



Finding Aid for

SUZANNE VANDERBILT PAPERS, 1958-1986
Accession Number 1751

Finding Aid Published: March 2011



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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 1751

CREATOR: Vanderbilt, Suzanne, 1933-1988

TITLE: Suzanne Vanderbilt papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1958-1986

BULK DATES: 1955-1977

QUANTITY: 0.4 cubic ft.

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Suzanne Vanderbilt joined General Motors in 1955 as a Junior Designer for Chevrolet Interiors. She was part of a new group of women working in design centers for automobile companies that reflected the industry's growing awareness of the female consumer. This collection contains material relating to product planning, reports, and projects Vanderbilt supervised in the Design Center.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** This collection is open for research.
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford.
- ACQUISITION:** The collection was donated to The Henry Ford by the Vanderbilt family in 1990.
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material within The Henry Ford:
- Suzanne Vanderbilt interview, Automotive Industry Design Oral Histories collection, Accession 1673.
- Also see the Automotive Design Drawings collection for works done by a number of automotive designers.
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Accession 1751, Suzanne Vanderbilt Papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared by staff of the Benson Ford Research Center and published in 1990.

Hardcopy paper finding aid was scanned, converted to MS Word electronic format and republished by staff of The Henry Ford in March 2011.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Suzanne Vanderbilt, 1933-1988, was born in Mt. Vernon, NY. She received her Bachelor of Industrial Design degree from Pratt Institute and her M.F.A. from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

After graduation from Pratt in 1955 she joined General Motors Corp. as a Junior Designer for Chevrolet Interiors. She advanced to Chief Designer for Chevrolet and finally to Design Assistant in charge of interior soft trim for all GM lines until her retirement in 1977.

Vanderbilt was part of a new group of women working in design centers for automobile companies who reflected the industry's growing awareness of the female consumer. Her work was especially evident in her three patents for an inflatable back support for seats, a safety switch on auto instrument panel and a motorcycle helmet design.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains material relating to product planning, reports, and projects she supervised in the Design Center.

ARRANGEMENT

The materials are arranged alphabetically by subject, and then chronologically by year.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names

Vanderbilt, Suzanne, 1933-1988

General Motors Corporation

General Motors Corporation. Chevrolet Motor Division

Subjects

Automobiles--Design and construction

Genre or Form

Correspondence

Design drawings

Photographs

Speeches

Technical reports

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box no. **Description**

BOX 1

Annual performance review notes, 1974
Automotive Interior Trim Report, 1974
Chevrolet advertisements, 1970-1979
Inter-organizational correspondence, 1960-1975
Materials and Designs; Seats and Doors, 1976
Patent, Inflatable seat
Patent, Safety switch
Pratt Institute
Product planning
 1958
 1967
 1969
 1970
 1970-1979
 1980
Projects; completed, 1975-1976
Proposals, 1961-1976
Quotations
Research project, 1965
Saver, Margaret; obituary, 1986
Seating, articles
Seating
 Drawings
 Ideas and notes
 Photographs
 Reference information
 Study, 1962
Speech notes
Torch club speech, May 1976
Women as Auto designers