Finding aid for the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council records Collection 480

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Prepared by Processing by Cynthia Engerson and Julia Bouwkamp; Finding aid by Julia Bouwkamp

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Grand Rapids Public Library
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
Business Number: 616-988-5497
localhis@grpl.org
URL: https://www.grpl.org/history/
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Summary Information

Repository: Grand Rapids History Center
Creator: Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council
Title: Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council records
ID: Collection 480
Date [inclusive]: 1973-2018
Date [bulk]: 1988-2018
Physical Description: 14 Linear Feet 31 boxes
Language of the Material: English.
Abstract: The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council (GGRWHC) is a non-profit organization in Grand Rapids, Michigan that advocates for women's history. The GGRWHC is dedicated to educating the community and celebrating the legacies of local women, preserving knowledge of their past and inspiring visions for their future. This collection contains a wide variety of documents relating to women's historical programming and research as well as materials concerning the day to day operations of the GGRWHC. The GGRWHC is active today [2019].

Biographical / Historical

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council (GGRWHC) is a non-profit organization in Grand Rapids, Michigan that advocates for women's history. The GGRWHC is dedicated to educating the community and celebrating the legacies of local women, preserving knowledge of their past and inspiring visions for their future. The GGRWHC came together in a moment when women, motivated by the effects of second-wave feminism, began to question traditionally held historical narratives. A new awareness of women's importance in the present prompted a reexamination of women and their impact throughout history.

One such milestone of that moment was the 1987 designation of March as Women's History Month. That same year, Twink Frey began research for a paper on women's history intended to
mark the newly designated Women's History Month at a Grand Rapids Collectors Club meeting. To her disappointment, Frey found little to no materials on women's history. Even as women's history had been given an official month of recognition, the sources with which to celebrate it had not yet been discovered and made accessible.

With this need in mind, Frey took formal steps in 1988 to create an organization that could do the work of recovering and celebrating women's history in the Grand Rapids area. To do this she pulled together a steering committee and together they planned a conference on women's history entitled "An Ear to the Past, an Eye to the Future." In 1990 the steering committee officially incorporated as the nonprofit Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council with the "purpose to promote the educational and historical study of women with emphasis on the greater Grand Rapids area...and other Western Michigan communities."

With so little attention given to women's history in Grand Rapids, the GGRWHC lost no time in correcting incomplete historical narratives. Some of their first projects included researching and submitting applications to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, creating a bibliography of women's history resources in the Grand Rapids Public Library (GRPL), creating traveling women's history exhibits, staging a centennial reenactment of the historic 1899 national convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association held in Grand Rapids at the St. Cecilia Society (now the St. Cecilia Music Center), and instituting a local triennial celebration of Women's History Month known as Legacy. The GGRWHC also took on an instrumental role in identifying and advocating for the acquisition of vital women's historical materials into the GRPL's archival collections.

Since 2000, the GGRWHC has maintained a commitment to community-based programming by presenting at events like History Detectives at the GRPL, while also developing a presence with scholarly audiences through exhibits and presentations at academic conferences. These include the Great Lakes History conference, the Women and Gender Historians of the Midwest conference, the Midwestern History Association, the National Genealogical Society, and the Historical Society of Michigan. The recent popularity of digital history projects and methods has offered the GGRWHC new ways of doing women's history. In 2010 they digitized 60 previously recorded oral history transcripts and audiotapes, and in 2017 they reached out to Her Hat Was in the Ring, a national crowdsourcing project listing American women who ran for office prior to the 19th amendment's ratification in 1920. The GGRWHC began researching and uncovering women's elective history in Grand Rapids in the 1990s. To date they have identified 47 women who ran in 82 campaigns before 1920, all of whom will be listed on Her Hat's online database by the end of 2018.

Starting with little to no women's historical materials, the GGRWHC has become an authority and primary mover for women's history in Grand Rapids and in Michigan generally. An active organization today, the GGRWHC is busy planning future women's history presentations and events including programming for the centennial celebration of the 19th amendment in 2020.

