

Walter P. Reuther Library
Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs
Wayne State University Archives

Robert Nielsen Papers
5.5 linear feet ([11 SB])
1967-1993, bulk 1976-1983

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

Finding aid written by Daniel Golodner on January 24, 2014.

Accession Number: 1828

Creator: Robert Nielsen

Acquisition: December 22, 2003

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Collection is open for research.

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

Notes: Citation style: “ Robert Nielsen Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University”

Copies:

Other Access Aids:

Related Material: Ray Howe Papers, Oregon Federation of Teachers Records, AFT President’s Office; Albert Shanker Records, AFT President’s office; Al Lowenthal Records.

History

Dr. Robert M. Nielsen was born in Nebraska in 1933. His family moved a short time later to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where his father worked and became president of the United Packinghouse Workers of American Local 40 at the Cudahy Brothers Meat Packing Company. After Nielsen graduated from South Milwaukee high school he worked for three years at the Bucyrus Erie Company as a turret-lathe operator. He was in the Army from 1954-1956 and then attended the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee on the G.I. Bill graduating with the B.A. in 1961. After getting his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, Dr. Nielsen became a professor of mathematics at the University of Delaware. In the late 1960s he was the co-founder of the AFT local for faculty at the university and was president from 1969-1973.

In 1973 Nielsen became director of the AFT's colleges and universities department in which he took both aspects of academic professionalism and union professionalism into creating a strong and viable department within the AFT. Dr. Nielsen was promoted to assistant to the president for higher education in July 1979. He had a regular column in the *American Teacher* as well as in the AFT's publication specifically for members in higher education called *On Campus*. During his tenure at the AFT Dr. Nielsen played a vital role in organizing new higher education locals within the AFT and brokered joint organizing campaigns with the American Association of University Professors. From 1989-1990, he was a visiting professor at the University of Texas – Austin as a consultant to the Carnegie Foundation Mathematics Quality Education for Minorities Project.

He retired from the AFT in 1991 to work on developing better mathematical education reform. He became director of the Mathematics Coalition and served on the Mathematical Sciences Education Board. Dr. Nielsen died of cancer in February 2002.

Scope and Content:

Series 1 is composed of Dr. Nielsen's calendars, correspondence and notes. The correspondence range from administrative memos, organizing strategies and ideas for articles. Notes contain handwritten ideas, diary entries, meeting minutes, theoretical ideas on philosophy and mathematics. He used these notebooks for business as well, tracking on where to be and people's phone numbers. Also they account for meeting minutes, ideas for the AFT and what he thought of various individuals in the AFT and AAUP. The notes were also his diaries on his life battling alcohol, relationships with his family as well as his ideas on life itself. Series 2 are the materials that encompass any organizing drive. They are correspondence, meeting minutes, surveys, flyers and newsletters. Here is perfect examples of how the AFT ran organizing campaigns during this time period, either as sole organizing union or joint organizing with the AAUP. Series 3 are Dr. Nielsen's publications which cover collective bargaining in higher education, mathematics as well as issues facing higher education, especially the corporation of the public higher education. Series 4 subject matters for research to specific organizations.

Important Subjects:

American Association of University Professors
American Federation of Teachers
Collective Bargaining – Higher Education

College Faculty
Curriculum
Decision Making
Educational Change
Mathematics Education
National Education Association
Student Aid
Tenure of college teachers
Yeshiva University
Organizing Higher Education
Vocational Education

Important Names:

Shanker, Albert
Kugler, Phil
Polishook, Irwin
Bledsoe, Gerie
Megil, Ken
Benjamin, Ernie
Silber, John

Series 1: Calendars, Correspondence and Notes, 1973-1991

Handwritten notes on meetings, minutes on meetings, contacts numbers and addresses, diary entries, drafts of articles, memos and organizing strategies. Correspondences contain formal letters, memos, drafts and ideas for higher education organizing.

Series 2: Organizing Campaigns, 1972-1983

Correspondence, memos, surveys, notes, flyers, articles all related to these various union organizing campaigns on higher education campuses during the late 1970s through the early 1980s. Of note are the various issues that come up with joint organizing with the AAUP.

