

An Annotated Inventory of the Bernard J. Carabello Collection, 1954-1977, 1985

Archives & Special Collections
College of Staten Island Library, CUNY
2800 Victory Blvd., 1L-216
Staten Island, NY 10314

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Overview of the Collection

Collection No. : WSSM-6

Title: Bernard J. Carabello Collection

Creator: Bernard J. Carabello

Dates: 1954-1977, 1985

Extent: Approximately 1 Linear Inch

Abstract: Bernard J. Carabello was born on January 19, 1950 in New York City. He was born with cerebral palsy, but was misdiagnosed as being developmentally disabled at age three. Doctors urged his mother—who was separated and raising eight other children on welfare—to place Carabello in an institution. Carabello was placed at the Willowbrook State School in 1954, and remained there for 18 years.

In 1972, Dr. Mike Wilkins, a physician at the facility, declared himself Carabello's personal guardian and obtained his legal release from the Willowbrook State School. Soon afterwards,

Wilkins was fired from the school. That day, Wilkins arranged for an ABC news reporter, Geraldo Rivera, to expose the conditions at the school and interview Carabello. Rivera's 30-minute piece, *The Last Great Disgrace*, created a massive reaction of public outrage.

Carabello has since transformed himself into a major force in the movement for self-advocacy in New York and across the nation. He began work to organize a statewide self-advocacy organization and founded the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State in 1986. He continues to advocate for the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities today.

The collection contains Carabello's medical records from the Willowbrook State School and the first four chapters of his unfinished autobiography.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

The Bernard J. Carabello Collection, Archives & Special Collections, Department of the Library, College of Staten Island, CUNY, Staten Island, New York.

Acquisition

This collection was donated to the College of Staten Island by Bernard J. Carabello in May 2005

Processing Information

Collection processed by Catherine N. Carson.

Restrictions

Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright Notice

The researcher assumes full responsibility for compliance with laws of copyright. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Coordinator of Archives & Special Collections.

Index Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms.

Subject Names

Carabello, Bernard J., 1950-

Subject Topics

Willowbrook State School

Container Listing

(The following box/folder inventory is in the form of a table. If you are visually impaired and using a pdf reader you may need assistance and should contact the Archives at 718-982-4128)

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	1	Medical File - Department of Mental Hygiene, 1954-1972 - This file consists of photocopies of Carabello's medical records from the Willowbrook State School. The records have been left in their original order.
1	2	Miscellaneous Papers, 1977, nd. - This file consists a few items that were originally found to have been placed at the end of the medical file. These consist of two letters from the PTA at P.S. 16, two news articles on the segregation of three former Willowbrook residents who were found to be hepatitis carriers at P.S. 69, and an unidentified item that appears to be a list of clothing items and related 3 digit codes.

1

3

Autobiography - Chapters 1-4, 1985

- This file includes a Table of Contents of proposed chapters and the first four chapters of an unfinished autobiography entitled *Imagine*. The first four chapters cover approximately 1950-1971.