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Scope and Contents

The materials in the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council collection are organized by content but also by form and includes materials from the GGRWHC's initial start as a steering committee in the 1980s to their work in the present [2018]. This collection contains a wide variety of documents relating to women's historical programming and research as well as materials concerning the day to day operations of the GGRWHC. Included in this collection are administrative materials, event and programming related materials, materials related to Legacy (the GGRWHC's triennial Women's History Month celebration), financial records, membership records, records related to affiliated organizations, photographs, publications, reference materials, and official proclamations.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Grand Rapids History Center

Grand Rapids Public Library
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
Business Number: 616-988-5497
localhis@grpl.org
URL: https://www.grpl.org/history/

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, 2013.011 and 2017.048

Controlled Access Headings

- Women -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids -- History
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
Collection Inventory

Series I: Administrative materials, 1973-2018

Scope and Contents

This series of administrative materials includes articles of incorporation, bylaws, annual meeting records from 1994-2004, board of directors meeting minutes from 1988 to 2017, correspondence from 1973-2009, various subcommittee materials, ephemera, grant applications, and strategic planning materials. This series also contains the original finding aid used by the GGRWHC before the collection's donation to the Grand Rapids Public Library.

Subseries A: Board of Directors Minutes, 1988-2017

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<td>Board of directors meeting minutes, 2002-2005</td>
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Subseries B: Board of directors and incorporation records, 1988-2016, n.d.

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<td>Articles of incorporation, 1990, n.d.</td>
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<td>Board of directors biographical information, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of directors calendar of events, 1988-2006</td>
<td>Box 1 Folder 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of directors lists, 1991-2007, n.d.</td>
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### Subseries C: Correspondence, 1973-2009

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### Subseries D: Planning and committee records, 1989-2006, n.d.

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<td>Finance committee, 1990-1999</td>
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<td>GGRWHC website, 2000-2004, n.d.</td>
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<td>Nominating committee, 1994-2006, n.d.</td>
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<td>Public relations committee, 1995-1997, n.d.</td>
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<td>Recognition and research committee, 1996-2004, n.d.</td>
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<td>Strategic planning, 1995</td>
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<td>Strategic planning, 1995-2003</td>
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<td>Business cards, miscellaneous business materials, n.d.</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Community College printing, 2000-2003</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Community College lease and key contracts, 1996-2012</td>
<td>Box 3 Folder 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kellie Bolster, finding aids, 2012</td>
<td>Box 3 Folder 16</td>
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<td>Kellie Bolster, finding aids, 2012</td>
<td>Box 4 Folder 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nokomis foundation, technology grant, 2000-2002, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 4 Folder 3</td>
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</tbody>
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Scope and Contents
This series contains materials related to events planned and or participated in by the GGRWHC. The noticeable variety of event types reflects the GGRWHC's wide ranging interests and their ability to share women's history with popular and scholarly audiences alike. Notable in this series are records for "An Ear to the Past and an Eye to the Future," the first conference planned by the steering committee that would later become the first GGRWHC board.


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<td>The Amy Beach Project, 1991-1998</td>
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<td>&quot;An Ear to the Past and an Eye to the Future&quot;, 1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Buried Voices, Buried Lives&quot;, n.d.</td>
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<td>Five Wars, 1997</td>
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<td>Great Lakes History Conference, 2002-2005</td>
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<td>Michigan Women's Studies Association Conference, 1993-2003</td>
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<td>Outstanding women photo essay, 1999</td>
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<td>&quot;A Piece of My Heart&quot;, 1996</td>
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<td>Research and recognition committee writing workshop, 2007-2008</td>
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<td>Speakers, n.d.</td>
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<td>Suffrage centennial, 1999</td>
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Scope and Contents

This series contains planning materials for Legacy, the GGRWHC's triennial Women's History Month celebration. Legacy started in 1991 as an effort to recover and raise awareness of women's history in the community and within local institutions. Their efforts brought together more than 50 local institutions representing the arts, education, health care, business, labor, religion, and social causes with exhibits and programming. It's focus changed in subsequent years as event leadership moved from the Council's to a separate planning committee led by co-chairs. Legacy was last celebrated by the Council in 2010, though the council continues to celebrate Women's History Month and the legacies of women in Grand Rapids.


