American Federation of Teachers St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Collection

Records, 1951-1983 (Predominantly, 1962-1983)

15.5 linear feet

Accession #463 OCLC #

The records of the St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 of the American Federation of Teachers were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs by Betty Finneran in April of 1971 and were opened for research in July of 1972. Additional papers were placed in the Archives in August of 1984 and opened for research in September of 1990.

The St. Louis (Missouri) Teachers Union was organized in 1935 by Paul W. Preisler, as the Teachers Union of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Its jurisdiction extended over these separate political entities in order to include members from Washington University. In 1944 the name of the local was changed to Teacher's Federation of St. Louis and St. Louis County. Its 1948 merger with Local 680, St. Louis Vocational Teachers' Union, extended Local 420's jurisdiction to include "all eligible teachers in St. Louis and St. Louis County including vocational and college teachers." By 1962 its name had been shortened to St. Louis Teachers Union.

The St. Louis Teachers Union experienced great growth between 1961 and 1963, during which period its membership grew from 81 to 1,417. Membership grew in the 1970's after the AFT became sole bargaining agent for teachers and with the inclusion of paraprofessionals and support staff, but internal disputes and unsuccessful strikes led to many resignations and a decline in membership in 1968 and 1976.

The St. Louis Teachers Union Collection consists primarily of the files of the union's presidents, especially Betty Finneran (1960-65), Ralph Kirn (1965-67) and Demosthenes DuBose (1968-70), and of Executive Secretary Herald M. Doxsee (1962-65). The records document the affairs of the local and conditions in St. Louis's public schools as well as the more general themes of teacher unionization, national politics, desegregation and educational standards. President Finnernan's files also cover her activities as vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

Busing
Collective bargaining
Department head policy
Duty-free lunch periods
Grievance procedures
Insurance
Integration
Membership drive activities
Paraprofessional organizing
Salaries
Teacher evaluation procedures
Teacher tenure legislation
Teacher testing
Working conditions

Among the correspondents are:

Carl J. Megel Robert G. Porter Herrick S. Roth

An index to correspondence will be found on the page 15.

Contents

31 manuscript boxes

Part 1

Series I, 1951-1970, Boxes 1-6:

Correspondence, minutes, newspaper clippings, reports, press releases, grievances, circular letters, notices to membership, membership lists and other material relating to the activities of the St. Louis Teachers Union and its committees.

Series II, Boxes 7-9:

Correspondence, reports and background material used in the local's contract negotiations with the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis and other board-related matters. Particularly well-documented is the issue of the duty-free lunch period.

Series III, Boxes 10-11:

Three scrapbooks of clippings, covering issues of interest to the union during the 1960's.

Series IV, Box 12:

Subseries A:

Correspondence, reports and other materials relating to Betty Finneran's activities as a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Subseries B:

Correspondence, reports and other material related to Betty Finneran's activities as president and a member of the executive board of the St. Louis Teachers Union.

Part 2

Series V, Box 13:

President's correspondence.

Series VI, Box 14:

Grievances.

Series VII, Boxes 15-20:

Correspondence, minutes, letters, reports, circular letters, notices to members, legal documents, membership lists and other material relating to the activities of the St. Louis Teachers Union and its committees.

Series VIII, Box 21:

Correspondence, reports and background material used in the local's contract negotiations with the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis and other board-related matters as well as material related to its activities with other agencies and organizations; federal, state, and local.

Series IX, Boxes 22-31:

Unbound scrapbook of clippings, covering issues of interest to the union from 1972 to 1983.

Non-manuscript material:

Eight photographs, relating primarily to the national AFT, have been placed in the Archive's Audiovisual Collection.

Series I 1951-1970 Boxes 1-6

Correspondence, minutes, newspaper clippings, reports and other material relating primarily to the activities of the St. Louis Teachers Union and its committees. The files are arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and are arranged chronologically within each folder.

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- 1. AFL-CIO, 1962-65
- 2-12. American Federation of Teachers, 1960-68
- 13-14. AFT locals and state federations; corres., 1960-67
- 15. The American Teacher, 1962-67
- 16. Awards
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- 1. Committee: Effective Schools
- 2. Committee; Human Relations
- 3. Committee; Membership
- 4. Committee; School Revenue Resources
- 5. Committee; Social
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- 12-16. Correspondence; miscellaneous, 1958-62
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- 1. Executive Secretary applicants
- 2-3. Executive Secretary (Herald M. Doxsee) files, 1962-65
- 4-5. Executive Secretary's reports, 1962-64
- 6. Elections, 1957-67
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- 1-4. Integration
- 5. Jennings (Missouri) School District; Milton D. Magenheim's attempt to organize and run for school board
- 6. Lease; 2319 Hampton Ave., Room 204, St. Louis, Missouri
- 7. Legal Cases; opinions and correspondence

