

Guide to the Michael W. Kerwin Papers UP001330

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Description is written in: 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: Kerwin, Michael W.

Title: Michael W. Kerwin Papers

ID: UP001330

Date [inclusive]: 1920-1965

Physical Description: 29 Linear Feet (26 SB, 1 OS)

Language of the

Material entirely in English.

Material: Abstract:

MIke Kerwin moved to Detroit in 1950 and began work at American Metal Products Co. which led to his membership with the UAW Local 174. Mike Kerwin also served as an Editor of the Local 174 newsletter, Union Voice. After 3 years in this position and becoming increasingly involved in Local 174's Education Committee, Kerwin began working directly for the UAW as a Technician in the Education Department. Kerwin worked in the UAW Education Department for most of his career, creating educational programs for union members. He also served as the Detroit Deputy City Clerk from 1974-1982. Kerwin's work with the UAW, as well as his own interests, led him to be very active in a number of Detroit and Michigan area groups related to the Democratic Party, Detroit Public Schools, Irish heritage, and labor. Among his many accomplishments, Kerwin helped found the Michigan Labor History Society in 1977 and remains an active member.

Citation Style

"Michael W. Kerwin Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University"

History

Michael (Mike) Kerwin was born on June 18, 1924 in Chicago, Illinois, the second of eight children born to Edward and Marie Kerwin.

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After graduating from Fenwick High School in 1942, Kerwin studied Chemistry at Xavier University (1942-1943), General Studies at Holy Cross College (1946-1947), and Meteorology and grad study in International Relations at University of Chicago (1947-1950). In between and during periods of study, Kerwin worked as a Laboratory Assistant at Corn Products Refining Co. (1942), served as a Radar Repairman in the U.S. Army (1943-1946), and as Maintenance at International House at University of Chicago (1948-1950).

In 1950, Kerwin moved to Detroit and began work at American Metal Products Co. As a Punch Press Operator making metal seat frames on an assembly line. This job led to his membership with the UAW Local 174. Mike Kerwin also served as an Editor of the Local 174 newsletter, Union Voice. After 3 years in this position and becoming increasingly involved in Local 174's Education Committee, Kerwin began working directly for the UAW as a Technician in the Education Department. Kerwin worked in the UAW Education Department until 1974, and from 1982-1989 when he retired, creating educational programs and teaching union members about a wide variety of important topics including collective bargaining, right-to-work laws, and labor history. Kerwin worked as the Detroit Deputy City Clerk from 1974-1982.

Kerwin's work with the UAW, as well as his own interests, led him to be very active in a number of Detroit and Michigan area groups related to the Democratic Party, Detroit Public Schools, Catholic faith, and labor. Shortly before moving to Detroit, Kerwin began helping run elections. Through his many dedicated years of this work, he served in many capacities including Precinct Captain, Delegate to Democratic National Convention, and in December 2020 as an Elector for the State of Michigan, representing the 14th Congressional District. Due to his strong interest in politics and elections, Kerwin also joined the 15th District Democrats, as well as County and State groups. Some of his political involvement is closely linked to his work with the UAW Education Department, such as with Serve Our Schools, a group that aimed to help liberal candidates get elected to the Detroit Board of Education.

In the mid-1970s, Kerwin helped found the Michigan Labor History Society and remains an active member, serving primarily as the Program Committee Chair and on the Board of Directors. His contributions to this non-profit group have aided in the creation and continuation of local labor tours, published information on labor history, and the important sculpture and monument, Transcending, located at Hart Plaza in Detroit honoring the Michigan labor movement. Kerwin continued to serve as a member of the both the Board of Directors and on the Program Committee until the end of his life.

Kerwin married Ann Haggarty in 1953 and had four children, William (Bill), Katie, Jim, and Joe. Michael W. Kerwin passed away on July 19, 2021.

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Scope and Content

This collection is processed into series by decade. Currently, there are 2 series: 1: 1930s-1940s, 2: 1950s. More series will be added as they are processed.

The 1930s-1940s series contains early records from the 15th District Democrats, other Democratic organizations, and political elections. Manuals and documentation on Detroit City Planning, the Irish in Detroit, course material and activities of Michael Kerwin while attending the University of Chicago, as well as a UAW scrapbook and a UAW-CIO agreement and materials from the Education Department.

