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

Sarah Lebovitz, Service Employees International Union archivist, joined the Reuther staff in August 2018.

Her attraction to the position stemmed from the SEIU’s commitment to social justice causes, such as affordable health care and a $15 per hour minimum wage. The union organizes a range of public sector employees, health care workers, and those in property services, including janitors and security officers.

Lebovitz appraises and processes SEIU materials and provides reference and outreach services for the collections. She also supports the union with records management and electronic records programs. Among myriad projects she’s been conducting remotely, Sarah is exploring ways to display the sizable SEIU Publications collection online.
From the Director

I write to share my deep pleasure and pride in joining the Wayne State and Detroit communities.

While my brief time here has been shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented closure of our building to staff and researchers, our ongoing work to document the labor movement, Wayne State, and urban and metropolitan Detroit has been truly affirming.

This past spring and summer, Reuther staff continued to serve users at a distance. This newsletter aims to share some of that work with you. Staff supported archival students, published new collections for online audiences, and led collecting initiatives to document life in a global pandemic and the resurgence of social movements for racial and economic justice. Not every moment was glamorous, but each added piece of metadata or updated finding aid brings collections to light for research.

This year marks two additional milestones: the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University and the 45th anniversary of the Reuther Library building. Now, as then, we are grateful for the generous support of partner unions, civic organizations, and individual donors in ensuring that the Reuther remains a destination for researchers, an attractive home for organizational collections, and a leader in archival practice.

In the following pages, please join me in celebrating the work of the Reuther’s staff as they make collections accessible, expand our virtual reach, deepen community relationships, support research and teaching, and preserve the heritage of labor and community for decades to come. As we slowly reopen, we hope you will continue to share in our efforts.

ALIQAE GERACI, DIRECTOR, WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY, ARCHIVES OF LABOR AND URBAN AFFAIRS
Detroit Revolutionary Movements Records

The Reuther’s staff is proud to announce that the Detroit Revolutionary Movements (DRM) Records are now freely available online.

This collection is especially relevant today as evidence of community-based activism that is formative to current social and political movements. Documents show the demands, political viewpoints, and allies of Black workers during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

For decades, the collection has been popular with researchers for its intimate look into the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), a federation of radical, Black autoworkers across plants in Southeastern Michigan. The LRBW formed in 1969 as Black workers, inspired by the 1968 wildcat strike of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) at the Dodge Main plant, joined together to fight systemic racism in organized labor — particularly in the UAW, which represented the plants where the League organized. Workers spread their message through flyers and provocative newsletters, many of which are available in the collection.

Dr. David Goldberg, associate professor of African American studies at Wayne State University, explains, “The Detroit Revolutionary Movements Collection ...[is]... especially useful to those who study the Black Power movement, the New Left, Black Marxism, labor and labor law, and revolutionary organizational activity during the late 1960s and 1970s.”

Archivists at the Reuther Library developed this project over several years, and are hopeful that it will inspire students, community members, and researchers to further investigate the important role of DRM in Detroit and in American society.
The Wayne State University student chapter of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) published an online version of the Michigan Black History Bibliography (MBHB), which originally existed as a card file. The resource contains hundreds of bibliographic references to sources illuminating the history of African Americans in Michigan up until the early 1970s.

The MBHB covers three centuries of Michigan’s history with topics including slavery in Detroit in the 1700s, Underground Railroad activity in the 1800s, the racism and discrimination Blacks faced in the 1900s, and, throughout, African American community-building activities.

“I am still raving about you and the ‘black box of index cards’ to all of the librarians here...”

Over the years, the MBHB has proven useful to many researchers. Professor Ula Taylor wrote to Dr. Jones, Reuther Field Archivist, extolling the importance of this resource. There, she maintains that, “I am still raving about you and the ‘black box of index cards’ to all of the librarians here at the University of California, Berkeley.”

Now that the bibliography is accessible online, a larger group of researchers will have access to this unique tool.

