

S0735 Metro St. Louis Now (National Organization For Women) Records, 1981-1989, Addenda 19 Folders

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James F. Mason donated the Metro St. Louis Chapter of the National Organization for Women, NOW to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection University of Missouri-St. Louis, in June 2006.

Betty Friedan, the author of *Feminist Mystique* founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966 and served as the first national president. By 1984 there were 260,000 individual members, 9 regional organizers, 50 state groups, and 800 local chapters. The organization's goal is to end all forms of prejudice and discrimination against women. The group continues to support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, enforcement of federal legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, social innovations to enable women to work while rearing a family, and a re-examination of laws and mores governing marriages and divorce. NOW promotes its views through research, litigation, and political action.

The Metro St. Louis NOW Chapter received its charter in February 1971. Mary Ann Sedey was the first president. By October 1972, there were 50 paid members, with many more people regularly attending the chapter's programs. By October 1972, eleven task forces and a speakers' bureau had been established. In addition, chapter members developed temporary alliances with one-issue oriented groups. Metro NOW supported its activities by selling posters, buttons and publications, as well as holding fund raising dinners.

Metro NOW worked especially hard to secure state ratification of the ERA and to protect abortion rights. The group held yearly rallies for ERA on August 25, the anniversary of women's suffrage, and in 1978 conducted a 77-day vigil at the state capitol to obtain an extension of the ratification deadline. The abortion task force joined with other St. Louis organizations in pro-abortion rallies and in picketing on behalf of the issue.

Members of the Media Committee monitored television news programs, wrote letters to offensive advertisers and urged a boycott of their products. The Education Committee reviewed public school text books for sex stereotyping. The Marriage and Family Committee worked towards the successful passage of the no-fault divorce law. The Library Task Force checked on the extent of collections dealing with women. The Compliance in Business and Industry Committee supported women who felt discriminated against in employment and counseled them on sex-decision laws, how and where to file a complaint, and how to deal with an employer personally. They worked to eliminate the segregation of job want ads. This committee monitored business and industry affirmative action plans and assisted in finding jobs for women that were usually held by men.

Metro St. Louis NOW was interested in a wide range of issues: child care, consciousness-raising, early childhood development, economic justice, education discrimination, homemakers' rights, labor unions and on-site organizing, lesbian rights, the problems of disabled and minority women, physical and mental health, violence against women, and women and religion.

SCOPE AND CONTEXT

The Metro St. Louis NOW records contain administrative materials, board minutes, membership rosters, news clippings, Metro NOW newsletters, the Craft Lawsuit filed in 1980 and the People's Manual for Lobbying in Missouri, 1981. This addenda is processed chronologically.

FOLDER LIST

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1. Craft Lawsuit, 1980
2. Correspondence, 1982-1989
3. Board Minutes, 1983-1988
4. Membership Rosters, 1981
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14. Metro Now Newsletters, 1970-1981
15. Metro Newsletters (NOW), 1981-1983
16. News clippings, 1983-1988
17. Newsletters, 1974-1989
18. Pamphlets
19. People's Manual for Lobbying in Missouri, 1981

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