



ArchivesSpace

Guide to the Sachs Waldman: Detroit Federation of Teachers Records LR002633

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on March 14, 2017.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

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

Table of Contents

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

Summary Information

Repository:	Walter P. Reuther Library
Creator:	Sachs Waldman (Detroit, Mich.)
Title:	Sachs Waldman: Detroit Federation of Teachers Records
ID:	LR002633
Date [inclusive]:	1967-2007
Physical Description:	6 Linear Feet (6 SB)
Language of the Material:	English
Language of the Material:	Material entirely in English.
Abstract:	<p>The law firm Sachs Waldman, Professional Corporation started in October 13, 1922 by Nicholas J. Rothe, considered by many as the first union labor lawyer in Michigan grew to represent the best interest of unions and workers. In 1951 Theodore Sachs joined the firm and was considered one of the best appellate attorneys in the country, under his leadership the firm grew in clientele and personnel. In 1965, the law firm began to specialize in public sector labor and began to represent those unions that had just gained the right to bargain collectively, notably with the Detroit Federation of Teachers and the Detroit Fire Fighters Association. The Detroit Federation of Teachers was founded in February 24, 1931 and remained a small but determined organization that fought basic bread and butter issues for teachers in Detroit. In 1964, the DFT became sole bargaining agent for Detroit classroom teachers and by 1965 the DFT secured a comprehensive contract. The DFT has remained the sole bargaining agent for Detroit teachers since then and expanded their bargaining power to incorporate various education reform issues. These records document the various stages of collective bargaining for teachers in the 1970s-1990s in Detroit that mirrors those issues faced by other teacher unions in large cities.</p>

Citation Style

"Sachs Waldman: Detroit Federation of Teachers Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

History

The law firm Sachs Waldman, Professional Corporation started in October 13, 1922 by Nicholas J. Rothe, considered by many as the first union labor lawyer in Michigan grew to represent the best interest of unions and workers. In 1951 Theodore Sachs joined the firm and was considered one of the best appellate attorneys in the country, under his leadership the firm grew in clientele and personnel. In 1965, the law firm began to specialize in public sector labor and began to represent those unions that had just gained the right to bargain collectively, notably with the Detroit Federation of Teachers and the Detroit Fire Fighters Association. Sachs also argued cases in front of the United States Supreme court including *Scholle v. Hare*, and *Baker v. Carr*.

The Detroit Federation of Teachers was founded in February 24, 1931 and remained a small but determined organization that fought for increase in pay, seniority rights, sabbatical leave, sick leave and other issues facing teachers and the school system of Detroit. In 1964, the DFT became sole bargaining agent for Detroit classroom teachers and by 1965 the DFT secured a comprehensive contract. The DFT has remained the sole bargaining agent for Detroit teachers since then. The DFT has been an integral part of the educational fabric of Detroit which only partly shows in the records of this collection on subjects ranging from better pay for teaches to reducing class size.

Issues that are addressed in these records cover the major strikes for the DFT and the Detroit Board of Education. The 1973 strike lasted 43 days. The issues revolving around the strike was job security for emergency substitutes in regular positions, improvements on working conditions, accountability and class size. The next strike was in 1979 for 13 days over salaries, health insurance as well as prep time, and issues over residency for new hires. Faced with layoffs and more concessions, teachers strike in 1982 in which a freeze on wages but numerous issues were sent to a binding fact finding panel. The panel ordered teachers to go for 10 payless pad days which would be reimbursed over 10 years; the board had to pay deductibles for health insurance; pay for longevity bonuses; and limited teacher minutes to only one hour. The strike in 1987 was over salaries which the teachers won pay raises after 5 years without a raise.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content

The records contain court documents related to Detroit Federation of Teacher strikes in the 1970s and 1980s and other issues that were kept by the law firm. The documents are transcripts of testimony (which can give wonderful insight on various issues), legal briefs and filings, statements, correspondence, newspaper clippings, hand written notes, materials from the DFT during the strike, exhibits from the

union and administration. Other files having court documents not related to strikes per se but issues that deal with school closings and salary arbitration. Of note, there is a good run of DFT contracts.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

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

Acquisition

These records were deposited at the Walter P. Reuther Library on July 13, 2013 by Marshall Widick (representing Sachs Waldman) and with permission from the DFT by Keith Johnson.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Daniel Golodner on March, 2017.

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

Detroit Federation of Teachers Records Michigan Federation of Teachers Records Mary Ellen Riordan Papers Helen Bowers Papers AFT Oral History Collection

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- American Federation of Teachers
- Public schools
- Strikes and lockouts --Teachers
- Collective bargaining --Teachers
- Riordan, Mary Ellen
- School integration
- Detroit Public Schools
- Teachers --Rating of
- Residency requirements
- Public School Closing
- Elliot, John