

## **Guide to the Flora and Stuart Mason Photographs and Event Programs**

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information .....	3
Biographical Note for Flora Mason .....	3
Scope and Contents Note .....	5
Arrangement .....	5
Administrative Information .....	5
Related Materials .....	6
Names and Subjects .....	6
Collection Inventory .....	7

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Mason, Flora
<b>Title:</b>	Flora and Stuart Mason Photographs and Event Programs
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00694
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	approximately 1965-2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	78 Digital Files (transferred electronically; no physical carrier)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	Collection is comprised of photographs of Las Vegas, Nevada community leaders Flora and Stuart Mason and three event programs from Temple Beth Sholom (Las Vegas, Nevada). Materials date from approximately 1965 to 2010.

### Preferred Citation

Flora and Stuart Mason Photographs and Event Programs, approximately 1965-2010. MS-00694. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Biographical Note for Flora Mason

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Flora Mason (née Esformes; 1940- ) is a Las Vegas, Nevada philanthropist who, along with her husband Stuart Mason, founded the Las Vegas Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation in 1970 and the Mason Undergraduate Peer Coach Program at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries in 2006. She was the first woman elected by the general membership to serve on the Temple Beth Sholom Board of Directors, and she served on the National Board of Directors of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Mason has also been involved with the Jewish Federation of Las Vegas, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Temple Beth Sholom youth group, United Synagogue Youth.

Born on October 23, 1940 in New York City, Flora Mason grew up between New York and Miami Beach. Flora met her future husband, Stuart Mason in Miami, and they married in 1958. Stuart Mason worked in the family business, Taylor International Corporation, and in 1964 he moved to Las Vegas to build Caesars Palace. Flora and three children, Deborah, William, and James, joined Stuart in Las Vegas in 1965. The Masons initially planned to stay in Nevada only temporarily, but then they both fell in love with the West and Las Vegas, and went on to become active and influential members of the Las Vegas community.

After beginning her college education at the University of Miami, Flora completed her bachelor's degree at UNLV, where she also later earned her Master's degree in English literature. Flora served as a lecturer in the English department at UNLV, and worked there until her retirement.

Source:

Mason, Flora. Interview, 2014 December 08. OH-02215. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Biographical Note for Stuart Mason

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Stuart Jay Mason (1935-2012) was a 47-year resident of Las Vegas and builder of some of the most iconic hotel casinos on the Strip. The Mason family construction company, Taylor International Corporation, helped build the Riviera (1955), the Tropicana (1957), Caesars Palace (1966), and the Stratosphere (1996). Mason built the then-largest hotel in the world four times: the International Hotel (opened in 1969, now called the Westgate), the MGM Grand at 3645 Las Vegas Boulevard (opened in 1973, now called Bally's), the MGM Grand at 3799 Las Vegas Boulevard (opened in 1993), and the Las Vegas Sands-owned Venetian/Palazzo complex (the Venetian opened in 1999 and the Palazzo opened in 2008).

Mason was born on December 19, 1935 in Columbus, Ohio. In 1937 his family moved to Coral Gables, Florida. He worked summers at his father's construction company and went to high school at Staunton Military Academy of Virginia. Mason met his future wife Flora Esformes in 1956 at a college fraternity party. The couple got married in 1958 after he graduated from the University of Miami with a bachelor's degree in business and a minor in philosophy. For seven years he traveled to Jamaica, Aruba, Puerto Rico, and Grand Bahama building hotels for his father's company.

Stuart's father Morry Mason acquired Taylor International Corporation in 1940 and built many iconic hotels in Miami, Florida. In 1954 Morry Mason went to Las Vegas to build the Riviera, and in 1964 he was approached by Jay Sarno to build Caesars Palace. Morry relocated the whole company to Las Vegas and Stuart went along to work on Caesars. Stuart's wife and children followed shortly after and the family decided to move to Las Vegas permanently. Eventually Stuart replaced his father Morry as head of Taylor International, and in 1997 passed the company on to his two sons, Jim and Bill. After many years in the family business, Stuart was hired by Sheldon Adelson to work for Las Vegas Sands Incorporated as the Vice President of Development for the Venetian.

Stuart Mason served as President of Temple Beth Sholom in Las Vegas from 1983 to 1984 and helped build the congregation's new synagogue in 2000. He was also president of the Nevada State Contractors Board, Trustee of Clark County Library, and board member of the Great Basin National Park Foundation. Mason and his wife Flora founded the Nevada chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in 1970. In 1997 the couple helped to create the UNLV Libraries Mason Undergraduate Peer Research Coach program for motivated students who are identified as statistically unlikely to graduate. Stuart Mason passed away in Las Vegas on April 28, 2012.

Sources:

"Stuart Mason Obituary." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. Accessed January 28, 2015. <http://obits.reviewjournal.com/obituaries/lvrj/obituary.aspx?pid=157361983>.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents Note

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The collection is comprised of images of Las Vegas, Nevada community leaders Flora and Stuart Mason and family (from approximately 1965 to 2009) and three event programs (1995, 2008, 2010) from Temple Beth Sholom in Las Vegas. A 2008 Temple Beth Sholom Gala Dinner honoring Flora and Stuart Mason for their many years of support of the local Jewish community is documented by images and a commemorative event program. Additional photographs document a family trip to Mount Charleston and special occasions such as a bar mitzvah, bris, and Flora's graduation from UNLV. Also included are two digitized Temple Beth Sholom event programs that celebrate the renewal of wedding vows of couples in the congregation, including Flora and Stuart Mason (1995 and 2010).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Arrangement

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Materials are arranged chronologically.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Administrative Information

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### Access

Collection is open for research. Collection is available at: <http://d.library.unlv.edu/cdm/search/searchterm/MS-00694>

### Publication Rights

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## Acquisition Note

In 2014 and 2017 Flora Mason donated digital surrogates, but retained the original items; accession numbers 2014-090 and 2017-132.

## Processing Note

Materials were processed by Cyndi Shein, Meghan Gross, and Emily Lapworth in 2015.

## Existence and Location of Originals

This collection is comprised exclusively of digital surrogates. The donor retained the original items.

## Revision Description

Finding aid was updated by Tammi Kim to reflect the 2017-132 addition. 2017

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Related Materials

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### Related Collections

The following resources provide additional information on the Mason Family:

Mason, Flora. Interview, 2014 December 08. OH-02215. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mason, Stuart. Interview, 2006 November 09. OH-01211. Oral History Research Center, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

Stuart Mason Photographs, 1940-1990s. PH-00370. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Taylor Construction Company Collection, 1954-1972. MS-00664. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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## Names and Subjects

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- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- Social life and customs
- Las Vegas (Nev.) -- Religious life and customs
- Mount Charleston (Nev.)
- Jews -- Nevada -- Las Vegas -- History
- Photographs

- Temple Beth Sholom (Las Vegas, Nev.)
- Mason, Stuart

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Containers
Mason family photographs	
Mount Charleston, Nevada, approximately 1965-1970	
MGM hotel construction, 1972 or 1973	
Special occasions, including bar Mitzvah, bris, graduation, and others, approximately 1973-2003	
MGM hotel construction and topping off party, circa 1992	
"The Wedding," Temple Beth Sholom event program, 1995 June 11	
Temple Beth Sholom Gala Dinner in Honor of Stuart and Flora Mason: photographs, event program, and speech, 2008 April	
"The Wedding," Temple Beth Sholom event program, 2010 June 06	