The 1950s series contains 5 subseries: Labor - UAW, Labor - Other, Politics, Detroit, Personal. This material follows Kerwin's work begginning with Local 174 and continuing with the UAW Education Department. His Education Department work includes notes and discussion guides for member and steward classes, including at summer camp, as well as some materials from the UAW Library, film library, and internal memos regarding day-to-day work. Kerwin's involvement and documentation of other labor organizations like the Greater Detroit and Wayne County AFL-CIO and Michigan State AFL-CIO are also present in this series. POLITICS. This series documents Kerwin's involvement with the Democratic political scene in Detroit and statewide, and provides both an overview of the political climate at that time and the minutiae of polititians and political districts. DETROIT. This series reflects Kerwin's personal interest, work with the UAW and subsequent involvement with various aspects of the City of Detroit. PERSONAL. This series contains a small amount of personal material related to Kerwin's education, thesis, and job searching efforts.

Series 1: 1930s-1940s Series 2: 1950s

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Arrangement

Arranged in 2 series – Series 1 (Box 1), Series 2 (Box 1-27). Folders are arranged in rough alphabetical order.

Additional series will be made available as they are processed.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue Detroit, MI 48202

URL: https://reuther.wayne.edu

Acquisition

This collection was donated to the Walter P. Reuther by Mike Kerwin between 2016 and 2019.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Shae Rafferty and Elizabeth Nicholson on June 7, 2021.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Use

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

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Related Materials

Related Materials

UAW Education Department (LR000043); UAW Local 174 Records (LR000006)

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Controlled Access Headings

- City planning
- Collective bargaining -- Education
- Democratic Party (Mich.)
- Detroit (Mich.) -- Politics and government
- Elections -- United States
- Ethnic groups -- United States
- Labor education
- Labor literature
- Local elections
- Michigan -- Politics and government
- Urban development

- 15th District Democrats
- Detroit Public Schools
- International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America. Education Department.
- International Union, United Automobile Workers of America (CIO). Local 174 (Detroit, Mich.)
- Michigan State AFL-CIO
- Serve Our Schools
- Sexton, Brendan, 1911-1988

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
American Democracy, 1945-1949, undated	box 1	folder 2
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) Conference, 1949	box 1	folder 3
Americans for Democratic Action, Detroit Chapter- Detroit Roosevelt Day Dinner, 1949	box 1	folder 4
Chicago World Fair- Ford Exposition, 1934	box 1	folder 5
CIO 11th Annual Michigan Convention, 1949	box 1	folder 8
CIO Publication- "Labor and Religion", 1946	box 1	folder 9
Coordinating Council for Research and Education in Human Relations, 1949-1950	box 1	folder 10
Correspondence, 1949	box 1	folder 11
Elections, 1938, 1945-1949	box 1	folder 13
Kerwin, Michael- University of Chicago Studies and Activities, 1947-1949	box 1	folder 16-17
Manual of Community Resources for Program Planners, 1949	box 1	folder 18
Manual of Practical Political Action (National Citizens Political Action Committee), 1946	box 1	folder 19
Photographs- Martin Fleming, Judge John Scollin, Christopher Lynch, Judge George Murphy, 1947	box 1	folder 22
"The Flivver King, A Story of Ford-America" by Upton Sinclair, 1937?	box 1	folder 24
The UAW in Clippings- The UAW Scrapbooks of Walter and Lucille Wells, 1936-1939	box 1	folder 25-26
Workers' Education Conference- Chicago, 1949	box 1	folder 32

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1950s

Labor - UAW

Scope and Contents

The Labor - UAW subseries contains material primarily related to the Education Department and its day-to-day work in the form of memos, notes, pamphlets, and union member class materials. Additionally, this subseries contains some memos and internal communications relating to the work of the Citizenship Department, Community Services Department, and Political Action Committee. UAW reports, conventions, programs, news releases, and administrative letters are also present.