Series 3: Publications and Speeches, 1967-1993

Published essays, narratives, speeches and articles.

Series 4: Subject, 1967-1993

Correspondence, speeches, notes, flyers and publications related to various subjects. Of note are the files of Yeshiva, people's college and SCUM. SCUM folder has materials of personal notes about various people in the AFT and AAUP

Arrangement

Arranged in 4 series – Series 1 (Box 1-5), Series 2 (Box 5-7), Series 3 (Box 7-9) and Series 4 (Box 9-11). Folders are arranged Alphabetical/Chronological.

Series 1

Box 1

- 1-3. Calendar, 1973-1975
4. Calendar, 1979 and 1987
- 5-6. Correspondence, 1981
7. Correspondence, 1982
8. Correspondence, 1983

Box 2

- 1-2. Correspondence, 1983
3. Correspondence Bob Glover re: Math Reform, 1991
- 4-9. Notes, 1973-1981

Box 3

- 1-10. Notes, 1981-1984

Box 4

- 1-12. Notes, 1983-1987

Box 5

- 1-4. Notes, 1987-1991

Series 2

Box 5

5. Organizing Campaigns; AAUP-Texas, 1982-1983
6. Organizing Campaigns; California CSU, 1979-1981
7. Organizing Campaigns; California UPC, 1980-1982
8. Organizing Campaigns; California Survey of CSUC Staff, 1981
9. Organizing Campaigns; Florida, 1980-1982

Box 6

1. Organizing Campaigns; Joint Venture in Organizing, 1981-1983
2. Organizing Campaigns; New Jersey, 1981-1982
3. Organizing Campaigns; Pennsylvania, 1979-1983
4. Organizing Campaigns; Delaware, 1971-1972
5. Organizing Campaigns; Delaware, 1972
6. Organizing Campaigns; UUP/SUNY, 1978
7. Organizing Campaigns; University of Michigan Graduate Students, 1976-1981
- 8-10. Organizing Campaigns; UPC Campaign, 1980

Box 7

1. Organizing Campaign; UPC Campaign, 1979-1980
- 2-4. Organizing Campaign; UPC Campaign, 1981
5. Organizing Campaign; Wayne State University, 1972

Series 3

6. Publication and Speeches; A New Learning in Mathematics
7. Publication and Speeches; A Uniform Boundedness Theorem
8. Publication and Speeches; Academic Unions, Values and Democracy
9. Publication and Speeches; All Kids Can Learn
10. Publication and Speeches; American Teacher 'Campus IV', 1973-1981

Box 8

1. Publication and Speeches; Anyone Can Learn Math, 1990
2. Publication and Speeches; Attacks on Tenure and the Tenured, 1977
3. Publication and Speeches; Bankaid – Student Aid, 1987
4. Publication and Speeches; Bargaining for Academic Democracy, 1976
5. Publication and Speeches; Basic French and Arithmetic, 1992
6. Publication and Speeches; Changing Education: Challenging the corporate campus, March 1976
7. Publication and Speeches; Changing Economy, Work, and the experience of faculty unions, 1987
8. Publication and Speeches; Collective Bargaining for Beginners, 1979
9. Publication and Speeches; Computers out of the closet, 1992
10. Publication and Speeches; Contract and Constitution
11. Publication and Speeches; Convergence of Herates and Differentiability, 1972
12. Publication and Speeches; Corporate Management Invades Academe, 1974
13. Publication and Speeches; Education's Special Role in a Democratic Society, 1980
14. Publication and Speeches; Faculty Collective Bargaining and Industrial Model
15. Publication and Speeches; Function Space Representations of Completions, 1967
16. Publication and Speeches; Guilds, 1979
17. Publication and Speeches; Hard Time and the Humanities, 1980
18. Publication and Speeches; Hard Times, Values and Academic Unions
19. Publication and Speeches; Hard Times speeches, 1983
20. Higher Education and Collective Bargaining
21. Publication and Speeches; Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences, Position of AFT on Unionism in Higher Education, 1976
22. Publication and Speeches; Information Age Math Teacher, 1993
23. Publication and Speeches; Initial Reaction to Yeshiva: A Union View
24. Publication and Speeches; Irwin Polishook Speech on Collective Bargaining
25. Publication and Speeches; Jobs and Math, 1993
26. Publication and Speeches; Kids are not cars, 1991
27. Publication and Speeches; Kill all the calculators? 1991
28. Publication and Speeches; Math against the Rules, May 1992
29. Publication and Speeches; Moving Beyond Literacy, 1992
30. Publication and Speeches; Math Backwards, 1992
31. Publication and Speeches; Math in a Flash, 1993
32. Publication and Speeches; Math Futures, 1991
33. Publication and Speeches; Math Woman, 1992