In collaboration with the Wayne State University SAA student chapter, the Reuther Library is now pleased to present this work to its many researchers.
“Bridging the Gap: Archives in the Classroom and Community” funded by NHPRC

The National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) has awarded Wayne State University’s College of Education and Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs $83,100 for a two-year project to improve access to meaningful primary sources in the classroom.

“Though most K-12 education standards call for the use of primary sources, archivists and teachers rarely work together to bring students relevant archival material. This project builds a community of archivists, classroom teachers, and teacher education students to share different areas of expertise. The team hopes this model can aid other archivists and educators in working together across the country.”

Reuther archivists Meghan Courtney and Dan Golodner have developed this project over the past 5 years with College of Education faculty Dr. Min Yu and Dr. Chris Crowley. Dr. Yu, principal investigator, says, “This project will bring knowledge and collective memories from communities into the daily work of classroom instruction. We hope it will give teachers opportunities to recognize existing community assets and incorporate nuanced understandings of the challenges different communities have faced historically.”

Over the next two years, teacher education students, in-service teachers, and archivists will participate in a series of workshops and form remote teams to create relevant archives-focused lesson plans for use in classrooms.
Shifting Gears: Summer 2020 Practicums Expand Collections and Student Learning

This spring’s shelter-in-place orders left Archival Administration practicum students unable to work on site in libraries and archives. Reuther staff jumped in, developing virtual projects to further the students’ learning while expanding access to archival collections at the Reuther.

Emmalee Herlocher cataloged digitized portions of the Reuther’s collections for further development and created an LGBT Civil Rights in Michigan document set and teacher tool focused on the Ernest L. Horne Papers: reuther.wayne.edu/node/14958

Madison Mosely and Justine Keuning-Lafrence developed the Wayne State School of Information Sciences Student, Alumni, and Faculty COVID-19 Collection Project to gather materials on the SIS community’s experiences during the pandemic.

Betty Adams and Kaitlyn Schroeder developed the Southeast Michigan COVID-19 Oral Histories Project and conducted remote interviews with essential and retail workers, teachers, parents working at home, medically at-risk persons, and a pandemic skeptic.

Although the circumstances were challenging, all the practicum students rose to the occasion, gaining practical archives experience.
In 1960, sociologist and Detroiter John C. Leggett conducted more than 400 surveys of Detroit residents about their employment, political affiliations, and race/ethnicity. Surveys also asked for Detroiters’ opinions on labor unions, strikes, and race.

This fascinating collection is now available thanks to the dedicated work of Graduate Student Assistant Jared Quist.

Leggett’s papers shine a light on the class and race struggles of the city’s working-class residents, illuminating how they saw others and themselves at the dawn of the sixties. The surveys were the basis of Leggett’s book, *Class, Race, and Labor: Working-Class Consciousness in Detroit*.

The *John C. Leggett Papers* span the years 1955-60 and include Leggett’s academic writings as well as research related to the impact of labor and race on society.

Learn more at [reuther.wayne.edu/node/14881](reuther.wayne.edu/node/14881)
Wayne State School of Information Science student Katie Okonowski worked to preserve union and political history, bringing it to life by creating original digital resources with historical materials. Made possible by the Michael Wells Digital Librarianship Endowed Scholars Fund, the paid internship allowed Okonowski to practice traditional archival skills while also using modern tools like Omeka-S.

First, Okonowski processed new materials into the Roy Reuther Papers, an eclectic and personal collection from the influential UAW and Democratic Party organizer and brother to Walter Reuther. This allowed her to build a digital exhibit with these items, titled Roy Reuther Through the Archives.

Okonowski then arranged and described the Jack Conway Photographs, Walter Reuther’s longtime right hand and director of Great Society programs. She crafted a photo essay about Jack’s career and relationship with Walter Reuther on the Library’s website using images she selected and scanned.

These collections and digital resources are available to the public, and demonstrate the exciting possibilities when donors invest in our students.
The Ronald Raven Award -
Supporting Wayne State University Collections

Karen Turk, recipient of this year’s Ronald Raven Award Scholarship, worked to process the Corrinne Gilb Papers during her practicum in WSU’s School of Information Sciences. Given a choice of collections, Turk was drawn to Gilb’s role as professor of history at Wayne State and planning director for the City of Detroit. Turk was inspired to share the story of an influential woman through archives.

