

Collection title: Bronco Moonwater Collection

Collection ID: MOON

Size: 1.31 linear feet

Date: 1972-1976

Abstract:

Bronco Moonwater was a professional football player with the Toledo Troopers women's football team. The bulk of the collection is material related to The Toledo Troopers team including a signed t-shirt, a football helmet, and a bound book about the team, also signed.

Accession information:

Bronco Moonwater donated material to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives in 2013.

Provenance:

These materials were compiled by Bronco Moonwater over the course of their activity in the Toledo Troopers.

Restrictions:

The collection is open to researchers. There are no restrictions on the collection.

Copyright:

Property rights to the physical objects belong to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives. All other rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or heir for permission to publish where the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives do not hold the copyright.

Biographical sketch:

Bronco Moonwater (b. 1948) was a professional football player who played on the Toledo Troopers women's football team. Bronco grew up in small midwest towns. At age 14, she began attending a convent to become a nun but was dismissed in her twenties. At the time she did not know her dismissal had to do with her sexuality. She grew up as a self-described "tomboy." Her parents encouraged her to try out for the Toledo Troopers, which began her career in professional football. Her moniker "Bronco" came from her coach, hall of fame inductee Bronko Nagurski. In Bronco's own words, "For me, playing football also set me on a path that led to my finally coming out at age 27." Bronco played with the Troopers from 1972-1976. She was sidelined with injuries after 1976. After her football career, Bronco became involved in political and environmental organizing.¹

¹ Biographical information sourced from the following: Britni de la Cretaz, "Almost Undefeated: The Forgotten Football Upset of 1976," *Longreads*, February 1, 2019,

The Toledo Troopers (1971-1980) was a professional women's American football team based in Toledo, Ohio. The Troopers were founded in 1971 before the passing of Title IX. The team began as a member of the Women's Professional Football League, which became the National Women's Football League in 1974. Under the leadership of Coach Bill Stout, The Toledo Troopers became seven-time world champions, awarding them the reputation of "winningest team in professional football history." In 1975 the Trooper's star running back, Linda Jefferson, was named WomenSports Magazine's first ever "Woman Athlete of the Year." The team disbanded after their 1979 season. In 2014 the Troopers became the first inductees into the Women's Football Foundation Hall of Fame.

Scope and content:

The Bronco Moonwater Collection consists of textiles, artifacts, and printed material, the bulk of which is related to the professional women's football team, the Toledo Troopers. The collection includes a Toledo Troopers t-shirt, signed by the team, a Toledo Troopers football helmet, and a bound book *The Toledo Troopers: The Untold Story of the Winningest Team In Pro-Football History*. The *Toledo Troopers* book consists of photographs and a brief history of the team and is also signed by Troopers team members. The collection also includes a 2008 Womyn's Music Festival tank top with hand-written text, included in the original donation. Bronco wore the tank top during a pro-choice rally.

Processing notes: This collection was processed by Vera Tykulsker in 2023 under a California State Grant.

The materials are in good condition and were not donated in any obvious original order. Textiles are protected in the same box as a folder containing the bound book. A "Miscellaneous" series has been used for the intellectual arrangement of material that is not directly associated with the Toledo Troopers.

Arrangement:

Series 1: Toledo Troopers

Series 2: Miscellaneous

Box level contents list:

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<https://longreads.com/2019/02/01/toledo-troopers/>; "Bronco's Toledo Troopers Football Helmet from the Bronco Moonwater Collection," Out of the Archives Newsletter, The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, March 25, 2021, <https://shorturl.at/byCP4>; Marie Cartier, *Baby, You Are My Religion*, (Routledge, 2013); Tom Henry, "Story of Toledo Troopers gaining more recognition," *The Blade*, March 12, 2023, <https://www.toledoblade.com/local/community-events/2023/03/12/story-of-toledo-troopers-now-going-well-beyond-toledo/stories/20230312054>.

Box 1

Series I: Toledo Troopers

Series 2: Miscellaneous

Scope and content: One bound book: *The Toledo Troopers: The Untold Story of the Winningest Team In Pro-Football History*, and two shirts: A Toledo Troopers Championship T-shirt signed by team members and a Womyn's Music Festival tank top.

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Box 1, Folder 1

The Toledo Troopers [Book] and copy of prologue page

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Box 2

Series I: Toledo Troopers

Box contents: Toledo Troopers football helmet.