

**S0498 Preisler, Paul W. (1902-1971),  
Addenda, 1954-1977  
78 Folders**

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The papers of Paul William Preisler - biochemist, union organizer, lawyer and photographer were deposited in the University of Missouri-St. Louis Archives and Manuscripts Division by the executors of his estate in the Spring of 1972. The collection has been processed and organized; it is now open to the public.

Preisler dedicated his life to bettering his community and protecting the civil liberties of its citizens. His life included many causes and interests, ranging from the American Civil Liberties Union and his opposition to the proposed Food and Drug Act of Congress in the nineteen thirties to founding Local 420 of the American Federation of Teachers, to the political redistricting of the City of St. Louis and the State of Missouri. He was active in the campaign to change the 2/3 majority vote needed to pass school taxes. Although he was a veteran campaigner for public office, having run eleven times, he never won an election.

Preisler was honored several times for his dedication and work in the community. Among his honors were the Page One Award, granted by the St. Louis Newspaper Guild, and certificates of appreciation from both the Eastern and Western Chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union. In many organizations, Preisler was elected to offices such as the president or vice president.

Paul William Preisler was born May 31, 1902. His father, Ernest Preisler, was an architect and realtor in St. Louis. Many homes designed by him are still standing in South St. Louis. Martha Witter Preisler, mother of Paul, was a descendant of an old St. Louis family which owned and operated Witter's Book Store, a locally famous store and a literary salon. Preisler had three brothers and two sisters.

As a young boy he attended Sherman Grammar School, followed by McKinley High School. During the summers, the Preisler family would vacation at Elkhart Lakes in Wisconsin. It was here that Preisler developed a life-long interest in turtles. Later as an adult, Preisler would entertain the vacationers with turtle races. In the fall of 1919, he entered Washington University. He graduated four years later with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering. He continued his education receiving his Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 1927. The same year he married Doris Bausch, a botanist and physiologist. Preisler then worked as a post doctoral fellow in Washington, D.C., Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. After finishing his work on the East coast, he returned to St. Louis and was hired by the Washington University School of Medicine as an instructor. He remained with the University until 1941 when he joined the army. After the war, he returned to the University staying until 1950 when he began to study law.

During the thirties, Preisler campaigned vigorously against the proposed Food and Drug Act in Congress. He gave lectures with slides (some of which are in the collection). He spoke to

the academic and science community, as well as to the general public. Preisler demanded more stringent rules for the sale of drugs, listing of the contents on cans and bottles, and the removal of unqualified persons in the business.

In 1935, Preisler helped found the St. Louis Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers, Local 420. He was elected its first president. His first and most important task was to force the Board of Education to allow teachers to unionize, something fiercely opposed by the Board. Two years later, as a result of a court suit to force a non-partisan board election, the teachers were allowed to unionize. On the national level, Preisler became influential in the union and was elected International Vice-President for two terms (1938-1940; 1940-1942). An avid anti-Communist, Preisler was helpful in ousting three locals from the national federation for alleged Communist infiltration. However, there were repercussions from his duties with the Federation. Washington University did not endorse Preisler's union activities, but they did not wish to fire him, so they kept him at the level of instructor.

Also in the Depression decade, Preisler joined the Socialist Party. He was elected Chairman of the City Central Committee, a position held until 1952, when he resigned from the Party. One of his major concerns in the Party was that the Board of Election Commissioners refused minority parties and non-partisan candidates the right to have challengers and watchers at the election pools. As chairman, Preisler filed suit against the Board. In the early fifties, the case finally reached the Supreme Court of Missouri which ruled in Preisler's favor. minorities could now have challengers and watchers at the polls. In 1934 after the death of his father, Preisler assumed the presidency of the Preisler Realty Company, in addition to his duties as chemistry instructor, his labor activities and his socialist causes. Preisler stayed with the company until 1943 when the company was sold.

