PRELIMINARY INVENTORY S0674 (SA3391, SA3766, SA3794, SA3911, SA3919, SA3939, SA4150) OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE RECORDS

This collection is available at <u>The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis</u>. If you would like more information, please contact us at <u>stlouis@shsmo.org</u>.

Introduction

Approximately 25 cubic feet

The Older Women's League (OWL), founded in 1981, is a national membership organization with more than 30,000 members and 1000 chapters. The St. Louis Gateway Chapter, one of the largest with 350 members, was founded in 1985. OWL's mission is to improve the image and status of mid-life and older women through grassroots advocacy, mutual support, and education. The collection includes correspondence newsletters, meeting minutes, reports, and photographs.

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The Violence Committee studies methods to end the cycle of violence in the lives of older women in the St. Louis area who are victims of domestic violence. The Health Care Committee advocates for health care reforms at the State and National levels. The OWL Gateway Chapter was influential in the passage of durable power of attorney for health care legislation and the continuation of health care benefits under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) law. In 1995 OWL members testified for the breast cancer insurance reform bill in both houses, the osteoporosis education and prevention bill, and the Missouri Health Assurance bill. The Committee supports collaborative citizen actions and keeps the membership and general public current concerning health through its newsletter, meetings, and a Speaker's Bureau. The Bureau has presented information groups of retirees, senior citizens, and families of disabled patients.

The Housing Committee advocates affordable, safe shared housing arrangements in the state of Missouri providing legislative testimony to change crippling laws. The highly recognized Mid-life Divorce Support Group offers peer support and information to women experiencing divorce after 20 or more years of marriage. The group of 15-20 women meets weekly and has served more than 200 women adjusting to divorce. Several are counselors who refer their clients to the support group.

The troupe of members performs 'Courageous Women in History,' a skit developed by the Gateway Chapter depicting outstanding women, including Susan B. Anthony, Eleanor

Roosevelt, and Margaret Sanger. In the past, this educational project has performed for teacher's organizations, conventions, and social groups.

Donor Information

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