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- 8-12. Legislative and political activities, 1950's-1960's
- 13. Letters to the editor, 1962-65
- 14-15. Membership drives, 1952-68

Box 5

- 1-5. Membership lists, 1950's-1960's
- 6. Membership withdrawals, 1963-66
- 7-11. Minutes; executive board meetings, Apr 1962-Mar 1970
- 12-15. Minutes; regular meetings, Feb 1961-Mar 1970
- 16. Missouri Association of Consumers; minutes, 8 Jun 1967
- 17. Missouri State Federation of Teachers, 1961-68
- 18. Missouri State Labor Council AFL-CIO, 1956, 1962-65
- 19-22. Newspaper clippings, n.d., 1963-65
- 23. Office and Professional Employees International Union Local #13; agreement with the St. Louis Teachers Union, 1965-66

- 1. Picket sign-up sheets
- 2-3. Press releases, n.d., 1962-64
- 4. Public Question Club of St. Louis address by H. T. Meek, "Let's Talk Sense About Our Schools," 1954
- 5. Public School Retirement System of St. Louis
- 6. Publications and publicity, 1961-67
- 7. Publicity; AFT-O-GRAMS, 1964-67
- 8. Publicity; circular letters, notices, etc., 1960-68
- 9. Publicity; television panel, 11 Oct 1962
- 10. Religion and Labor, 1962
- 11. Reports and Miscellaneous, 1968
- 12. Roth, Herrick S.; correspondence, 1963-64
- 13-14. St. Louis Labor Council AFL-CIO, 1961-68
- 15. St. Louis Public Schools Advisory Committee, 1954-63
- 16. School taxes
- 17. Speeches
- 18. Textbook issue, 1962-66
- 19. Transfer of teachers
- 20. Truancy, 1964

- 21.
- Typewriter controversy, 1961-63 Union-Industries Show, AFL-CIO, 1963 22.
- 23. White House Conference on Education; Missouri follow-up, 1956
- White House Conference on Education in St. Louis and St. Louis County, 24. 1956-61

Series II 1951-1968 Boxes 7-9

Correspondence, reports and background material used in Local 420's contract negotiations with the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis and other board-related matters. The files are arranged alphabetically by topic and chronologically within each folder.

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- 1-10. Board of Education City of St. Louis, 1953-68
- 11. Collective bargaining, 1962-68
- 12. Department Head Policy, 1954-62
- 13. Department Head Policy; correspondence, 1962
- 14. Department Head Policy; teacher questionnaires and petitions, 1962

Box 8

- 1-3. Duty-free lunch period; correspondence, 1962-64
- 4. Duty-free lunch period; correspondence with teachers, 1962-64
- 5. Duty-free lunch period; miscellaneous
- 6-10. Duty-free lunch period; teacher questionnaires of 19 Nov 1963
- 11. Duty-free lunch period; teacher questionnaires, tabulations
- 12. Duty-free lunch period; statement and reports
- 13. Extra pay for extra-curricular activities
- 14. Hospitalization petition results
- 15. Miscellaneous issues

- 1-7. Negotiations, 1951-68
- 8. Pay period change, 1964

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- 1. Subject index to 250-page scrapbook
- 2. Scrapbook pages 1-25; Board of Education; county; federal aid
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- 6. Scrapbook pages 111-135; junior college; Local 420; miscellaneous
- 7-9. Scrapbook pages 136-212; miscellaneous
- 10. Scrapbook pages 213-232; National Education Association; parochial school bus issue
- 11. Scrapbook pages 233-250; Sunday Closing Law; state aid
- 12. Subject index to 291-page scrapbook
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Box 11

1-17. Scrapbook pages on various issues and events in which the St. Louis Teachers Union had an interest

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Subseries A: AFT Vice President Betty Finneran

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- 1. American Federation of Teachers; Collective Bargaining Committee, 1964
- 2-6. American Federation of Teachers; correspondence, 1962-1971
- 7. American Federation of Teachers; Council of Professional Standards, 1966-67
- 8. American Federation of Teachers; Defense Committee, 1963-70
- 9. American Federation of Teachers; Editorial Advisory Committee, 1964-65
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- 11. American Federation of Teachers; Executive Council minutes, 31 Mar

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- 12. American Federation of Teachers; miscellaneous
- 13. American Federation of Teachers; regional membership statistics, 1961-

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- 14. Jennings (Missouri) School District; organizing efforts
- 15. Local 420 St. Louis Teachers Union
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- 17. Local 1680 Excelsior Springs (Missouri); Job Corps Federation of Teachers

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- 18. American Federation of Teachers; correspondence, 1962-63
- 19. Biographical material on Betty Finneran
- 20. Board of Education, City of St. Louis, 1963-67
- 21-22. Board of Education, City of St. Louis; contract negotiations, 1962-66
- 23. Correspondence, 1962-70
- 24. Insurance
- 25. Integration reports
- 26. Missouri State Federation of Teacher; minutes, 3 Nov 1967
- 27. Missouri State Labor Council AFL-CIO; Teacher Tenure Committee
- 28. St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420
- 29. St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420; elections, 1966-67
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Correspondence, reports and other material relating to the activities of the presidents of the St. Louis Teachers Union. The files are arranged chronologically.

