

Willi Unsoeld Collection, 1963-1979

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Unsoeld, William Francis, 1926-
Title	Willi Unsoeld Collection
Dates	1963-1979 (inclusive) 1963 1979 1963-1965 (bulk) 1963 1965
Quantity	0.1 cubic foot, (1 box)
Collection Number	MSS Unsoeld
Summary	The Willi Unsoeld Collection documents OSU alumnus and faculty member Willi Unsoeld's spring 1963 climb of Mount Everest and the fall 1963 OSU fundraising campaign to defer Unsoeld's medical expenses resulting from the Mount Everest climb. The collection includes correspondence, newsletters, financial reports, clippings, and a 1979 Oregon Senate resolution.
Repository	Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives Research Center Special Collections and Archives Research Center 121 The Valley Library Oregon State University Corvallis OR 97331-4501 Telephone: 541-737-2075 Fax: 541-737-8674 scarc@oregonstate.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open for research.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Renowned mountain climber William Francis Unsoeld was born in 1926 in Arcata, California, and attended high school in Eugene, Oregon. In 1944 he enrolled at Oregon State College, studied physics, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1951. While at Oregon State, Unsoeld helped found the OSC Mountain Club. He received a divinity degree from the Pacific School of Religion in 1954 and a Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1958.

Unsoeld joined the faculty of the OSC Department of Religion in 1958. From 1962 to 1967 Unsoeld took a leave of absence from OSU and worked for the Peace Corps in Nepal, and later worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development. At the time of his death in 1979, Unsoeld was on the faculty of Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, where he had taught philosophy and religion since 1970.

Unsoeld was a world class mountain climber who started mountain climbing as a boy in Oregon's Cascades. He was best known for his participation in the successful 1963 climb of Mt. Everest by the first group of climbers from the United States. On that climb, Unsoeld and Thomas Hornbein became the first climbers to scale Everest's west ridge. Other significant climbs in which Unsoeld participated included the 1954 California Himalayan Expedition to Malaku and the 1960 American-Pakistan Karakoram Expedition to Mt. Mashabram in the Western Himalayas.

While a student at Oregon State, Unsoeld met Jolene Bishopruck when they were both members of the OSC Mountain Club. Unsoeld and Bishopruck married in 1951, and had four children. Jolene Unsoeld graduated from Oregon State in 1953 and later served as a U.S. Representative from Washington from 1989 to 1995. Willi Unsoeld died in an avalanche on Mt. Rainier on March 4, 1979.

Content Description

The Willi Unsoeld Collection primarily documents Unsoeld's participation in the 1963 climb of Mt. Everest. The series I newsletters were written by expedition members, including Willi Unsoeld, James R. Ullman, and Norman Dyhrenfurth, between February and June 1963. Series II, Correspondence, consists of OSU president emeritus A.L. Strand's fundraising efforts in the summer and fall of 1963 to help offset the medical costs of Unsoeld's treatment for frostbite resulting from the climb. This series also contains other correspondence between Strand and the Unsoelds, 1963-1965. Series III contains newspaper clippings about the 1963 Mt. Everest climb from the *Oregonian* and *Corvallis Gazette-Times* newspapers, as well as *National Geographic's* 1963 articles on the climb, including one co-authored by Unsoeld. Included in one of the articles is a photo of Unsoeld planting the OSC Mountain Club banner on Everest's summit. Series IV consists of a resolution passed by the Oregon Senate honoring Unsoeld after his death in March 1979.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

Willi Unsoeld Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon

Restrictions on Use

Mt. Everest climb newsletters are copyrighted and are not to be reproduced.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series: I. Mt. Everest Expedition Newsletters; II. Correspondence; III. Newspaper and Magazine Clippings; and IV. Oregon Senate Resolution.

Related Materials

Newspaper clippings and magazine articles from the Oregon Stater pertaining to Willi and Jolene Unsoeld are available in the Willi Unsoeld and Jolene Unsoeld Memorabilia Collection files. The [Oregon State University Mountain Club Records](#) contain information about the Unsoelds' participation in and leadership of that group. The News & Communication Services Photograph Collection (P 57)

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<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv11643>

contains two 1960 portraits of Unsoeld while a member of Oregon State's faculty. The [President's Office Photograph Collection \(P 92\)](#) contains a kinescope photograph of Unsoeld at OSU's 1962 commencement.

The [Evergreen State College Archives and Special Collections](#) includes materials pertaining to Willi Unsoeld and Jolene Unsoeld's legislative and congressional papers.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Mountaineering--Everest, Mount (China and Nepal)

Corporate Names :

Oregon. Legislative Assembly. Senate--Resolutions.
(creator)

Geographical Names :

Everest, Mount (China and Nepal)

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

Dyhrenfurth, Norman G.

(creator)

Strand, A. L. (August Leroy), 1894-

(creator)

Ullman, James Ramsey, 1907-1971

(creator)

Unsoeld, Jolene

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