In March, she worked with staff to refine WSU collections in Archive-It, a service used in web archiving. This effort helped gather webpages related to WSU’s pandemic response. Turk explained, “The decision to return to school 12 years after completing my MLIS was difficult, but the choice to attend Wayne State University was easy. The School of Information Sciences offers unparalleled opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience. The Ronald Raven Award has given me the chance to develop my skills as an archivist and build lasting relationships with a team of professionals I might not have otherwise met.”

Tales From the Reuther Library podcast

This year’s podcast topics included the history of racial disparities in school discipline, the Detroit Housewives League’s 1930s support of Black-owned businesses, child agricultural laborers, Henry Ford and fascism in Michigan, the queer history of the UAW, IWW organizer Matilda Rabinowitz Robbins, engineering alumna and Miss Wayne University 1950, and rare recordings of blues musicians Sippie Wallace and Son House. Archives students shared their work on the Michigan Black History Bibliography.

Subscribe to Tales From the Reuther Library on your favorite podcast app or at reuther.wayne.edu/podcast
Much of the essential work of the Walter P. Reuther Library has been successful due to donors and supporters of all types and at all levels. Your generous contributions help ensure that future generations of scholars, practitioners, and the general public enjoy continued access to the research and educational resources of the Reuther Library.

Donations are directed strategically: toward processing and digitizing collections, maintaining proper environmental conditions for preservation, ensuring that the technologies essential for 21st-century archival practices remain current, and to expanding our reach to the communities we document and serve. As we prioritize future projects and initiatives, we welcome your stories and reflections of how Reuther has been valuable to you and your organization and look forward to working together to bring new collaborations to light.

You can visit giving.wayne.edu/donate/reuther to donate, and please reach out to Director Aliqae Geraci (aliqae.geraci@wayne.edu) to discuss your giving priorities or project ideas.
2019 in Review:

- **700+** Students in archival instruction sessions
- **91** Exhibits and publications featuring Reuther material
- **19, 18** Blog posts, podcasts
- **454** Linear feet donated across 61 collections
- **1974** Remote research requests

Researchers from:
- **7** Countries
- **30** States
- **3** Provinces
New Staff

The Reuther welcomed Dallas Pillen, technical services archivist, in June 2020.

Pillen is an alumnus of Wayne State University and worked at the Reuther as a Ronald Raven Award intern and processing technician. "I have a personal attachment to Wayne State and the Reuther that made me very excited for the opportunity to be back," he said.

In his new position, Pillen works with the Reuther’s technical systems to support collections management, description, and access initiatives. Prior to his return to Wayne State, Dallas spent several years at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan.

He is a member of the ArchivesSpace Technical Advisory Council and co-chair of the Society of American Archivists’ Encoded Archival Standards Section.

Here to Stay

United Farm Workers Florida Boycott Office Records

When the United Farm Workers signed a contract with Coca-Cola Company’s Food Division in 1972, labor experts predicted that the company and the newly formed migrant labor union, headed by Cesar Chavez, would experience a tenuous relationship at best, certainly nothing long lasting. Though smaller, independent citrus farmers never conceded to union representation, Chavez’s comment to the skeptics was, “we are here to stay.”

The UFW Florida Division offices operated throughout many cities in Florida from 1971 until well into the 1990s, lasting longer than most other UFW boycott offices in the United States. The records of the UFW Florida Division are now available for research. They provide unique primary documentation on Florida migrant workers, including data on Florida migrant advocacy groups and files relating to operation of the Florida offices.
James and Grace Lee Boggs Photographs and Audio-visual Materials

James and Grace Lee’s rich personal and philosophical interests are evident in a new audio-visual collection at the Reuther. Researchers will find audio recordings of lectures, sermons, and interviews by Rev. Albert Cleage (Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman), Malcolm X, Milton Henry, and C.L.R. James, as well as meetings of the Freedom NOW Party and the National Grassroots Leadership Conference.

