Kim Robert Stafford collection, 1972-1989

Overview of the Collection

Creator: Stafford, Kim Robert
Title: Kim Robert Stafford collection
Dates: 1972-1989 (inclusive)
Quantity: 3.55 linear feet, (7 containers, 1 oversize folder)
Collection Number: Coll 206
Summary: Kim Stafford is a writer from the Pacific Northwest. His poetry and essays focus on the relationship of people with nature and social custom. Stafford places great value on folklore and bases much of the research for his own writing on the study of folk custom and oral history. He has taught and served as an artist-in-residence throughout the state of Oregon and in Washington, Idaho, and California. He regularly offers poetry readings and writing workshops and is active as a printer. The majority of the collection of Kim Stafford's work encompasses books and other printed material, including periodicals and newspapers. Also included are photographs, videos, broadsides, and printed flyers.

Repository: University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives,
UO Libraries--SCUA
1299 University of Oregon
Eugene OR
97403-1299
Telephone: 541-346-3068
spcarref@uoregon.edu

Access Restrictions: Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room. Collection or parts of collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Special Collections and University Archives in advance of your visit to allow for transportation time. Collection includes sound recordings, moving images, and digital files to which access is restricted. Access to these materials is governed by repository policy and may require the production of listening or viewing copies. Researchers requiring access must notify Special Collections and University Archives in advance and pay fees for reproduction services as necessary.


Languages: English
Sponsor: Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Historical Note

Kim Robert Stafford was born on October 15, 1949 in Portland, Oregon, one of four children of Dorothy and William Stafford, who was also a poet. Stafford's interest in nature dominates his poetry and essays, which focus on the relationship of people with nature and social custom.

Kim Stafford has spent most of his life in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in Oregon. He received his college and graduate education at the University of Oregon where he obtained his B. A. in 1971, his M. A. in 1973, and his Ph.D. in Middle English Literature in 1979. In addition to a fellowship for graduate study at the University of Oregon from 1971-1974, Stafford received creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1976 and 1984.

During the 1970s Stafford began an intense study of printing in Port Townsend, Washington, where he assisted Graywolf Press in the production of printed works of several poets. He has made a practice of regularly issuing postcard editions of his poems from his own press, Ashwood Press.

Stafford places great value on folklore and bases much of the research for his own writing on the study of folk custom and oral history. He served as an oral historian for the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum in Florence, Oregon, in 1975. Stafford's interest in folk literature led to his regular attendance and support of the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, held annually in Elko, Nevada. In January 1990 he gave the Gathering's keynote address.

Kim Stafford has steadfastly pursued his creative work in Oregon. He has taught and served as an artist-in-residence throughout the state of Oregon and in Washington, Idaho, and California. He was an artist-in-residence in Burns, Oregon (1975) and Wallowa, Oregon (1978). Stafford taught at Pacific Lutheran University (1980), Idaho Sate University (1981-1982), and the University of California at Davis (1983-1984). He began teaching in 1978 at Lewis and Clark College, and became director of the Northwest Writing Institute (Oregon Writing Project).

A steady contributor to many literary journals, Stafford describes himself as a "professional eavesdropper," and relies on his daily journal as a source for his writing projects. In 1976 he published a collection of his own poetry, A Gypsy’s History of the World, and contributed to a collection of poetry by his father, Braided Apart. Stafford continues to publish collections of his poetry and prose. His collection of essays, Having Everything Right, won a special award in 1986 from the Western States Arts Foundation.

Stafford has contributed to many Northwest as well as national poetry and literary journals. In Oregon, his work frequently appears in The Oregonian supplement of Northwest Magazine in the poetry section as well as in feature articles. He regularly offers poetry readings and writing workshops and is active as a printer.

Content Description

Given the variety and rarity of Stafford's publications, this collection is remarkably complete to date (September, 1990). All of the books in this collection have been removed from the manuscript collection but are available in Rare Books.

Stafford has produced several books, including two for which he shares authorship with his father William Stafford: Braided Apart (1976) and That Meeting Place: Poems (1979). The collection also includes Stafford's award-winning collection of essays, Having Everything Right (1986), as well as...
his latest collection of poems about local character, Places and Stories. Within this category are also
two books which present some of Stafford's ideas and examples about teaching writing: Twenty-three
Ways of Holding Still and Thirty-Seven Ways of Holding Still: Poems Written at Wallowa School and
Assignments as Given (1978), which contain exercises for grade school students supplementing the
examples of the work of Stafford's students from Idaho and eastern Oregon primary and secondary
schools.

Books containing contributions by Kim Stafford date from 1983 through 1988. These include Stafford's
introduction to a collection of essays in honor of his advisor and Middle English scholar Stanley
Greenfield, Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature (1986). Also included is Idaho Place
Names (1988) by Lalia Boone, which contains a poem by Stafford as the frontispiece.