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- 1-2. President's correspondence; Betty Finneran, 1961-1966
- 3. President's correspondence; Ralph Kirn, 1967-68
- 4. President's correspondence; George Fithen, 1968
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- 6-19. President's correspondence; Demosthenes DuBose, 1968-75
- 20. President's correspondence; James Johnson, 1976-77
- 21-22. President's correspondence; Evelyn Battle, 1978-83

Series VI 1961-1973 Box 14

Grievances filed by teachers. Arrangement is chronological.

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Correspondence, minutes, reports, legal documents and other material relating primarily to the activities of the St. Louis Teachers Union and its committees. The files are arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and are arranged chronologically within each folder.

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- 1. American Federation of Teachers, 1963-65
- 2. Annuity program issue, 1962-63
- 3. Collective bargaining, Senate Bill 112; corres. and legal opinion, 1964-66
- 4. Collective bargaining, Senate Bill 112; legal documents and opinion, 1966
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- 6-7. Committee; Hospitalization, 1966
- 8. Committee; More Effective Schools, 1973
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- 15. Committee; School Resource, 1965
- 16. Committee: Teacher Concerns, 1968
- 17-18. Committee; Teacher Evaluation Forms, 1964, 1971

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- 3. Correspondence; AFT, 1973
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- 5. Correspondence; Betty Finneran, VP AFT, 1972-74
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- 15-17. Financial reports, 1962-71, 1975, 1977-79, 1980-83
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- 23. Local 420 fact sheet, n.d.
- 24. "Local 420 In Brief" (history)

- 1-4. Membership Lists, n.d., 1965-69, 1971, 1974, 1979-80
- 5. Minutes; Missouri State Federation of Teachers, 11 Jul 1984
- 6. Missouri State Federation of Teachers; constitution and bylaws, 1972
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- 1-7. Publicity; Fliers, 1964-65, 1970-76, 1979, 1981, 1983
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Correspondence, reports and background material used in the local's contract negotiations with the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis and other board-related matters as well as material related to its activities with other agencies and organizations; federal, state, and local. Included are files on two court cases: Harrison, et al. v. Miller, et al., a case involving the National Teachers Test and racial discrimination, and Kammeyer v. Board of Education, a case involving workmen's compensation. The files are arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

- 1. Agreement, 1976
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- 5. Decentralization conference, 1969
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- 18. Harrison, et al. v. Miller, et al., 1972-73
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- 21. Quest Committee report on middle schools, 1980
- 22. Racism in Education Conference, 1968
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Walter P. Reuther Library Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs Wayne State University Archives

AFT Affiliate St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Records, Part II

4 linear feet (4 SB) 1959-2009, bulk 1972-2007

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Finding aid written by Stefanie Caloia on December 5, 2014.

Accession Number: LR000463

Creator: St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420, St. Louis Coalition of Labor Union

Women, Betty Finneran

Acquisition: The AFT Affiliate St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Records, Part II

arrived at the Reuther in multiple shipments: May 15, 1989; August 1,

1994 by Mary Franklin; October 6, 2010; and July 2012.

Language: Material primarily in English. Some material in Spanish.

Access: Collection is open for research.

Use: Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library *Rules for Use of Archival*

Materials. Restrictions: Researchers may encounter records of a sensitive nature – personnel files, case records and those involving investigations, legal and other private matters. Privacy laws and restrictions imposed by the Library prohibit the use of names and other personal information which might identify an individual, except

with written permission from the Director and/or the donor.

Notes: Citation style: "AFT Affiliate St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420

Records, Part II, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives

of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

Related Material: St. Louis Teacher; Local 420 Uniscope; Local's View (Missouri

Federation of Teachers); Coalition of Labor Union Women Records

Abstract

The St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Records, Part II, were created or used by member Betty Finneran. Finneran served as Local 420 President from 1961-1966 and later served for ten years as Treasurer and ten years as Secretary of the local. She also organized and chaired the Local 420 Retiree Chapter. In addition to serving the St. Louis Teachers Union, Finneran was AFT Vice-President from 1963 to 1972. She was involved in women's organizations, including the St. Louis Coalition of Labor Union Women, for which she served as president. St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Records, Part II reflect Finneran's activities, as well as activities of the union as a whole. Local 420 subjects include a dispute with the Missouri Federation of Teachers, raiding between Local 420 and the local National Education Association chapter, internal disputes among board members, organizing and elections, and desegregation of St. Louis schools.