Besides all of the above activities, Preisler also ran for public office in the thirties. In 1937, two years after the St. Louis chapter of the American Federation of Teachers had been founded, Preisler ran for the Board of Education as a non-partisan. The Board refused his candidacy since, by its constitution, it was bipartisan. In a landmark decision by the Missouri Supreme Court, the Board was forced to accept Preisler's candidacy. The court order was handed down three days before the election which meant all the ballots had to be remade. Preisler was not running to win, (which he didn't), but on principle.

When World War II broke out, Preisler entered the United States Army as a captain. He was stationed at Fort Sam Houston in Texas at the Brooks General Hospital. His assignment was to the Sanitary Corps. In January 1946, he was discharged as lieutenant colonel. After the war, he returned to St. Louis. Again, he was in court. This time in 1947, he organized a suit against the Board of Education, because they did not permit married female teachers to work. Again the court ruled in favor of Preisler and women were allowed to retain their positions.

In 1950, at the age of forty-eight, Preisler entered St. Louis University School of Law. He was retained as Research Associate at Washington University with no salary. In 1969, he was awarded Professor Emeritus. He was also still active with the teachers union, but the issue consuming most of his time at this point was the one of redistricting. In 1952, while still a law student, Preisler filed his first redistricting suit. It was against the Board of Election Commissioners for improper drawing of the election districts. He lost in the lower court but on second appeal to the Missouri Supreme Court, he won. St. Louis was forced to redraw her

election maps.

Next he turned his attention to the United States Congressional Districts of the state. He filed in 1962, on the grounds that the districts were not as compact and "nearly equal in population as may be". In 1965, the issue was brought before the Missouri General Assembly, which was responsible for legislating the districts. The General Assembly proposed a plan and the electorate voted for it in 1965. Early in 1966, Preisler refiled the suit for he did not think that the 1965 plan was fair enough. Late in the summer of 1966, the Missouri Supreme Court declared the 1965 plan unconstitutional. By 1969, the difference in Congressional representation was less than 2000 in population per district. At the time of his death in 1971, he was involved in another redistricting suit. In 1975, the court voted against Preisler's suit.

As a lawyer, Preisler served gratuitously as a Counselor for the ACLU. He defended the right of students to wear long hair, hold anti-war demonstrations, and to publish uncensored newspapers. He also defended prisoners and women against discrimination.

He was also involved in municipal affairs. He filed suit against the City of St. Louis when it proposed the roadway through Shaw's Garden. Due to the vehement protest from Preisler and the other citizens, the plan was dropped. Another case was that of the License Collector's job. Preisler contested it claiming it was patronage. However, he lost this case. Often, Preisler's fight against discrimination took the form of running for office. He ran as a Socialist for the Missouri legislature in 1934 and 1936. He campaigned for the Board of Education in 1937, 1939, 1959, 1965, 1967, and 1971 as a non-partisan. In 1940 and 1957, he ran for the Board of Aldermen also as a non-partisan. In 1954, Preisler ran for the United States Congress. This campaign was another one contested in the courts. The dispute revolved around the filing fee. The Secretary of State of Missouri, Walter Toberman, refused to accept the Preisler candidacy as a non-partisan; his argument was that a statute was designed to stop Communists and splinter parties from filing unless they had a substantial number of votes in the preceding election. Preisler argued that he could run as an individual and not as a representative of a party. The case went before the Missouri Supreme Court which ruled in favor of Preisler. Preisler did not win any of these elections. However, he successfully defended the rights of other non-partisan candidates, many of whom were subsequently elected.

Outside interests of Preisler included bridge playing, cooking and photography.

Preisler was a member of many organizations, both professional and nonprofessional. In some of them, he was elected to high office and was presented with awards for his dedication to others. Because of the many organizations and honors, it is easier to simply list them.

