



**YORK UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

**Inventory of the  
Ruth Morris fonds**

**Inventory #F0461**

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## F0461 - Ruth Morris fonds

**Fonds/Collection Number:** F0461

**Title:** Ruth Morris fonds

**Dates:** 1939-2001

**Extent:** 1 m of textual records  
ca. 40 photographs  
2 audio cassettes

**Biographical Sketch/  
Administrative History:** Ruth Rittenhouse Morris, Quaker, professor and social activist, was born on 12 December 1933 in the United States. She received her BA from Oberlin College, Ohio, in Music and Sociology (1956) and her MA in sociology from University of Illinois (1958). She then received her MSW (1959) and PhD (1963) from the University of Michigan. Morris advocated strongly for the case of abolishing prisons in favor of alternative justice systems. Morris' activist work began as a reaction against the Vietnam war, racism and poverty. Morris moved to Canada in 1968 and began focusing on penal justice issues and saw the current system as an incarnation of racism and classicism present in society. A former York University sociology instructor, she proposed a 'transformative' justice system and founded "Rittenhouse: a new vision", an agency dedicated to bringing about transformation justice in our criminal justice system. Morris developed a bail program for prisoners and founded Toronto's first bail residence as well as a half-way house for ex-offenders. In addition to many achievements, Morris launched a community project to improve banking services to disadvantaged persons, a drop-in centre for street people and a multi-cultural conflict resolution centre. Some of her published books include 'Penal Abolition: The Practical Choice'(2000), 'Street People Speak'(1987) and 'Crumbling Walls: Why Prisons Fail' (1989). Among many other honours and awards, Ruth Morris was awarded the Order of Canada on May 30, 2001, shortly before her death on September 17, 2001.

**Scope and Content:** Fonds consists of materials relating to Morris' personal and professional life as a social activist, advocate for prison abolition, writer and lecturer including pamphlets, notes, drafts of articles and books written by her, monographs, published and unpublished articles, photos, clippings, personal and professional correspondence as well as volumes of Morris' detailed diaries.

**Restrictions on  
Access and Use:** No restrictions on access.

**Finding Aid:** File list available.

**URL of Finding Aid:** <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000461.htm>

**Accruals:** The fonds comprises the following accession: 2004-008. No further accruals are expected.

**Immediate source of  
acquisition:** Donated by husband Ray Morris in 2004.

**Provenance Access Points:** Morris, Ruth, 1933-

Date of creation: 2004/04/23

Date of last revision: 2004/11/02