Important Subjects:

Equal rights amendments--1970-1980 Retired teachers Segregation in education

Important Names:

Battle-White, Evelyn Coalition of Labor Union Women (U.S.) Dubose, Demosthenes Missouri ERA Coalition St. Louis Teachers Union (Saint Louis, Mo.)

Series 10: St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 General Records, 1959-2001 (Boxes 32-34)

This series contains meeting minutes, correspondence, flyers, newsletters, news releases, reports, and testimony. Meetings minutes are from regular and special board meetings, general and mass membership meetings, building representative meetings, paraprofessionals, and the secretarial/clerical chapter. Accompanying minutes are committee reports, including the Election Committee, Salary Committee, the QuEST Committee and others. Financial reports are also included.

Series 11: St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Subject Files, 1961-1988 (Box 34)

This series mostly consists of grievances and legal cases, but also includes organizing and bargaining documents and information on employees of the union. Several prominent cases are represented in the grievance and legal matters files, including a wrongful termination case involving five teachers who were fired after a student drowned on a field trip (folder 34-28), school district desegregation and a related implementation study (folders 34-27 and 34-28), conflicts within Local 420 including unpaid vacation leave of a former president (34-27), a dispute with the Missouri chapter of AFT regarding representation (34-21) and a libel case against the Missouri National Education Association (34-30). Additional information on grievances may be included in correspondence or minutes in Series 10.

Series 12: St. Louis Teachers Union Local 420 Retiree Chapter Records, 1974-2009 (Boxes 34-35)

This series consists of meeting minutes, correspondence, reports, newsletters, and flyers produced by and related to the Local 420 Retiree Chapter. Included are documents related to celebrations for newly retired union members and memorials for deceased members. This series also contains a file on Lois Jean Turner, who once served on the Executive Board of the retiree chapter and who was involved in lawsuits regarding her role on the Board of Trustees of the St. Louis Public School Retirement System.

Series 13: Betty Finneran Records, 1974-1976 (Box 35)

This series consists of records created and used by Betty Finneran related to her activities with organizations outside the St. Louis Teachers Union. This includes her tenure as President of the St. Louis Coalition of Labor Union Women and communications with Missouri Equal Rights Act Coalition. Other materials include newsletters, flyers, and advertisements for various events and initiatives related to labor and women's rights groups, including fair housing, International Women's Day and Year, and racial discrimination.

Arrangement

Arranged in 4 series – Series 10 (Boxes 32-33), Series 11 (Box 34), Series 12 (Boxes 34-35), and Series 13 (Box 35). Folders in Series 10 are arranged alphabetically by type of document and thereunder chronologically. Folders in Series 11 are arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically. Folders in Series 12 are in their original order and are arranged by document type or subject. Folders in Series 13 are arranged by organization name and thereunder by type of document.

Some material in this collection arrived in folders and some was unfoldered. Where practical, original folder arrangement was kept and additional material was arranged in separate folders, so folder dates may overlap or repeat.

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- 10 Newsletters, 1983-1985
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- 12 Newsletters, 1991-1993
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- 14 Newsletters; St. Louis Teacher, 1973-1993
- 15 News Releases, 1964, 1972-1987
- 16 Reports; O'Fallon Technical Center, 1986
- 17 Reports; Teachers Evaluations, Student Testing, 1987
- 18 Reports; Treasurer, with Financial Statements, 1974-1985
- 19 Testimony; Finneran on HB1155 Collective Bargaining, undated

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- 22 Grievances and Legal Matters, Battle, 1980
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- 25 Grievances and Legal Matters, Staff Reduction, 1982-1984
- 26 Grievances and Legal Matters, Strikes, 1979, 1983
- 27 Grievances and Legal Matters, Dubose, 1983-1985
- 28 Grievances and Legal Matters, Wrongful Termination, 1985-1987
- 29 Grievances and Legal Matters, Salary and Pay, 1985-1987
- 30 Grievances and Legal Matters, Missouri National Education Association

- Libel Case, 1986
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- 33 History of Local 420, undated
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- 36 Teacher Center Guidelines, 1978
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- 15 St. Louis CLUW Minutes, 1974-1976
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- Leadership Conference Certificate, 1974 July 13
 Missouri Equal Rights Amendment Coalition, 1975-1976
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