**Professional Organizations:**

**American Association for the Advancement of Sciences**

**American Chemical Society**

Counselor, 1949-1950

Secretary-Treasurer, Division of Biological Chemistry, 1948-1951

**American Electrochemical Society**

**American Federation of Technical Engineers**

**American Society of Biological Chemistry**

**Association of Military Surgeons of the United States**  
**Engineers Club of St. Louis**  
**Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology**  
**American Bar Association**  
**Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis**

**Non-Professional organizations:**

**American Civil Liberties Union**

Counselor, 1968-1971

American Federation of Teachers, 1935-1971

President, Local 420, 1935-1971

International Vice-President, 1937-1939, 1940-1942, 1950

Chairman of Legislative Committee

Executive Secretary, 1965

**Central Trades and Labor Union**

Chairman of the Education Committee and Delegate

**Federation of Economic and Political Education**

2nd Vice President

**Gamma Alpha**

**Missouri State Historical Society**

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

Member-Executive Committee

St. Louis Labor Education Project

**National Geographic Society**

**National Organization on Legal Problems of Education (NOLPE)**

**Phi Sigma**

**Public Question Club of St. Louis**

**Public Education Association**

Treasurer

**St. Louis Labor Council**

**Sigma Xi**

**Socialist Party**

Chairman of the City Central Committee, 1934-1951

State Committee of Missouri

**Workers Defense League**

**Awards:**

1951--Appreciation from the American Chemical Society

1957--Page One Award - St. Louis Newspaper Guild

1960--Appreciation Honor from the American Federation of Teachers, Local 420

1968--ACLU Award from Eastern and Western Missouri Chapters

1969--Award from the American Jewish Congress

1972--Posthumously - Meritorious Service Award from St. Louis Metropolitan New Democratic Coalition

In 1971, Preisler died at his home in St. Louis.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Paul Preisler Addenda documents the life and activities of Paul Preisler from 1953 to

1977. The addenda contains information of Preisler's ongoing involvements, both personally and professionally. Most information, however, concerns his political activities and involvements. Documents include newspaper clippings, maps, correspondence, financial records, information on "The Committee for the Equal Weighting of Votes", campaigns and elections, redistricting and apportionment, 2/3 majority vote rule, legal briefs, court documents, handwritten notes and legal transactions after the death of Preisler in 1971.

Two series comprise the largest part of the addenda: 2/3 Majority, One Man-One Vote, 1969-1977; and Redistricting and Apportionment, 1953-1975. 2/3 Majority, One Man-One Vote is subdivided into media and court documents and "The Committee for the Equal Weighting of Votes". The "Committee" was formed in reaction to 2/3 Majority rule and the information complements the legal and media information. Redistricting and Apportionment contains newspaper clippings and court documents as well as maps and correspondence which deal with redistricting at community, city, and state levels.

For more information, see collection S0235.

**SERIES DESCRIPTION SERIES 1. PERSONAL AND NON-POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, 1954-1971. FOLDERS 1-5.**

This series consists of newspaper clippings regarding the man Paul Preisler and his awards, correspondence, and certified mail receipts.

**SERIES 2. CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS, 1938-1971. FOLDERS 6-8.**

This series contains newspaper clippings, reprinted newspaper articles, campaign brochures and flyers.

**SERIES 3. NON-PARTISAN CANDIDACY AND ELECTIONS, 1954-1959. FOLDER 9.**

This series contains newspaper clippings regarding non-partisan candidacy and elections.

**SERIES 4. 2/3 MAJORITY, ONE MAN-ONE VOTE, 1969-1977. FOLDERS 10-34.**

This series contains newspaper clippings, court documents and exhibits, legal articles, records regarding the establishment of "The Committee for the Equal Weighting of Votes", financial records, expenses, Income Tax records, correspondence and handwritten notes.

**SERIES 5. REDISTRICTING AND APPORTIONMENT, 1952-1975. FOLDERS 35-76.**

This series contains newspaper clippings, court documents, maps of legal districts and counties, census information, handwritten notes, correspondence, and correspondence after the death of Preisler regarding ongoing suits.

**SERIES 6. LAW PRACTICE GENERAL, 1956-1973. FOLDERS 77-78.**

This series contains newspaper clippings and court documents.