Recordings of both James and Grace Lee Boggs offer insight into the evolution of their personal beliefs. A small series of photographs, primarily personal snapshots, are also available.

Select audio recordings are available remotely upon request. Please contact reutherav@wayne.edu for more information.

Now Open: The George Schermer Papers

The George Schermer Papers reflect a career working to improve housing, human relations, and urban social problems. Schermer served as director of the Detroit Mayor’s Interracial Committee (later the Detroit Commission on Community Relations). In his spare time, Schermer helped create the National Association of Human Rights Workers, served as the first president of the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights, and was heavily involved in neighborhood communities where he lived.

The Schermer papers contain materials primarily from his career in Detroit and Philadelphia, and span 1939-92.
New Collections

History of Nursing

**Grace Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae Association Records** include booklets on the nursing program, newsletters, and scrapbooks from the early 1900s. Photographs show the living and working environments of nurses including their close working relationship with doctors at Grace Hospital.

The **Lorraine H. Decker Papers** include photographs and publications from the School of Nursing and its students. A 1912 edition of *Tattler* provides a unique look into the culture of the Grace Hospital School of Nursing through student-submitted writing and commentary on both students and staff. Decker was a member of the Alumnae Association and once served as its Social Chair.

Michigan Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights Records

This pro-choice interfaith organization was founded in 1973 after *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in the United States. The organization changed its name to Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice in 1994. The Michigan branch, founded in 1975, served a primary purpose of preserving reproductive choice as a basic part of religious liberty.

Lyrick Club Records

**The Lyrick Club Records** are an entertaining set of scrapbooks, notebooks, and correspondence from a social club formed by young male ushers at the Lyceum and Garrick Theatres in downtown Detroit from 1909 until 1917. The collection also reflects the friendship of their members and the reunions they held into the 1960s.
New Collections

Maryann Mahaffey Papers

Mahaffey was perhaps best known as a Detroit City councilmember from 1973-2005, though her many accomplishments include work with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Girl Scouts of America, Merrill-Palmer Institute, and Brightmoor Community Center.

She served as consultant to the mayor of Detroit on parks, recreation, and social services, chaired the Mayor’s Task Force on Malnutrition and Hunger, and served as a professor at Wayne State University in the School of Social Work. Following her 1970 campaign for Wayne County commissioner, she won a Michigan Supreme Court case that set a legal precedent allowing married women to use their maiden names when running for public office.

Mahaffey’s papers reflect her work on Detroit City Council, teaching at Wayne State, and the many social service organizations with which she was involved.

Merrill-Palmer Institute: Photographs and Audio-Visual Materials

Internationally known as one of the top institutions for education, training, and research in child development, the Merrill-Palmer Institute is celebrating 100 years of work. Since its founding in 1920, Merrill-Palmer staff have conducted and published studies on families and children; operated a nursery school, camps, and clubs; offered marriage and family counseling; and performed community service work.

In 1981, the institute became a part of Wayne State University, merging in 2005 with the Skillman Center for Children to become the Merrill-Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development. The bulk of the materials in this collection center on the operation of the Early Childhood Center (formerly the Merrill-Palmer Nursery School), but also cover the Institute’s programs and services, teaching and research missions, and its physical environment.
Saving Detroit's Orchestra Hall

The Reuther Library now houses the archival records of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra!

The Save Orchestra Hall Records document the efforts of Save Orchestra Hall, Inc., comprised of local citizens and DSO musicians, who raised funds to restore the hall from the 1970s to the 1990s.

Recognized for its wonderful acoustics, after renovations Orchestra Hall once again became home to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s performances.

Over the coming years, the Reuther will open many additional collections related to the DSO’s work. Stay tuned!
An incredibly diverse group of researchers use our AV collections each year. From the Smithsonian to the Nature Conservancy to history enthusiasts, creators use material in endlessly interesting ways.