<table>
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<td>Funding, 1990-1991</td>
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<td>Budget, 1990-1991</td>
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<td>Calendar of events, 1990-1991</td>
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<td>Publicity, 1990-1991</td>
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<td>Committees, 1994</td>
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### Scope and Contents

This series covers the GGRWHC's financial activity from 1986 through 2013. It includes bills, receipts, revenue and expense reports, deposit forms, and other financial documents necessary to the operation of a nonprofit historical organization.

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Scope and Contents

This series contains GGRWHC media storage devices from the 1990s through roughly 2012. Included are one cassette tape recording of PBS NewsHour's Margaret Warner speaking at Legacy 1997, several CD ROMS storing newsletters from 2004-2005 and Legacy event materials, various floppy disks storing Legacy 2000 planning materials and assorted women's history materials, and two USB drives, the first containing miscellaneous GGRWHC files from 2008 to 2010 and the other storing Merry Malfroid's files from 2002 to 2012.

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Scope and Contents

This series contains GGRWHC membership records, including membership applications, forms, correspondence, dues, invoices, gentle reminders, membership lists and rosters by year, and Women's History Month resolutions from roughly 1991 to 2004.


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**Scope and Contents**

This series contains records for the variety of organizations from 1988 to 2010 with whom the GGRWHC has partnered with for events and or projects, applied for and or received funding from, and other organizations with which the GGRWHC has established professional connections. Notably, this series includes many women's organizations with focuses varying from historical research and commemoration to more contemporary women's issues.

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**Michigan Women's Hall of Fame Awards dinners, 1988-2011, 2015-2017**

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### Scope and Contents

This series contains GGRWHC photographs and, the bulk of which are from the 1990s to the early 2000s. The diversity of the photographs and realia included reflects the variety of initiatives in which the GGRWHC participated in and/or directed. Examples include photographs from workshops, awards ceremonies, and historical programs as well as brochures, flyers, and various pins.


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Legacy, 1994, 1905
Finding aid for the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council records Collection 480

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Scope and Contents

This series contains publications that the GGRWHC was affiliated with, collected, published and or contributed to. Notable in this series are Council newsletters from 1989 to 2018. Also notable is an issue of Grand River Valley History (1995, Volume 12) entirely dedicated to women's history and the work of the GGRHWC and to which Council members contributed articles.

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council Newsletters, 1989-2018

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## Other organizations, 1990-2016

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<td>Michigan Women's Foundation, Trillium, 1991-1999</td>
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**Scope and Contents**

This series contains reference materials collected and utilized by the GGRWHC from 1980 to 2015. Notable in the series are applications with supporting materials submitted by the council to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame on behalf of historically important local women.

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<td>Reference, Emily Claytor, articles, 2014</td>
<td>Box 14 Folder 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference, Minnie C. Blodgett, 1919, 1925, 1931, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 14 Folder 9</td>
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<td>Reference, Susan B. Anthony, 1995, 1998</td>
<td>Box 14 Folder 12</td>
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<td>Vergennes Township Living History, n.d.</td>
<td>Box 14 Folder 13</td>
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<td>VHS: Gaining Grand, Women in Grand Rapids City Government, 1998</td>
<td>Box 15 Object Tape 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>VHS: Wood TV 21st Century Women, 2000</td>
<td>Box 15 Object Tape 2</td>
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Series XI: Proclamations

Scope and Contents

This series contains a copy of the October 2000 Proclamation issued by President Bill Clinton to declare October 11 as Eleanor Roosevelt Day. Eleanor Roosevelt was born on October 11, 1884 in New York City. The GGRWHC received the proclamation and accompanying materials from the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
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<td>Eleanor Roosevelt Day, 2000</td>
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