



## St. Louis Women's Labor Conference Collection (S0110)

**Collection Number:** S0110

**Collection Title:** St. Louis Women's Labor Conference Collection

**Dates:** 1971-1974, bulk 1973

**Creator:** St. Louis Women's Labor Conference

**Abstract:** The St. Louis Women's Labor Conference met in 1973 to discuss working women's issues such as organizing the unorganized, job training, equal pay and advancement, and daycare. Conference participants listened to speeches by prominent women unionists, attended workshops, and passed resolutions as part of a larger plan that was designed to further women's positions in the workforce. The collection includes correspondence, flyers, a meeting packet, resolutions, and handouts.

**Collection Size:** 0.01 cubic foot  
(1 folder)

**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-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at [stlouis@shsmo.org](mailto:stlouis@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *St. Louis Women's Labor Conference Collection* (S0110); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

**Donor Information:** The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Lucy Layne on March 7, 1974 (Accession No. SA0383). An addition was made on May 29, 1974 by Myrna Fichtenbaum (Accession No. SA0407).

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the St. Louis Women's Labor Conference can be found in the following collections:

*Coalition of Labor Union Women, St. Louis Records (S0106)*

*Ora Lee Malone Papers (S0383)*

*Winnie Lippman Papers (S0922)*

**Processed by:** Western Historical Manuscripts Collection staff, date unknown. Revised by Emery Cox, December 4, 2019.

### **Historical Note:**

The St. Louis Women's Labor Conference took place at Teamsters Council Plaza, 300 South Grand Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri on Saturday, November 17, 1973. The conference welcomed all working women, black and white, organized and unorganized (that is, both union and non-union). The agenda comprised introductory speeches, two keynote addresses, workshops, and a concluding session that passed resolutions. Group-discussion workshops engaged in topics such as higher wages (and wages equal to men's), ending discrimination, healthcare, childcare, job training, and greater women's participation in unions.

Activist and labor organizer Ora Lee Malone of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America chaired the convention, and Addie L. Wyatt (Director of Women's Affairs for the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen) gave a keynote address called "Organizing the Unorganized - Economic Security for Women." Other labor leaders who ran workshops or gave speeches included Florence Criley, International Representative of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America; Oscar Ehrhardt, President of the St. Louis Labor Council; and Marjorie Stern and Jean Thurmond of the American Federation of Teachers.

The gathering shared accounts of problems that women in the workforce experienced and brainstormed solutions. Participants ended up adopting twenty-four itemized resolutions with such proposals as a higher minimum wage, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, universal healthcare, endorsement of strikes by St. Louis Hospital Workers and Farah workers, and increasing women's participation in union leadership. Some of the resolutions also created a "Continuations Committee" and directed it to follow up with other labor conferences, union leaders, and academia.

The St. Louis Women's Labor Conference resolutions were part of the framework for a forthcoming national women's labor coalition. On June 30, 1973, the Midwest Conference of Union Women had convened in Chicago, Illinois. It comprised over 200 delegates from various unions who planned local conventions of working women, within the Midwest and in other regions, in preparation for a national conference to organize women in all sectors of the labor movement. The St. Louis Women's Labor Conference was one such regional meeting, and Ora Lee Malone, in a follow-up letter, mentioned that the enthusiasm was "gratifying" and expressed optimism that the momentum would lead to a broader assembly. That national conference took place in Chicago, Illinois on March 22-24, 1974 and created the Coalition of Labor Union Women ("CLUW"), part of the AFL-CIO.

With the founding of CLUW, no further independent St. Louis Women's Labor Conferences met. CLUW continues as one of the constituency groups of the AFL-CIO, and the St. Louis Chapter of CLUW is active today.

**Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into one folder.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The St. Louis Women's Labor Conference Collection contains correspondence, flyers, a meeting packet, resolutions, and handouts relating to women in the workforce, trade unions, and labor law. The bulk of the collection dates to the conference itself and the months immediately before. Official conference documents include a meeting packet with a statement of purpose, schedule, and list of organizers. The proceedings of the conference as a whole are reflected in a typed list of resolutions; a typed draft of the resolutions is also present. The collection also contains related materials on women's rights, especially with respect to labor, some of which were given as handouts. Other items of interest include Farah Strike Bulletin No. 15 (April 1973), subtitled "VIVA LA HUELGA," and a St. Louis Women's Labor Conference button with the motto "Sisterhood - Solidarity" and an image of two hands clasping, one black and one white.

**Container List:**

f. 1                      St. Louis Women's Labor Conference, 1971-1974

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