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UAW-CIO, 1944-1949	box 1	folder 28
UAW, 1955-1959	box 1	folder 33
UAW-CIO Administrative Letters, 1948-1952	box 2	folder 1
UAW-CIO Administrative Letters, 1953-1957	box 2	folder 2
UAW Administrative Letters, 1958-1959	box 2	folder 3
Auto proposal to stop inflation, 1957	box 2	folder 4
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Community Services Committee materials, 1956-1959	box 2	folder 7
Community Services Department, 1957	box 2	folder 8
Community Services program, 1954-1957	box 2	folder 9
Competitive Shop Program, 1953	box 2	folder 10
Competitive Shop and pro-UAW materials, 1956	box 2	folder 11
Competitive Shop Department organizing materials, 1953-1956	box 2	folder 12
UAW Constitutions, 1941-1953	box 25	folder 1
UAW-CIO Convention - Milwaukee and University of Chicago, 1948-1950	box 2	folder 13

Kerwin a student at University of Chicago

UAW-CIO Convention - Milwaukee, 1949	box 2	folder 14
UAW 17th Constitutional Convention, 1959 October 9-16	box 2	folder 15
UAW Convention pamphlets, 1947-1959	box 25	folder 2
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Biennial Education Conference, 1954, 1956	box 4	folder 16
Brief history of the American Labor Movement comments - U.S. Department of Labor, 1956	box 4	folder 17
Careers Unlimited, 1956	box 4	folder 18
Censorship Program Detroit Police Department - The Moon is Blue, 1953 July	box 4	folder 19
Children's book on auto plant - Balantine local union officers comments, 1957	box 4	folder 20
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Central High School, 1957	box 4	folder 28
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Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs - Factual Reports, Regional Committees, 1958	box 5	folder 3
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Labor - Other

Scope and Contents

The Labor - Other subseries contains material gathered by Kerwin, likely connected to his own personal interest and work with the UAW Education Department. Primarily this material relates to the operation of the Greater Detroit and Wayne County AFL-CIO, Michigan State AFL-CIO, a mixture of these and local labor organizations materials, and labor songs.

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James T. Karem, anti-union

Political

Scope and Contents

The Political subseries consists of records relating to Michael Kerwin's involvement with and the operation, communication, and activities of the 15th District Democrats, the Wayne County Democratic Committee, the Democratic State Central Committee of Michigan, and the Democratic national Committee. Also included are election results, campaign materials and events, personal and organizational correspondence, political organization newsletters, Democratic and Republican propaganda, as well as documentation of prominent members of the Democratic Party in Michigan and Nationwide.

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Detroit

Scope and Contents

The Detroit subseries provides records relating to Kerwin's involvement with Detroit Schools: Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs, and Citizens for Schools. Pamphlets, reports, correspondence, and events

involving ethnic and religious groups in Detroit, Detroit City Planning and Development, and the Port of Detroit Commission.

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City of Detroit Commission on Community Relations, 1954-1956	box 23	folder 14
City of Detroit Department of Railways Service Map, 1954	box 23	folder 15
City of Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee, 1949-1951	box 23	folder 16
City Plan Commission- Planning Detroit, 1948-1949	box 1	folder 6
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Detroit City Planning and Development, 1953-1957	box 23	folder 17
Detroit Council for Better Housing, 1951	box 23	folder 18
Detroit Land Use and Planning, 1945-1951	box 1	folder 14
Detroit Pamphlets, 1947, 1951-1959	box 26	folder 16
Detroit Round Table of Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, 1954	box 23	folder 19
Ethnic Groups in Detroit, 1951	box 23	folder 20
International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc., 1953-1954	box 23	folder 21
Irish In Detroit- Articles, Correspondence, Ephemera, 1936-1943	box 1	folder 15
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Neighborhood Integration, 1950-1957	box 23	folder 25
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Photograph- Irish in Detroit, 1957	box 23	folder 27
Photograph- Gaelic League Building Dedication (Michigan Ave), 1954 September 18	box 23	folder 28
Political Program for the City of Detroit, 1957	box 23	folder 29
Rapid Transit Plan for Metropolitan Detroit, 1949	box 1	folder 23
The Catholic Interracial Council of Detroit, 1958	box 23	folder 30

Wayne State University- WDET and WTVS Radio and TV box 23 folder 31 Schedules, 1958

Personal

Scope and Contents

The Personal subseries contains material from Kerwin's own educational opporutnties and efforts, including looking into funding for thesis work. Correspondence related to potential work positions and membership to organizations before moving to Detroit are also present.

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Kerwin employment and membership, 1950-1953	box 24	folder 1	
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Dingell; job inquiries Detroit News, Office of Deputy Drain Commissioner, and Mutual Security Agency			
Kerwin involvement, 1950-1952	box 24	folder 3	
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Education, Democratic delegate, Michigan CIO Labor Press Council, Union Councellor			
International education and exchange, 1949-1951	box 24	folder 4	
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