pilcher speaking to Companion Animal Assn. of Az.
185. Pilcher speaking to Companion Animal Assn.
186. Pilcher speaking to Companion Animal Assn.
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
- 253. Pilcher hugging Rex Allen Jr.
- 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. Patricks parade
- 286. Pilcher at St. Patricks 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 56: Pilcher's Master's Thesis, completed August, 1973: "An Investigation of Opinions on First Impressions of a Disabled Person as Measured by the Semantic Differential."

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 59: 1987 Pageant information.

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'.