Michigan Coalition for Human Rights Records
4.5 linear feet

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


Accession Number: 1790

Creator: Michigan Coalition for Human Rights

Acquisition: The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights records were first deposited at the Reuther Library on November 14, 2002 with a subsequent deposit on June 6, 2006.

Language: Materials entirely in English

Access: Papers are open for use. Restriction: Personal information related to members and donors may not be published.

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

Notes: Citation style: “Michigan Coalition for Human Rights Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.”

Related Material: Reuther Library Collections: Organization in Solidarity with Central America Records, Mildred Jeffrey Papers, Ernest L. Horne Papers

Photographs, oversize items including awards, and other items were transferred to the Reuther Library’s Audiovisual Department.
History
The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights (MCHR) was formed in Detroit in December 1980 by a group of Detroit-area religious leaders representing a broad range of Judeo-Christian and Muslim denominations. Initially organized with the goal of providing a liberal alternative to conservative Christian organizations such as The Moral Majority, the group’s primary issues included racism, militarism, gay rights, unemployment, poverty, and other socio-economic and local political topics.

In 1981, the Steering Committee (later re-named the Board of Directors) began holding meetings at the Episcopalian Diocesan Center in Detroit. This committee consisted of President Bishop H. Coleman McGhee Jr., Vice President Reverend Dorothy Boroush, Treasurer Reverend James E. Wadsworth, Secretary Erwin Brown, and Executive Director Lawrence M. Ventline. In 1984, Thomas Fentin joined the organization as its first full-time director.

Among the actions undertaken by the group under Fentin’s tenure, which lasted until 1990, were a movement to abolish the death penalty and keep it from being enacted in Michigan, a boycott of the Coors Brewing Company practicing policies discriminatory to gays and lesbians, a campaign against President Ronald Reagan’s Central American policies, and a campaign preventing the confirmation of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court.

One of the group’s high profile activities was the annual Freedom Tour, begun in 1989. Started with the goal of educating local youths about the civil rights movement of the 1960s, these tours took dozens of local children on bus trips through the southern United States with stops at important places in civil rights history, including Selma, Birmingham, and Atlanta. Subsequent Freedom Tours were conducted to educate about Michigan’s civil rights history and the role of Underground Railroad in the United States and Canada.

The organization was dedicated to improving race relations in the Detroit area and promoting social justice and other liberal causes in the state of Michigan and nationwide as well as the promotion of human rights in Africa and other international regions. In particular, the MCHR was heavily involved in the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. This began in 1985 with a boycott of South American kruggerand gold coins that was expanded the next year to include all South Africa imports including lobsters and other food items. Over the course of the next several years, the group promoted several anti-Apartheid events in the Detroit-area including appearances by high-profile African dignitaries including Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Apartheid officially ended in 1994.

MCHR continues its operations today and is involved in international issues promoting peace in the Middle East and civil liberties in the United States.
Scope and Content
The Michigan Coalition for Human Rights Records document its operations and activities between the organization’s formal inception in 1981 and 2003, with some supplemental articles and materials on human rights issues from the period of 1975-1980. Materials reflect the goal of the MCHR to encourage those in the Detroit-area to participate in events and campaigns promoting better race relations, increased civil liberties, and a greater respect for human rights abroad. Issues including capital punishment, race relations in Detroit, gay rights, children’s rights, apartheid in South Africa, US involvement in Central America, as well as the internal financial operations of the MCHR are documented.

The collection includes correspondence, board meetings minutes, staff reports, financial records, grant proposals and other related documents, newspaper clippings, newsletters and other printed materials, promotional fliers, mailings, and pamphlets, program booklets from annual dinners, speeches, educational materials, government documents, endorsements, intra-office memos, and media releases.

Important Subjects Include:

- Africa
- Apartheid
- Archdiocese of Detroit
- Capital Punishment
- Central America
- Children’s Rights
- Detroit, Michigan
- Environmentalism
- Freedom Tours
- Gay Rights
- Militarism
- Mozambique
- NAACP
- Racism
- United Automobile Workers

Important Names:
- Anthony, Wendell
- Bond, Julian
- Ernst, Conrad
- Fentin, Thomas
- Jeffrey, Mildred
- Kidd, David
- Lapsley, Fr. Michael
- Mahaffey, Maryann
- Mandela, Nelson
Melton, Reverend Fred
Millet, Edmund
Patterson, Brooks
Paulsen, Fr. Casimir
Rooney, Charles
Savoie, Kathryn
Simons, Rudy
Tutu, Archbishop Desmond
Watson, Joann
Williams, Fred

**Series I: Administrative Documents, 1981-2000**
Correspondence, financial documents, minutes of board meetings, early foundation documents, information on prominent members, grant proposals, and other records.

**Series II: Events, 1981-2005**
Materials related to annual dinners, Freedom Tours, lectures, film presentations, and panel discussions organized or sponsored by the MCHR. Includes fliers, correspondence, promotional items, news clippings, and other records.

**Series III: State and Local Issues, 1982-2000**
Materials related to urban Detroit and race relations issues, state budgets issues, and other local concerns. Includes media releases, correspondence, news clippings, and other records.

**Series IV: National Issues, 1975-2000**
Materials related to capital punishment, gay rights, economic concerns, and other national concerns. Includes correspondence, news clippings, media releases, and other materials.

