



ArchivesSpace

Freedom Forum; Records

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M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement of the Collection	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Collection Inventory	6
Administrative Files	6
Program Committee	7
Correspondence	8
Publicity	9

Summary Information

Repository:	M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives
Title:	Freedom Forum Records
ID:	apap124
Date [inclusive]:	1959-1978
Physical Description:	0.4 cubic ft.
Physical Location:	The materials are located onsite in the department.
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection documents the activities of the Freedom Forum from 1959-1978. It includes information about administrative practices, meeting minutes, letters between members, and two photographs.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Freedom Forum Records, 1959-1978. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Freedom Forum Records).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

The Freedom Forum was organized in 1943 in Schenectady, New York by the Subcommittee on Post War Planning of the Citizens Unity Committee of the Schenectady County Consolidated War Council. The Freedom Forum's organizers had one priority at the organization's inception, to promote an interest in civic and educational topics of the day. This dedication motivated Freedom Forum to bring notable lecturers to Schenectady. The Freedom Forum by-laws state: "The policy of Freedom Forum, Inc. is to help in spreading factual information and in the discovery of truths concerning issues about which there are two or more points of view."The not-for-profit, non-partisan organization group evolved by the 1960s to sustain over 1500 members in the Capital Region of New York.

Early in the Freedom Forum's history the organization lacked control over lecturers because of its dependence on other organizations such as the Y.W.C.A and Union College who, along with other local organizations, helped to sponsor the first lecture series. They were also financially supported by the Schenectady County Department of Education. Freedom Forum opened memberships to the public at an annual subscription fee that would allow subscribers to participate in lectures and vote at meetings. Under the leadership of Reverend Edwin H. Wilson, of the Unitarian Church, Freedom Forum used these funds to become independent in 1944 and assume control over decisions on speakers. In 1951, Freedom Forum was incorporated as a non-profit "educational corporation."

The Board of Directors assigned working committees to projects and managed the regulations of the organization. The general perspective of each lecture series was discussed during the Program Committee's meetings. The first Freedom Forum speaker was author and scientist William Agar who lectured on September 27, 1943, on the topic of "The World We Want," which dealt with solutions to domestic problems at the end of World War II.

In addition to lecture series the group also held public debates such as in December 1976 when E. Linn Draper, Director of the Nuclear Engineering Program at the University of Texas, debated Daniel F. Ford, Executive Director of Union of Concerned Scientist. They debated the issue of using nuclear power as a source of energy, which was favored in response to the rising need for energy as standard fuel resources began to wane. In addition to lectures on energy options other subjects that the program committee considered for discussion were the Vietnam War, contraception, abortion laws, and inflation. Other well-known speakers included Eleanor Roosevelt in 1956 and Margaret Mead in 1947 and 1962. A brief question and answer period usually followed the lectures.

The records do not specifically state the date group disbanded, but the reduction in the number of subscriptions, decrease in amount of board members, and the activity of those board members remaining may have influenced the demise of the organization. The last program mentioned in the collection is May 8, 1978. The speaker was Bernard Davis who lectured on "The Recombinant DNA Scenario: Andromeda Strain, Chimera, and Golem."

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection documents the activities of the Freedom Forum from 1959-1978. The collection includes information on the organization from the period when it depended on donations through the time when it gained its independence by selling memberships. With this independence came more controversial lecturers and topics.

The Freedom Forum records include administrative files, news clippings, handwritten notes, and correspondence. The news clippings and a single western union telegram from United States Senator Charles H. Percy have been photocopied. The news clippings include an excerpt from the "The Challenge of Change," a book by senator Edward W. Brooke. Communication between Freedom Forum and speakers, or potential speakers, is most abundant in this collection. The correspondence files include a

note to Freedom Forum from Teamsters Union leader Jimmy Hoffa. Correspondence also exists from Alexander Kerensky, the first Premier of Russia after the 1917 revolution and Moshe Sharett, the first Foreign Minister and second Prime Minister of the State of Israel. Correspondence also exists between the Directors and Dr. John Rock, Dick Gregory, and John V. Lindsey.

