



Guide to the Society of Women Engineers Detroit Section Records LR001467

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	Society of Women Engineers. Detroit Section
Title:	Society of Women Engineers Detroit Section Records
ID:	LR001467
Date [inclusive]:	1930-2012
Date [bulk]:	1952-2007
Physical Description:	8.5 Linear Feet (6 SB, 5 MB)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	The Society of Women Engineers was founded in 1950 to encourage young women to pursue engineering and to support women engineers throughout their careers. The Detroit Section of the Society of Women Engineers was chartered June 30, 1952. SWE Detroit is one of the Society's oldest sections and is also among its largest, largely due to the prominence of the automotive and manufacturing industries in southeastern Michigan. The Society of Women Engineers Detroit Section Collection includes section bylaws, correspondence, meeting minutes, membership files, section newsletters, news clippings, publications about women in engineering, photographs, and scrapbooks.

Citation Style

"Society of Women Engineers Detroit Section Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

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History

Women engineers were exceedingly rare in the United States prior to the Second World War; engineering was not considered an appropriate career for women and they were not allowed to enroll in many engineering schools, either by decree or by practice. The Second World War and subsequent Cold War, however, created a shortage of technological manpower and provided unprecedented educational and employment opportunities for women engineers. Where women engineering students' attempts to organize in the early twentieth century were largely unsuccessful, by the late 1940s several student and professional groups formed on the East Coast, each calling themselves the Society of Women Engineers and operating independently of the others.

On May 27, 1950, more than sixty women from New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and Washington, D.C. attended the founding meeting of the unified Society of Women Engineers (SWE) at The Cooper Union's Green Engineering Camp in New Jersey. The specific objectives of the Society were to: inform young women, their parents, counselors, and the general public of the opportunities for women in engineering; assist women in readying themselves for a return to active work after their temporary retirement; serve as a center of information on women in engineering; and encourage women engineers to attain high levels of education and professional achievement. Over the next three years, the Society expanded to the Midwest and West Coast, chartering sections in Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles.

The SWE Detroit Section was chartered on June 30, 1952. Many of the twenty-three charter members had trained as engineers or engineering aides in southeastern Michigan's automotive and manufacturing plants, which had been converted for war work during the Second World War. By the mid-1970s, they were joined by a rapidly increasing number of women who completed engineering degrees outright, propelled by the nation's technological manpower shortage and the educational and career momentum created by the Women's Movement.

Prominent early members of SWE Detroit include Ann O. Fletcher, Mary Virginia Sink, and Lucille Pieti Milne. Fletcher, a patent draftsman at Ford Motor Company in the 1940s through 1960s, enthusiastically recruited technical women at Ford to join SWE Detroit and served as the section's president numerous times. Sink became the nation's first female automotive engineer when she was hired by Chrysler Corporation in 1936. An expert in vehicle emissions control and smog reduction during her 42-year career, Sink co-developed Chrysler's Cleaner Air Package in 1962, emissions control technology that predominated in Detroit automotive companies until a congressional mandate in 1972 called for the use of catalytic converters. Pieti Milne was a mechanical engineer turned spokeswoman in the 1950s for Chrysler's New Worlds in Motion auto show and in Plymouth-sponsored commercial breaks on the CBS sitcom "That's My Boy". She married and left the field in the mid-1950s, unhappy with being pigeonholed as a model rather than as a mechanical engineer.

More recently, three SWE Detroit members have been honored with the Society-level SWE Achievement Award for their impactful technical achievements: Roberta Nichols, an alternative fuel expert at Ford Motor Company; Lynn Conway, a pioneering electrical engineer and computer scientist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor; and Shirley Schwartz, a chemist and research scientist at General

Motors. SWE Upward Mobility Award recipient Sue Cischke was a leader in safety and environmental sustainability at Chrysler, DaimlerChrysler, and Ford.

Since its chartering in 1952, the SWE Detroit Section has featured programming to support women engineers at all stages of their careers, including engineering outreach and scholarship programs for girls, technical talks, professional development conferences, and social events. With over 360 members as of 2018, SWE Detroit is among the Society's largest sections.