34. Publication and Speeches; Mathematics and the Smart Shop, 1992
35. Publication and Speeches; Mathematics and Basketball, 1992
36. Publication and Speeches; National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education; Role of Faculty Unions, 1977
37. Publication and Speeches; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Keynote, 1992

Box 9

1. Publication and Speeches; New Unionism
2. Publication and Speeches; Notes and Observations on the History and Function of Faculty Unions
3. Publication and Speeches; Opinion: Are we shutting out the have nots?
4. Publication and Speeches; On Completeness of Spaces of Continuous Functions, 1969
5. Publication and Speeches; On Campus 'Consensus', 1981-1991
6. Publication and Speeches; Organizing Speech, 1974
7. Publication and Speeches; Pointwise Convergence and Differentiability, 1971
8. Publication and Speeches; Politics and Faculty Unions, 1975
9. Publication and Speeches; Publication drafts, 1983
10. Publication and Speeches; Quasi-Uniformizability, 1969
11. Publication and Speeches; Roaches, Rats, and other Redundancies
12. Publication and Speeches; Systemic, Standards based reform: A Skeptics view, October 1992
13. Publication and Speeches; Statement to University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, January 10, 1986
14. Publication and Speeches; Technology, Craft, and Teacher Professionalism, 1992
15. Publication and Speeches; Tenure and Academic Freedom speech notes
16. Publication and Speeches; Two views on collective bargaining, 1977
17. Publication and Speeches; Testimony to National Governor's Association, 1986
18. Publication and Speeches; Tools, Toys and Technology
19. Publication and Speeches; Remarks to East Texas State University Faculty, June 1978
20. Publication and Speeches; Remarks to Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolutions, 1978
21. Publication and Speeches; Remarks to SUNY Faculty, 1978
22. Publication and Speeches; Remarks to Joint Committee on Finance, Wisconsin State Legislature, August 1979
23. Publication and Speeches; Unions in Academia, A Bargaining Frontier, 1977
24. Publication and Speeches; Unionization of College and University Faculty, 1976
25. Publication and Speeches; Unionism and Professionalism: Siblings?

Series 4

26. AAUP

Box 10

1. American Federation of Teachers, 1977-1982
2. AFT and University of Pittsburgh grant for math education, 1988
3. AFT historical materials on higher education
4. Chronicle Papers, 1979
5. Cudahy Brother's Meat Packing Plant, 1987
6. Conference on Academic Unionists, October 1981
7. Ego, 1976-1991
8. Ego
9. Higher Education for Working Adults
10. History of Glassboro State Federation of College Teachers
11. Mathematics Connection meeting, February 1992

Box 11

1. Mathematical Sciences Education Board; Making Points for Mathematics reform, 1991
2. Mathematical Sciences Education Board; Connections Task force, 1992
3. National Academy of Sciences; National Research council, 1992
4. People's college, 1979
5. Personal
6. Prisons and Colleges, 1989
7. Professional Staff College
8. Project for Adult College Education
9. SCUM
10. Shanker, 1981-1984
11. Sweden, Germany, and Great Briton Trip, October 1980
12. Teachers Inc.
13. University of Houston – Victoria; Math Institute, 1991
14. Yeshiva
15. Photos