Inventory of the Stella Religa Collection SPC.1900.035

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California State University Dominguez Hills, Gerth Archives and Special Collections
2016
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Contributing Institution: California State University Dominguez Hills, Gerth Archives and Special Collections
Title: Stella Religa Collection
Creator: Religa, Stella
Identifier/Call Number: SPC.1900.035
Physical Description: 4 Linear Feet (8 unprocessed boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1918-2013
Date (bulk): 1960-1980
Abstract: The Stella Religa Collection contains material relating to politics, civil rights and helping victims of domestic violence. The collection concentrates on Stella Religa's participation in local city government, activism, organizations for equality, women's rights, and shelters for battered women and children. This includes several decades of Stella Religa's participation as an activist in Whittier, CA and Chicago, IL. The memorabilia spans several decades of involvement with the Democratic Party, The Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A., and the National Organization of Women (N.O.W.). Included in the collection are books and periodicals, campaign material, manuscripts for television, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, newsletters, photographs, film, and audio cassettes.
Language of Material: English
Availability
Collection is unprocessed and requires advance notice for research access.
Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Director of Archives and Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical materials and not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.
Preferred Citation
[title of item] Stella Religa Collection, Courtesy of the Gerth Archives and Special Collections. University Library. California State University, Dominguez Hills
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection donated to CSUDH Archives by Sharilyn Religa.
Biography
Stella Religa was born Stella Gertrude Cerny on April 8, 1919 in Aberdeen, Washington to Christine Marie and Frank Cerny. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia at the onset of World War I. When Stella was old enough she began work as a stenographer for the telephone company (the Western Electric Division of AT&T) in Chicago, IL. A year later Stella met John Religa who shipped off in 1942 to work with the Army as a Radar Mechanic in Hawaii. John was a Sergeant in the United States Army Air Corps from 1942, until 1946. In 1946, Stella and John married and moved to California. In 1951, the couple had their first son, adding another son to their home on September 1953. Their last and final child Sharilyn Jean was born in December 1957.
Stella and John moved their family and eventually settled in Whittier. John eventually became Vice President of the Trust Department at Crocker National Bank. Stella became involved in issues related to women's equality, the Equal Rights Amendment and the Democratic Party. Stella protested against the Vietnam War and was very proud to be an important part of starting a shelter for battered women and children. In 1968, she served as a delegate to the Democratic Party's National Convention in Chicago. In the late 1960s, she ran for the city council in Whittier.
In 1977, Stella Religa was an integral part in starting the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter, Inc. (WCCS). In Whittier as President of the Board of Directors of the WCCS Stella helped establish a shelter facility and later an auxiliary building named Stella's Friendship House. In addition, she worked for thirty years in the formation of quality programs to assist thousands of victims of domestic violence. She was the driving force in establishing the SRH, the fund raising organization for WCCS. The SRH, maintains an all-volunteer thrift shop called "Sacks on the Boulevard.” In 2016, for its 20th year anniversary SRH produced a 5k walk, “Stepping out against Domestic Violence.” Stella passed away in March 2016.
Scope and Contents
The Stella Religa Collection consists of Stella Religa's professional and personal papers during her time in Whittier, California where she was instrumental in starting the Women's and Children's Crisis Shelter, Inc. (WCCS) in 1977. As President of the Board of Directors for the WCCS, Stella oversaw the establishment of the shelter facility and later an auxiliary building named Stella's Friendship House. Materials include letters, correspondence, documents, activist material, photos, magazines and newspapers. The newspapers cover major historical events in politics from 1918, until 2003. The collection relating to the E.R.A. and N.O.W include photos and newspaper articles that chronicle Stella's involvement in
politics. The political material in the collection includes documents from both the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago where Stella served as a delegate to the Democratic Party and when she ran for the city council in Whittier, showing her involvement in local city government as well. Also includes a good number of bumper stickers and political pins

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Whittier (Calif.)

Chicago (Ill.)

Equal rights amendments--United States

National Organization for Women. Los Angeles Chapter