Around the lunchroom table, perhaps the most talked about project was *Crimetown: Season Two*. The 19-episode podcast explores the history of crime in modern Detroit, touching on themes of “race, poverty, policing, loss of industry, the war on drugs, and our universal desire for a savior.” The Reuther’s archival audio builds a story starting with the Detroit Police Department’s notorious S.T.R.E.S.S. program in the 1970s and ending after the fall of Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. *Crimetown* is available exclusively through Spotify.

Images from our photo collections appeared in 83 books since our last newsletter, including Michael Long’s *We the Resistance: Documenting Non-Violent Protest*, an anthology of first-person accounts of nonviolent resistance in the United States over the past 300 years. Featuring an afterword by Dolores Huerta, the book chronicles movements from the Quakers to Black Lives Matter and explores themes such as civil rights, workers’ rights, and gender equality.

Look for our images of the Lawrence Textile Strike and the activities of the United Farm Workers (UFW) if you pick this one up.

Museums often borrow our content for exhibition. This year, we found materials for the Victoria and Albert Museum, National Parks Service Cesar E. Chavez National Monument, U.S. Space and Rocket Center, and the National Museum of African American History, among others.

The Smithsonian’s *Girlhood: It’s Complicated*, promises an interesting take on “how girls have been on the
front lines of social and cultural change” throughout history. The project was inspired by zine design and will include five story sections supported in part by Reuther material: education, wellness, work, fashion, and biographical interactives. Girlhood will open in 2020 at the National Museum of American History and will travel the country starting in March 2022.

Over the past two years the Reuther has seen a marked increase in requests for use in digital mapping projects that use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create interactive maps of historical events, such as the National Parks Service’s new application for the Selma to Montgomery National Historical Trail and a GIS StoryMap by the Phoenix Historic Preservation Department. The Selma map used an image from the investigation of Civil Rights activist Viola Liuzzo’s murder by the Ku Klux Klan in 1965 (left), while the Phoenix-area project selected images from the United Farm Workers (UFW) Photographs to highlight the role of immigrant workers in the community.

Poletown in Pictures

Nearly 40 years ago, developers razed Poletown, one of Detroit’s oldest and most ethnically diverse neighborhoods, to make way for the General Motors Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Plant.

During the neighborhood’s final months, Bruce Harkness traveled the area with a 4x5 press camera and tripod, capturing beautifully composed images of residents, street scenes, and neighborhood architecture. A selection of these images, recently digitized, are now available for research in the Bruce Harkness Poletown Photographs image gallery at reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/2108.
**Working 9 to 5:**
Archives support Dolly Parton Podcast

The country music songstress (and generally radiant human) Dolly Parton has been on our minds of late. Throughout 2019, Reuther archivists worked with Jad Abumrad, founder and co-host of the syndicated public radio program *Radiolab*, on his latest project, *Dolly Parton’s America*.

Producers used audio pulled from **SEIU District 925 Records** throughout the episode *Dollitics*, which revisits the past and present implications of the film *9 to 5* in both the context of organized labor and the #MeToo Movement.

This June, the Wayne State University Library system launched the Wayne State affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, an early literacy program founded by Parton in 1995. This partnership will provide every child in the 48201 and 48202 ZIP codes access to free, age-appropriate books delivered directly to their homes from birth to age 5. Our AFSCME Archivist, Stefanie Caloia, was instrumental in the success of this project.

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**91 Years of Dance**

The **Wayne State University Dance Department Records** holds programs, choreographic notes, and other materials from many performances by students over the years, as well as records from professional dancers and dance groups.

The records illustrate the department’s move from Physical Education to the School of the Fine Arts, where it became the Department of Dance in 1986.
Community in the Archives

On January 23rd, 2020, the Reuther partnered with the Detroit Sound Conservancy, a grassroots, do-it-yourself, nonprofit mobile museum and archive advocating for Detroit music, to host Music in the Archives: A Celebration of Detroit’s Aural History. The program included live performances by Detroit’s Soul Ambassador, Melvin Davis, and Ron English and his trio on the legendary Blue Bird Inn stage. The event celebrated both the musicians’ role in the music community and oral history interviews that create a deeper understanding of the motivations behind well-known songs and records. Learn more about the mission of the Detroit Sound Conservancy and the legacy of Detroit’s storied music scene at detroitsound.org.