The largest correspondence files are the 1967 and 1968 files. These files reflect the organization's interest in the 1968 presidential election and its candidates. During those years the organization invited George Wallace, former governor of Alabama, Hubert Humphrey, and human rights activist Dick Gregory to share their opinions. Correspondence between the period of 1944-1964 is not available in the collection.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement of the Collection

The collection is organized into the following series:

- 1 Series 1 - Administrative Files, 1964-1976, Undated
- 2 Series 2 - Program Committee, 1959-1978, Undated
- 3 Series 3 - Correspondence, 1964-1978
- 4 Series 4 - Publicity, 1966-1978, Undated

All series are arranged alphabetically with the exception of Series 3, which is arranged chronologically.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

Revision Description

Encoded in EAD by Janice Lee 2013

Processing Information

Processed in 2004 by Kenyetta Russell.

Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

Acquisition Information

All items in this manuscript group were donated to the University Libraries, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, by Loren Broc, historian of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, in October 2001.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Social Activists and Public Advocates
- Schenectady, New York
- Schenectady (N.Y.)
- First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany (Albany, N.Y.)
- World War II
- Energy
- Letters
- Annual reports
- Letters
- Photographs

Collection Inventory

Administrative Files, 1964-1976Undated

Physical Description: 0.08 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series includes information that explains the administrative practices of the Freedom Forum. Included are by-laws, contracts, and financial data. The personal notes of board members reveal arrangements made for lecturers. This series also includes member and officer rosters.

Title/Description	Instances	
By-laws, Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 1
Contracts, 1965-1974Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 2
Financial, 1964-1973Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 3
Membership Correspondence, 1965-1973Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 4
Membership Rosters, 1967-1975Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 5
Officer Rosters, 1967-1972Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 6
Organizational Correspondence, 1965-1976Undated	Box 1 (1-Administrative Files)	Folder 7

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Program Committee, 1959-1978Undated

Physical Description: 0.08 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains one annual report as well as sparse meeting minutes. The many handwritten notes in this series illustrate how the committee chose and then ranked their lecturers and topics. A brief biography of the many

lecturers can also be found in this series. Among the biographies are those of human rights advocate Dick Gregory and consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

Title/Description	Instances	
Annual Report, 1972-1973	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 8
Biographies, 1959-1978Undated	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 9
Lecture Topics, 1973	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 10
Meeting Minutes, 1966-1977Undated	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 11
Miscellaneous Notes, Undated	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 12
Programs, 1965-1976	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 13
Program Chairman's Duties, Undated	Box 1 (2-Program Committee)	Folder 14

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Correspondence, 1964-1978Undated

Physical Description: 0.20 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents

This series is composed of letters between members of the Freedom Forum Board of Directors and potential lecturers. Among the series is correspondence between Freedom Forum chairmen and Thurgood Marshall after his appointment to the Supreme Court. Correspondence also exists between the Board of Directors and Dr. John Rock, a scientist in the field of birth control. Other notable correspondence is with former Mayor of New York City John V. Lindsey and with Jimmy Hoffa

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence, 1964	Box 1 (3-Correspondence)	Folder 15
Correspondence, 1965		

	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 16
Correspondence, 1966	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 17
Correspondence, 1967	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 18
Correspondence, 1968	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 19
Correspondence, 1969	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 20
Correspondence, 1970	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 21
Correspondence, 1971	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 22
Correspondence, 1972	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 23
Correspondence, 19713	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 24
Correspondence, 1974	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 25
Correspondence, 1916	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 26
Correspondence, 1978	Box 1 (3- Correspondence)	Folder 27

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Publicity, 1966-1978Undated

Physical Description: 0.04 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Contents

This series contains two photographs, one of noted manager of Engineering Applications at General Electric Dr. Thomas O. Paine, the other unidentified. The news clippings contain numerous articles about Freedom Forum lecturers, including an excerpt from a book written by African American former Republican Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts.

Title/Description	Instances
News Clippings, 1966-1978Undated	Box 1 (4- Publicity) Folder 28

1966-1978, Undated

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)