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Introduction

Approximately 60 cubic feet

The papers of Harriett Woods contain correspondence, senate bills, transcripts of senate committee hearings, newsletters, press releases, and photographs chronicling her life as a journalist, television producer, Lieutenant Governor, and Missouri State Senator from the 13th district. Subjects of interest include bills Woods sponsored for elderly tax relief, anti-drunk driving, and a program for the developmentally disabled. Included in the collection are materials relating to her unsuccessful campaign against John Danforth for a U.S. Senate seat in 1982. The materials in this collection date from 1939 to 2002.

Harriett Ruth Friedman was born in 1927 to Jewish parents, Armin and Ruth Friedman. She first lived in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. In 1936, her family moved to Chicago. She attended Hyde Park High School, where she enjoyed journalism class. Harriett won a scholarship to the University of Chicago College and took classes. In 1945 Friedman attended the University of Michigan. She was active in a variety of activities, including classes, music concerts, attending sporting events, and tutoring. She also worked for the Michigan Daily, a student newspaper. She also was the correspondent for the *Detroit Free Press*. After her junior year, she was hired as a reporter for the *Chicago Herald-American*. She graduated in June 1949.

After graduation, Woods had difficulty finding employment at a newspaper because she was a woman. However, she did get a job with the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. She joined the St. Louis Newspaper Guild, AFL-CIO. She also joined the St. Louis Philharmonic in the violin section. In 1952, she took an unpaid leave of absence and moved to Paris with a high school friend. She did not return to work at the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. She returned to America, and in 1953 she married James B. Woods, later regional vice president of the American Newspaper Guild.

Woods was a happy housewife waiting to be a mother. She started rebuilding her life in St. Louis and had three boys in four years, Chris, Peter, and Andrew. She became angry with a noisy manhole cover that would wake the children up from their naps. She petitioned the local governing body to fix it, but they did not help. So Woods got a signed petition from her neighbors, which resulted in blocking off the street. This incident was her introduction to politics. Woods later joined the League of Women Voters, was elected vice-president in her local Democratic Club, and wrote articles for *FOCUS Midwest*, a regional magazine. She was also a book reviewer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Then she became a moderator for KPLR-TV and later was hired to launch its public affairs department. She worked for the station from 1964 to 1974. In 1967, she became a member of the University City Council. She worked on many committees to help

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government-individual relations, to form a better community in University City, and to help the metropolitan area. She stepped down from the City Council in 1974 when Governor Christopher S. Bond appointed her to the Missouri State Transportation Commission.

She was elected to the Missouri State Senate in 1976 and re-elected for a second term in 1980. Senator Woods, a Democrat, is the second woman in Missouri history to be elected to the State Senate. As a senator, Woods' legislative concerns included urban affairs, problems of the elderly, health care, education, and creating a more open and responsive government. She sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment, which was defeated (22-12) in March 1977. She played a prominent role in the drafting and passage of the Nursing Home Bill of 1979. She worked for harsher punishment for drunk drivers.

Woods campaigned for the U.S. Senate in 1982 against Republican incumbent John Danforth. Her first obstacle was the primary, where she faced several opponents and was not backed by the Democratic Party leaders. However, she did win the primary. Then she faced the next obstacle; Danforth was well known with a record. She worked hard to get her name and issues to the voters and eventually won endorsements from various labor unions and women's political organizations. During the campaign, Woods took stances against the Reagan administration's economic policies and an amendment to balance the federal budget. She supported federal support to farmers and a nuclear weapons freeze. She also supported legalized abortion, because she felt that the decision was between the woman, her family, her church, and her doctor, not for the government to control. By the end of the election, Woods increased her profile among the electorate, leading to a close election. Woods only lost by a 51 to 49 percent margin. She then finished the remaining two years of her term as a state senator.

In 1984, she ran for Missouri Lieutenant Governor, a position that would give her the freedom to meet with people and work on issues to help them and to prepare her for another U.S. Senate election later. Going into the campaign, many voters recognized her name and issues because of her campaign for U.S. Senate. She was elected and was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor in January 1985. Woods was the only Democrat to win statewide office that year and was the first woman to win statewide office in Missouri. This position held little power: Woods's duties consisted of presiding over the Senate and acting as Governor when the Governor was out of the state. Woods used the opportunity to talk with Missouri citizens and address their concerns, including the farm crisis, homelessness, limited guardianship for elderly and disabled, voluntarism, development of small businesses and entrepreneurship, and reform of the procedures for Efficiency (SAVE), a toll-free number hotline for state employees to share suggestions about how to end government waste of taxpayers' money.

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In 1986, Woods ran for U.S. Senate again because Missouri Democratic Senator Thomas Eagleton retired. She was supported by organized labor unions, environmentalists, teachers, seniors, women's groups, and several Democratic politicians, including Thomas Eagleton. During the campaign, Woods focused on helping farmers during the farm crisis, increasing attention on transportation, small business and entrepreneur development, a nuclear arms freeze, and legalized abortion. She easily won the primary, but she lost the election to former Missouri Governor Christopher Bond. She finished serving her remaining two years as Lieutenant Governor. She also led Missouri's delegation to the Democratic Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, and was co-chair for Richard Gephardt's presidential campaign. She did not run for a second term as Lieutenant Governor. Even after she retired from political office, Woods remained a political activist.

In the fall of 1988, she became a Fellow of the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She taught "Getting Inside When You're Outside: Women in Leadership." In February 1989, Woods became the president of the Institute for Policy Leadership at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. She focused on homelessness and housing, which led to the formation of the Regional Housing Alliance. She also worked with Missouri Alliance for Choice and Missourians for Choice to promote pro-choice. Even though she was not in political office, she still wrote, spoke, and advocated for issues.

In 1991, she became President of the National Women's Political Caucus because she wanted to help women run and win office and to be a national spokeswoman. She planned to recruit, train, and support women for elected and appointed office. She spoke out about Clarence Thomas to bar him from becoming a Supreme Court Justice because of his alleged sexual harassment of Anita Hill. She did work with and mentor many women candidates. She retired in 1996. She also taught classes at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, including "Risk Takers ... Who Changed History: The Modern Women's Movement" and "American Women in Public Life: Gender and Power in Today's World." Woods also wrote many newspaper articles after her retirement, and she wrote books, including *The Truth About Women - Politics & Power: One by One by One, Political Women and the New Millennium, Stepping Up to Power, The Political Journey of American Women*. Harriett Woods died on February 8, 2007.

Donor Information

The papers were donated to University of Missouri by Harriett F. Woods on August 30, 1977 (Accession No. SA1124). An addition was made on January 16, 1979 by Harriett F. Woods (Accession No. SA2113). An addition was made on August 7, 1980 by Harriett F. woods (Accession No. SA2315). An addition was made on October 28, 1980 by Harriett F. Woods (Accession No. SA2340). An addition was made on July 28, 1981 by Harriett,

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