In 2019 the Reuther hosted *Immigrant Girl, Radical Woman*, an exhibit of original artwork from author and artist Robbin Légère Henderson. The show involved scratchboard drawings depicting the life of Matilda (Rabinowitz) Robbins (1887-1963), the celebrated Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizer, activist, and writer. The pieces were inspired by historical photographs Légère Henderson discovered in archival collections throughout the country, including our own, and are featured in *Immigrant Girl, Radical Woman: A Memoir* from the Early Twentieth Century, illustrated and annotated autobiography of Robbins. The exhibit’s opening featured a lecture and book signing by Henderson, audience Q & A, and the premiere of an original work inspired by Robbins’ writings by the sound artist weather citizen. You can learn about the artist, her process, and Robbins’s lasting legacy through a 2-part podcast.
Dr. Louis Jones  
**Society of American Archivists Distinguished Fellow**

The highest honor in the archival profession in the United States confirms what his Reuther colleagues and donors already know - that Dr. Jones is among the best in the field.

Dr. Jones joined the Reuther staff in 1993 as SEIU archivist and became field archivist in 2012 where he works closely with donors to bring in new collections. As the award states, “he has helped to provide voice and exposure to those who might otherwise be silent and unseen.” Dr. Jones has added collections including the LGBT Detroit Records, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Records, Damon J. Keith Papers, papers of Edward Littlejohn and Ed Vaughn, and many more.

During his 23 years at the Reuther, Dr. Jones has processed collections, conducted oral history interviews, and collaborated on exhibits. Both formally and informally, he mentors his junior colleagues and the next generation of archivists. He is an adjunct professor in Wayne State University’s School of Information Sciences, doctoral committee member in WSU’s History Department, and faculty advisor to the WSU student chapter of SAA. Originally from New York, Dr. Jones attended Morehouse College and Cornell University, where he earned his Master of Afro-American Studies. He added a master’s in history while studying archival management at the University of Delaware. For his doctorate in American history from Wayne State University, his dissertation explored public sector union development in post-WWII metropolitan Detroit. Dr. Jones has been actively involved with SAA as well as the Academy of Certified Archivists, serving as the latter’s president from 2016-17.
Reference Archivist Kristen Chinery, along with her co-authors, published “The archival mystique: Women archivists are professional archivists” in the 2019 spring/summer issue of The American Archivist, a peer-reviewed academic journal by the Society of American Archivists.

Chinery has also been appointed to the Wayne State University AAUP-AFT Bargaining Team and the Society of American Archivists Diversity Committee (2019-2022).

Troy Eller English wrote an APEX Grand Award-winning article in the Society of Women Engineers Magazine: “Somehow, I Participated in That: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Apollo Moon Mission,” which used oral histories and other documents from SWE’s archives to highlight SWE members’ contributions to the 1969 NASA lunar landing.


Shae Rafferty will serve as co-chair of the Society of American Archivists Labor Archives Section, 2020-22.

Did you catch this summer’s interview with Louis Jones on Kitchen Sisters Podcast? He talks about his path to the profession and what he does as a field archivist.

Search for episode 145 to learn more about Louis’s motivations, the Reuther’s collections, and how we’ll bring future collections to you for research!
Our Staff:

Jon E. Cawthorne, dean of libraries
Aliqae Geraci, director
Molly Banes, AV asset production and licensing technician
Bart Bealmear, APLA archivist
Stefanie Caloia, AFSCME archivist
Kristen Chinery, reference archivist
Elizabeth Clemens, audiovisual archivist
Meghan Courtney, outreach archivist
Troy Eller English, SWE archivist
Aimee Ergas, collections archivist
Louis Jones, field archivist
Dan Golodner, AFT archivist
Sarah Lebovitz, SEIU archivist
Paul Neirink, digital resource archivist
Elizabeth Nicholson, archives technician
Timothy Parker, digitization and access services technician
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