**FOLDER LISTING**

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1. Newspaper clippings regarding Paul Preisler, 1954-1969.
2. Newspaper clippings regarding awards, 1956-1957.
3. Correspondence regarding awards, Dec., 1955 - June, 1968.
4. Correspondence regarding the death of Paul Preisler, 1971.
5. Certified mail receipts, Nov. 3, 1971 - Nov. 24, 1971.
6. Newspaper clippings regarding campaigns and elections, 1965-1971.
7. Reprinted newspaper articles regarding campaigns and elections, 1938.
8. Campaign brochures and flyers regarding campaigns, 1965-1967.
9. Newspaper clippings regarding non-partisan candidacy and elections, 1954-1959.
10. Newspaper clippings regarding two-thirds majority rule, July 30, 1969 - Nov. 8, 1970.
11. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1969. A.T. Gordon, et.al. VS. Granville H. Lan6e, et. al. and The Board of Education of the county of Roane, et.al.
12. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1969. A.T. Gordon, et.al. vs. Granville H. Lance, et.al.
13. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1970. A.T. Gordon, et.al VS. Granville H. Lance, et.al.
14. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1970. A.T. Gordon, et.al. vs. Granville H. Lance, et.al.
15. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1970. A.T. Gordon, et.al vs. Granville H. Lance, et.al.
16. U.S. Supreme Court, Oct. 1970. A.T. Gordon, et.al. vs. Granville H. Lance, et.al.
17. U.S. District Court Brief, No Date. Paul Preisler, et.al. VS. The Mayor of St. Louis, et.al./ Luis Glaser et.al. vs. The Board of Education District of University City / Paul Preisler, et.al. vs. The Board of Education City of St. Louis.
18. U.S. District Court Brief, No Date. Paul Preisler, et.al. vs. The Mayor of St. Louis, et.al. / Luis Glaser. et.al. VS. The School District of University City / Paul Preisler, et.al. vs. The-board of Education of the City of St. Louis
19. U.S. District Court Brief, No Date. Brenner, Hurt and Star vs. School District of Kansas City, et.al.
20. U.S. District Court Complaint, No Date. Paul Preisler, et.al. vs. Board of Education, School District of St. Louis.
21. U.S. District Court Complaint, No Date. Paul Preisler, et.al. vs. Mayor of St. Louis, et.al.

22. U.S. District Court Amended Complaint, No Date. Luis Glaser, et.al. vs. Board of Education University City, et.al.
  23. Photocopies of Plaintiffs Exhibit 1 - 8. No Date.
  24. "Judicial Activism and Municipal Bonds: Killing Two-Thirds with one Stone?" by John Hays Mershon. Virginia Law Review, V56, #2, 1970.
  25. Photocopy of p.804 from 170 South Eastern Reporter, 2nd Series. No Date.
  26. Photocopies of text pp. 639-651. Bogert vs. Kinzer. No Date.
  27. Photocopies of text pp.783-803, Lance Vs. Board of Education of County of Roane. No Date.
  28. Photocopy of p.563. Reynolds vs. Sims. No Date.
  29. Records of establishing "The Committee for the Equal Weighting of Votes", 1970.
  30. Financial Records of "The Committee of Equal Weighting of Votes", 1970-1971.
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35. Newspaper clippings regarding redistricting, 1952-1975.
  36. Reprinted newspaper articles regarding redistricting, Nov.,1955.
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  38. Maps of legal districts. No Date.
  39. General Highway Map Perry County, Jan. 1, 1970.
  40. Documents regarding Census Population and Housing, 1970.
  41. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief. Sept. 1953. Preisler vs. Board of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State of Stat of Mo., City of St. Louis and Attorney General.
  42. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief. Sept., 1955 Preisler VS. Members of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State, and Attorney General.