Stafford is a prolific contributor to national and Northwest literary journals, many of which have had
short lives on the market. The collection of journals with Stafford's poetry includes 47 journals, some
with several issues containing Stafford's work. These range from well-know journals such as the
Atlantic Monthly, Poetry Northwest, and the South Carolina Review, to rare issues of Permafrost, Mister
Cogito, and other ephemeral periodicals. The earliest published poem in the collection dates from

The section containing Stafford's essays, articles, and reviews is represented by a collection of
15 periodicals. These include short stories and reviews, as well as articles about others, such as
"He Found This Great Strength," the Idaho Foxfire Network, which describes the last days of Lloyd
Reynolds, scholar, artists, and friend of Stafford. This category also contains an interview with Kim
Stafford about his writing ( Mossy Creek Journal, 1988).

James Henry kept a cross-reference index of all of Stafford's poems and essays. Henry's file is kept in
the Special Collections Reading Room.

As an artist-in-residence, Kim Stafford often collected and published the work of his students in
booklets. These are represented in the category of work edited by Kim Stafford and include rare copies
of the poetry by students at Lewiston, Idaho (1975); Enterprise, Oregon (1978); Lincoln Junior High,
Burns, Oregon (1980); Redmond, Oregon (1980); and Washington High School, Portland, Oregon

Three programs contain work by Kim Stafford. Cityfolk (1981) and Cowboy Poetry Gathering (1987 and
1989) feature Stafford's essays.

Newspapers containing poetry and essays by Kim Stafford were collected by the donor. The majority
of Stafford's works are represented here in issues of The Oregonian or its supplement, Northwest
Magazine, together with Stafford's contributions to the Elko Daily Free Press and Fresh Weekly
( Willamette Week) dating from 1980 to 1989. Because the donor had Kim Stafford autograph nearly
every entry of the collection, the original newspapers have been preserved and kept in a separate box
at the end of the collection.

Whenever James Henry could not find original issues of journals or publications containing Stafford's
work, he obtained photocopies. Many of these copies duplicate original issues in the collection. The
copies are represented in 21 titles and numerous issues.

Also included in the collection are undated press catalogues and flyers, as well as advertising
postcards for Stafford's own work or books and periodicals to which he contributed.
As director of the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, Stafford contributed regularly to the institute’s newsletter. In addition to newsletters from 1988 through 1990, the collection also contains flyers advertising workshops and events at the Institute from 1987 to 1989.

A few newspaper articles about Kim Stafford also appear in this collection and feature Stafford’s work as a judge in the Young Writers Fiction Contest (1988), as head of a conference on writing (1989), his award for Having Everything Right (1986), as well as other events in which Stafford participated.

James Henry and Kim Stafford began corresponding in March 1981 when Henry began a serious collection of Stafford’s work. Their correspondence currently includes letters through November 1989 and reveals the wide-ranging interest, activities, and jobs that Kim Stafford took on during this period, and the slow process of assembling the materials for this collection which required Henry’s persistence. A selection of James Henry’s letters to Kim Stafford, which were photocopies from Stafford’s files, is also included. This correspondence highlights the effort involved by the collector as well as the firm friendship and respect between Stafford and Henry in their struggle as writers.

Also included among the correspondence are James Henry’s replies from publishers to his requests for copies of their journals. These have been arranged according to publishers rather than by addressee to coordinate them with the publications in the collection. The inventory identifies the names of all correspondents.

Numerous photographs of Stafford appear throughout the journal and newspaper articles of this collection. Also available is one autographed 8 by 10 inch photograph of Kim Stafford and his father.

During the 1970s the Oregon Humanities Foundation produced a television series on Northwest Writers. A video featuring Kim Stafford as part of the Visiting Writers Series is included in this collection. An audiocassette recording of Stafford’s keynote address to the Cowboy Poetry Gathering at Elko, Nevada in January 1990 is also included.

Some of Stafford’s poetry has been printed in limited editions by others. The largest (18” x 24”) in the collection is the Breakwater Broadside Series I, which included Stafford’s “The Bears” (1980). “The Rocking Chair” (1980) and “A Woman and a Bear” (1985) also include illustrations.

Kim Stafford’s father, William Stafford, is a nationally acclaimed poet whose work James Henry began collecting before he began collecting Kim Stafford’s work. Some of the periodicals include poems by William Stafford who has autographed most of them. These are listed in a separate category, although the publications may be found within the appropriate category of Kim Stafford’s work.

The works donated to this collection by Thelma Greenfield are of a personal nature, most dating from Stafford’s frequent contact with the Greenfields when he was a student at the University of Oregon. The one piece of correspondence, a letter dated June 13, 1989, contains a draft of one of Stafford’s essays. The remaining items, made during the early 1970s, include several broadsides and a small handmade book which features Stafford’s poetry and photographs taken by Stafford.

Administrative Information

Detailed Description of the Collection

Kim Robert Stafford collection, 1972-1989
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv99529

4
Guide to the Kim Robert Stafford Collection

Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**
- American literature--20th century
- American poetry--20th century
- Authors, American--20th century
- Poets, American--20th century

**Personal Names:**
- Greenfield, Thelma N.
- Henry, James L. (James Lloyd), 1908-1999
- Stafford, Kim Robert
- Stafford, William, 1914-1993

**Form or Genre Terms:**
- Broadsides
- Sound recordings
- Videotapes

Finding aid prepared by Christina Pierce and Vida Germano
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