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Scope and Content

The collection includes administrative records, such as correspondence, meeting minutes, treasurer's reports, newsletters, publications, and membership files. Other items include scrapbooks, photographs, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous brochures. Series 1: Administration, 1952-2007 Series 2: Programming, 1952-2012 Series 3: Newsletters, 1953-2011 Series 4: Subject Files, 1930-2010 Series 5: Photographs and Scrapbooks, 1952-2005

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Arrangement

Arranged in 5 series – Series 1 (Boxes 1-4), Series 2 (Boxes 4-5), Series 3 (Box 5), Series 4 (Box 6), and Series 5 (Box 7-11). Folders are arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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5401 Cass Avenue

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URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

Revision Description

Guide updated to reflect reprocessed collection. 2019-02-22

Acquisition

The historical records of the Society of Women Engineers Detroit Section were placed in the Walter P. Reuther Library by SWE-Detroit Past President Ann O. Fletcher on June 11, 1991. Subsequent accruals were donated by section leaders in 1995, 2001, 2004, 2010, and 2014.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Troy Eller English on February 22, 2019.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Use

Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library "Rules for Use of Archival Materials."

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Controlled Access Headings

- Engineering
- Engineering Societies, etc.
- Women
- Women engineers
- Women in engineering
- Women --Societies and clubs
- Society of Women Engineers

Collection Inventory

Series I: Administration, 1952-2007

Title/Description	Instances
Advisory Committee, 2003-2006	Box 1 Folder 1

Brochures and Pamphlets, circa 1990-2002	Box 1	Folder 2
Bylaws, n.d., 1996	Box 1	Folder 3
Correspondence, 1952	Box 1	Folder 4
Correspondence, 1953 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 5
Correspondence, 1953 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 6
Correspondence, 1954	Box 1	Folder 7
Correspondence, 1954-1955 (1 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 8
Correspondence, 1954-1955 (2 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 9
Correspondence, 1954-1955 (3 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 10
Correspondence, 1955-1956 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 11
Correspondence, 1955-1956 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 12
Correspondence, 1956-1957 (1 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 13
Correspondence, 1956-1957 (2 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 14
Correspondence, 1956-1957 (3 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 15
Correspondence, 1957-1958 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 16
Correspondence, 1957-1958 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 17
Correspondence, 1958-1959 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 18
Correspondence, 1958-1959 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 19
Correspondence, 1959-1960 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 20
Correspondence, 1959-1960 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 21
Correspondence, 1960-1961	Box 1	Folder 22
Correspondence, 1961-1962 (1 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 23
Correspondence, 1961-1962 (2 of 2)	Box 1	Folder 24
Correspondence, 1962-1963	Box 1	Folder 25
Correspondence, 1965-1966	Box 1	Folder 26
Correspondence, 1966-1967 (1 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 27
Correspondence, 1966-1967 (2 of 3)	Box 1	Folder 28
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Correspondence, 1967-1968	Box 1	Folder 30
Correspondence, 1968-1969	Box 1	Folder 31
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Correspondence, 1975-1976	Box 1	Folder 33

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Correspondence, 1977-1978 (2 of 2)	Box 2	Folder 2
Correspondence, 1978-1979	Box 2	Folder 3
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Correspondence, 1980-1981 (1 of 2)	Box 2	Folder 5
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Financials; IRS Rulings, 1960-2002	Box 2	Folder 17
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Letterhead and Logo, n.d.	Box 2	Folder 20
Meetings; Minutes, 1952-1953	Box 2	Folder 21
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Membership; Rosters, 1953-1959	Box 3	Folder 7
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Officers; President, 1994-1995 (2 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 19
Officers; President, 1995-1996 (1 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 20
Officers; President, 1995-1996 (2 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 21

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Officers; President, 1996-1997 (2 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 23
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Officers; President, 1997-1998 (2 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 25
Officers; President, 1998-1999 (1 of 2)	Box 3	Folder 26
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Awards; Nominations, Susan M. Cischke, 1995	Box 4	Folder 10
Awards; Nominations, Rosalind Cox, 1993	Box 4	Folder 11
Awards; Nominations, Cynthia Hess, 1992	Box 4	Folder 12
Awards; Nominations, Roberta Nichols, 1988	Box 4	Folder 13
Awards; Nominations, Laurie Ramsey, 2003	Box 4	Folder 14
Awards; Nominations, Martha Sloan, 1993	Box 4	Folder 15
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Professional Guidance and Education, 1967-1968 (1 of 2)	Box 4	Folder 38
Professional Guidance and Education, 1967-1968 (2 of 2)	Box 4	Folder 39
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Newsletters, 1988-1989	Box 5	Folder 7
Newsletters, 1990-1991	Box 5	Folder 8
Newsletters, 1992	Box 5	Folder 9
Newsletters, 1993	Box 5	Folder 10
Newsletters, 1994-1995	Box 5	Folder 11
Newsletters, 1996-1997	Box 5	Folder 12
Newsletters, 1998-1999	Box 5	Folder 13
Newsletters, 2000-2001	Box 5	Folder 14
Newsletters, 2003-2004	Box 5	Folder 15
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