43. Supreme Court of Missouri Opposition's Response, Sept. 1955. Preisler vs. Members of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State, and Attorney General.
44. Supreme Court of Missouri Motion for Rehearing, Sept., 1955. Preisler vs. Members of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State, and Attorney General.
45. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief, Sept., 1955. Preisler vs. Members of Board of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State, and Attorney General.
46. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief, Sept., 1955. Preisler vs. Board of Election Commissioners, Secretary of State, and Attorney General.
47. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief, Jan., 1959. Preisler vs City of St. Louis, The Board of Commissioners of the City of St. Louis, and Attorney General.
48. U.S. Supreme Court Reports Subject of Annotation, March-April, 1964. Lucas vs. Colorado General Assembly.
49. U.S. Supreme Court Motion to Affirm, Oct., 1967. Secretary of State of Missouri, Missouri Attorney General, et.al. vs. Paul W. Preisler, et.al.
50. U.S. Supreme Court Appeal, Act. 1967. Secretary of State, and Attorney General, et.al. vs. Preisler and Erbe.
51. U.S. Supreme Court Jurisdictional Statement, Oct.,1967. Secretary of State and Attorney General vs. Preisler, et.al.
52. U.S. Supreme Court footnotes, Oct., 1967. Secretary of State and Attorney General, et.al. vs. Preisler, et.al.
53. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct., 1967. Secretary of State and Attorney General, et.al. vs. Preisler, et.al.
54. U.S. Supreme Court Appendices Jurisdictional Statement, Oct., 1967. Secretary of State and Attorney General vs. Preisler, et.al.
55. U.S. Supreme Court Petition for Rehearing, Oct., 1968. James C. Kirkpatrick, et.al. vs. Paul Preisler, et.al.
56. Summary: Kirkpatrick VS. Preisler / Heinkel vs Preisler, April, 1969.
57. U.S. District Court, Oct., 1971. Williams, et.al. vs. The County Court of Perry county.
58. U.S. Supreme Court Brief, Oct. 1971. Danforth vs. Preisler, et.al.
59. U.S. Supreme Court Jurisdictional Statement, Oct. 1971. Danforth vs. Preisler, et.al.
60. U.S. Supreme Court Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement, Oct., 1971. Danforth vs. Preisler, et.al.



61. Preisler, et.al. vs. MANDAMUS, et.al., 1971. Case #57473
62. U.S. Supreme Court Appeal, Oct.. 1971. Danforth vs. Preisler, Childs, Erve, Franklin, et.al.
63. U.S. Supreme Court Documents regarding Danforth vs. Preisler, et.al., Oct., 1971.
64. Court Documents regarding Preisler vs. Secretary of State, Case #1716, 1971-1972.
65. U.S. District Court Documents regarding Watkins, et.al vs. Kirkpatrick, Case #20148-1, 1973.
66. Circuit Court Documents regarding preisler, et.al. vs. Secretary of State, Case #26870, 1974.
67. Supreme Court documents regarding Preisler, et.al. vs. Kirkpatrick, Case #59049, 1975.
68. U.S. District Court, No Date. Preisler and residents of St. Louis vs. Board of Election Commissioners.
69. U.S. District Court Trial Memorandum, No Date. Jonas, Preisler, Roddy, and Grant vs. Honorable W.A. Hearn and Heinkel, Case #14528-2.
70. U.S. District Court Reply Memorandum, No Date. Preisler, Erbe, Franklin, Riedel, Childs, Rifkin, and Leonard vs. Secretary of State and Attorney General, Case #1064.
71. U.S. District Court Complaint, Kansas City, State Senatorial Districts Suit.
72. Correspondence regarding redistricting, March 10, 1965.
73. Correspondence to and from Irving Achtenberg after Preisler's death. 1971 - 1975.
74. Correspondence regarding redistricting and apportionment after Preisler's death. Nov., 1971 - Jan., 1973.
75. Hand written notes regarding redistricting. No Date.
76. Handwritten notes regarding Danforth vs. Preisler. No Date.
77. Newspaper clippings regarding other court cases.
78. Supreme Court of Missouri Brief, Jan., 1958. Preisler vs. License Collector of St. Louis, et.al.

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