



Paula Kassell Papers (C4091)

Collection Number: C4091

Collection Title: Paula Kassell Papers

Dates: 1931-2007

Creator: Kassell, Paula, 1917-2012

Abstract: The papers of the director for *New Directions for Women* include personal and professional material, including her material concerning involvement in various feminist organizations. Included in the papers are correspondence, photographs, writings, awards, research projects, news clippings, and conference notes and speeches.

Collection Size: 3.5 cubic feet
(88 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia. If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Paula Kassell Papers* (C4091); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Paula Kassell on April 5, 2012 (Accession No. CA6192).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Paula Kassell Papers can be found in the following collection:

[*New Directions for Women Records*](#), (C4031)

Processed by: Processed by Jessica Bollinger on April 3, 2013. Finding aid revised by Elizabeth Engel on October 15, 2021.

Biographical Note:

Paula Sally Kassell was born on December 5, 1917, in New York City to Daniel and Bertha Kassell. In 1923, the family moved to Yonkers, New York, and soon after the move, Paula began school. After completing high school, Kassell enrolled in Barnard College, where she quickly discovered a passion for feminism, largely due to her reading Margaret Mead's book *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. Kassell graduated in 1939 with degrees in psychology and sociology.

In August 1941, Paula Kassell married Gerson Friedman and moved to Dover, New Jersey. For a short time, she worked in the social welfare field and after the birth of her son and daughter, she decided to stay home and raise her children. By 1955, Kassell was ready to rejoin the work force. She worked as a technical editor for a short time, but soon went to Bell Telephone Laboratories, where she worked until 1970.

When the feminist movement emerged in the 1960s, Kassell quickly became an avid participant. In 1967, she joined the National Organization for Women along with numerous other feminist organizations. Kassell became coordinator of New Jersey's first statewide feminist conference in 1971, and coordinated numerous other conferences for decades afterward.

In addition to coordinating and attending both international and national conferences, Kassell also led several campaigns to further women's rights. Her first campaign was to convince newspapers to integrate help wanted ads (they had previously been separated according to male and female categories). Other notable campaigns headed by Kassell were discrimination suits against *The New York Times* to encourage use of the term "Ms." and a campaign for equal pay. Additionally, Kassell founded and became chief editor of the *New Directions for Women* newspaper in 1971. *New Directions for Women* explored the political, legal, economic, and social issues that impacted women until the newspaper's discontinuation in 1993. A collection of Kassell's writings was published in 2009.

Paula Kassell continued her work furthering women's rights until her death on August 20, 2012, at the age of 94.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following two series:

Personal
Professional

Scope and Content Note:

The **Personal** series includes biographical information, awards, a diary, an autograph book, a scrapbook, college papers, correspondence with feminist friends, and articles chronicling Kassell's achievements and awards. Also included in the series are photographs, cards, and invitations for birthday celebrations.

The **Professional** series includes research projects, correspondence, speeches, and writings. The bulk of the series relates to Kassell's involvement in feminist conferences and organizations. The *New York Times* material includes correspondence concerning sexist language, and the use of the term "Ms.," as well as newspaper clippings, notes from stockholder meetings, and notes relating to Kassell's employment discrimination law suit. The Bell Labs material consists mostly of newspaper clippings and correspondence between Ms. Kassell and Bell Labs regarding the "de-sexregation" of phonebook directories. The Co-ops material includes correspondence between the ad sales co-op advisory board, formed by the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, concerning advertising tactics, as well as example ad sales in magazines and newspapers.

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