**Series V: International Issues, 1977-2000**
Mostly related to South Africa and Apartheid with some material related to other African nations, the Middle East, and Central America. Materials include correspondence, printed materials, news clippings, educational materials, government documents, news letters, and media releases.
**Arrangement**

Arranged in five series – Series I (Boxes 1 – 2), Series II (Box 2), Series III (Box 2), Series IV (Box 3), and Series V (Boxes 3 - 5). Folders are arranged, in each series, alphabetically by subject and then chronologically by year, if applicable.

**Series I**

**Box 1**

1. Annual Meeting, November 5, 1992
2. Annual Meeting, November 18, 1993
3. Audit, 1996-1997
4. Awards, 1985-1993
6. Board of Directors Retreat, June 10, 1998
7. By-laws, Personal Policies, undated
8. Combined Federal Campaign, 1999
10. Correspondence, 1981-1989
11. Correspondence, 1990-1999, undated
12. Davenport, Curtis, 1990
17. Financial Statements/Budget Reports/Income Reports, 1990
22. Fundraising, 1987-1993
25. Grant Information; Black United Fund, 1987-1995
27. Grant Information; Proposals, undated
28. Grant Information; Racine Dominicans, 1990-1996
32. Membership, 1997-2000
33. Membership Committee, 1981
34. Membership and Funds Campaign, 1983
36. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1986
37. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1987
38. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1988
39. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1989
40. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1990
41. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1991-1992
42. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1993
43. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1994-1995
44. Minutes; Board of Directors, 1996-1999
45. Minutes; Executive Committee, 1989-1999
46. Minutes; Finance and Fundraising Committee, 1987-1989
47. Minutes; Finance and Fundraising Committee, 1990
48. Minutes; Finance and Fundraising Committee, 1991-1993
49. Minutes; General Membership, 1982-1984
50. Minutes; Other Committees, 1989-1998
51. Newsletters, 1982-1985
52. One Hundred for Human Rights, 1987-1992
53. One Hundred for Human Rights, 1995
54. One Hundred for Human Rights, 1996-1997
55. One Hundred for Human Rights, 1998-1999
57. Projections, Proposals, 1982-1989, undated

Box 2
1. Reports, 1987-1999, undated
2. Report; Avrushin, Adam (Intern)-1994
5. Steering Committee 1981-1984, undated
8. Want Ads, 1984, undated

Series II
Box 2
10. Annual Dinner, June 22, 1989
11. Annual Dinner, June 21, 1990
13. Annual Dinner, June 25, 1992
14. Annual Dinner, June 24, 1993
15. Annual Dinner, October 11, 1995
16. Annual Dinner, November 11, 1995
19. Annual Dinner Program Booklets, 2003-2005
20. Cross Colors/Common Ground Foundation, 1993
21. Detroit 300 Events, 2001
22. EarthFest, 1992
23. Environmental Justice, June 18, 1994
30. Freedom Tour, 1989
31. Freedom Tour II, 1990
32. Freedom Tour III, 1991
34. Freedom Tour: Freedom in Our Backyard, 1995
35. Freedom Tour: Canadian Underground, June 30, 1996
36. Freedom Tour, 1997
37. Freedom Tour: Michigan Freedom Tour, 1999
39. “God, Guns, and Old Glory: Where Did We Go Wrong?” Panel, May 31, 1995
41. “Prosecuting Children as Adults,” April 4, 2000
42. “Question of Justice” Film/Lecture Series, 1993
43. Theater, 1987-1999
44. Woodward March Commemorations, 1988-1993 (Bulk: 1993)
45. World Conference Against Racism, 2001

**Series III**

**Box 2**

46. Anti-Surveillance Ordinance, 1996
47. Archdiocese of Detroit, 1987-1993, undated
50. Dearborn Parks Coalition, 1986
51. Heidelberg Project, 1994
52. Holocaust Memorial Center, undated
53. Michigan Budget, 1982
54. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1989-1995
57. Open School, 1990-1993
58. Patterson, Brooks; Protest, 1984
59. Product Liability, 1995
60. Stop the Violence Campaign, 1993
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<td>Arms Race, 1982</td>
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<td>Apartheid, 1988-1997, undated</td>
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<td>“Apartheid is Wrong: A Curriculum for Young People,” 1990</td>
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2. “Apartheid is Wrong: A Curriculum for Young People,” 1990
3. Apartheid; Local Events, 1986-1991, undated
4. Apartheid; Other Regions, 1991-1993
7. Center for Global Education Travel Seminar: South Africa, 1995
11. Gcabishe, Sipha; Visit, 1992
12. Goad, Daphne; Visit, 1993
13. Hani, Chris; Assassination, 1994
14. Human Awareness Programme; South Africa, 1984
16. Krugerrand Campaign, 1985
19. Middle East, 1988-1991, undated
29. Printed Materials; Mozambique, 1994-2000, undated
32. Printed Materials; South Africa, 1987-1989
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Box 5
1. Printed Materials; South Africa, 1995-1997, undated
2. Printed Materials; Zimbabwe, 1982-1983, undated
4. Sankofa (film), 1995
6. Sisulu, Albertina; Visit, 1994
7. South Africa Boycott, 1985-1986
10. South African Divestment Bills, undated
11. South African Divestment Bills; HB 4770, HB 4771, February 1986
12. South African Divestment Bills; HB 4770, HB 4771, February 1986
15. South Africa Sister Community Project, 1989
16. South Africa Education and Action Kit, undated
18. Tutu, Archbishop Desmond; Visit, 1993