



Guide to the AFSCME Local 1259: Detroit Public Library Records LR002374

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on December 11, 2017.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

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

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
History	4
Scope and Content	5
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Controlled Access Headings	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	AFSCME. Local 1259
Title:	AFSCME Local 1259: Detroit Public Library Records
ID:	LR002374
Date [inclusive]:	1920-1981
Date [bulk]:	1950-1972
Physical Description:	4.25 Linear Feet (4 SB, 1 reel)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	Local 1259, representing Detroit Public Library (DPL) employees, affiliated in 1949 with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Michigan Council 77. It represented professional librarians, as well as clerical and maintenance employees. A staff association existed for some years before union certification, and failed attempts to unionize were made before 1949. In 1970, the Association of Professional Librarians won the right to represent the professional librarians within the union. Local 1259 continued to be the bargaining unit for the DPL's maintenance and clerical workers. The collection documents the activities of Local 1259 and of the Detroit Public Library during the 1950s and 1960s. Additional information is included on broader topics like Detroit city employees; Michigan AFSCME organizations and events, especially Michigan Council 77; and unionism in libraries. Records include contracts and negotiation material; budgets, proposals, and financial statements; correspondence; meeting minutes; publications; constitutions; salary information; clippings; convention materials; and fliers.

Citation Style

"AFSCME Local 1259: Detroit Public Library Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

History

Local 1259, representing Detroit Public Library (DPL) employees, affiliated in 1949 with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Michigan Council 77. It represented professional librarians, as well as clerical and maintenance employees. A staff association existed for some years before union certification, and failed attempts to unionize were made before 1949.

In 1966, the Association of Professional Librarians challenged Local 1259 for rights to represent professional librarians. The case before the State Mediation Board centered on the definition of supervision, with the Association of Professional Librarians arguing that all professionals, from Division Chiefs to Librarian I's had supervisory duties and thus belonged in the same bargaining unit: theirs. Local 1259 argued that only Division Chiefs were supervisors, and Librarian I, II, and III's should remain in their bargaining unit, along with paraprofessionals. The Mediation Board ordered an election, where staff members could vote among three options for representation: Local 1259, Association of Professional Librarians, or neither. The election took place on December 12, 1966, and results were finalized in January 1967. Local 1259 would continue to represent Librarians I, II, and III, as well as paraprofessionals. The Association of Professional Librarians would represent Division Chiefs.

In 1970, at the end of the contract period, the Association of Professional Librarians again challenged for an election. This time around, they won the right to represent all librarians. Local 1259 continued to be the bargaining unit for the DPL's maintenance and clerical workers.

Helga Herz began working at the Detroit Public Library in 1945 as a secretary. She loved the work and returned to school at the University of Michigan to earn her library science degree. She continued working at the DPL until 1978 when she was forced to retire by law at the age of 65. Beginning in 1957, Herz served in leadership positions in Local 1259 including Professional Section Representative, Legislative and Lobbying Committee Chair, Policy Committee member, Bargaining Committee Chair, President (1963-1965), and Vice President (1968-1969).

Herz had immigrated to Michigan with her mother Alice in 1942, escaping Europe and her native Germany during Hitler's rise to power. She and her mother were both lifelong activists for peace. In 1965, at the age of 82, Alice Herz immolated herself in a downtown Detroit plaza in protest of the Vietnam War, the first person in the United States to do so. After her retirement from the DPL, Helga devoted her time fully to peace activism, including volunteering with the Wayne State University Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and continued active membership in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She donated the Local 1259 records to the Reuther Library in 2000 and 2003. Helga Herz died in 2010 at the age of 97.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content

The collection documents the activities of Local 1259 and of the Detroit Public Library during the 1950s and 1960s. Additional information is included on broader topics like Detroit city employees; Michigan AFSCME organizations and events, especially Michigan Council 77; and unionism in libraries. Records include contracts and negotiation material; budgets, proposals, and financial statements; correspondence; meeting minutes; publications; constitutions; salary information; clippings; convention materials; and fliers. Many handwritten notes are also included. Though it is not known for certain, it is believed these notes were created by Helga Herz, the collection's donor and an officer in Local 1259. One audio reel to reel is included. It is a recording of an interview with founding members of Local 1259, and it is believed that one of the interviewers is Helga Herz.

Important Subjects : Collective bargaining--Librarians Collective bargaining--Library employees
Collective bargaining--Professions Women in the labor movement

Important Names: Detroit Public Library Herz, Helga Ulveling, Ralph A.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Files are arranged alphabetically.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

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

Revision Description

AV description added and finding aid updated by Deborah Rice. 2107-12-06

Acquisition

These materials were donated by Helga Herz, a long time librarian at the Detroit Public Library, and an officer in Local 1259. The majority of the records were donated in 2000, with a small addition in 2003. Both accessions were processed together.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Johanna Russ on June 6, 2013. Processing Assistance from April Conant.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Use

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

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Transfers

One audio recording (reel) was transferred to the AV Department. A certificate of affiliation with the Michigan AFL-CIO from this collection is stored in the general ALUA Oversized box.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Collective bargaining
- Collective bargaining -- Librarians
- Women in the labor movement
- Detroit Public Library
- Herz, Helga, 1912-2010