S0436 Missouri Public Interest Research Group (Moprig)  
165 Folders

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The records of the Missouri Public Interest Research Group were donated to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-St. Louis at the University of Missouri-St. Louis by MOPIRG co-director, Tom Ryan, on August 27, 1981.

MOPIRG began in March, 1971, after students at St. Louis University heard a speech by Ralph Nader. Nader inspired the students to organize citizen action groups modeled after similar groups in Oregon and Minnesota. The Center for Student Action at St. Louis University and the Missouri Public Action Council at Washington University lobbied to establish a public interest research organization funded by a small assessment added to student activities fees. Student referenda on both campuses supported the fee assessment. The two student groups combined their operations and formed MOPIRG. MOPIRG is a research and advocacy organization for consumer, citizen, and student interests in Missouri.

MoPIRG's earliest campaigns included a successful appeal to the Federal Trade Commission to investigate deceptive advertising and sales practices by some St. Louis used car dealers in 1972. The group was also represented on the St. Louis Advertising Review Board, a self-regulatory board of the Advertising Club and the Better Business Bureau. MOPIRG gained national attention for its criticism of self-regulation by the advertising industry. MOPIRG also championed the right to representation for St. Louis City Jail prisoners. Their proposal led to the establishment of an ombudsman position by the St. Louis Department of Welfare in August, 1973.

MOPIRG was active in campaigns to stop legislation that would raise the legal ceiling of small loan interest rates in Missouri, drafted a consumer protection ordinance presented to the St. Louis Board of Aldermen in September, 1973, and published research on a variety of consumer and citizen related issues. It researched and developed legislation that helped improve workers' compensation laws in Missouri and was also successful in stopping an effort to eliminate the public display rating system for area restaurants. From 1975 to 1981, MOPIRG developed a comprehensive revision of the state landlord-tenant law and successfully worked for its passage twice in the Missouri House of Representatives, although the bill was defeated both times in the Senate.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter attempted to reform the patronage system of judicial selection for the Circuit Court of Appeals. MOPIRG responded by forming a coalition of eleven political organizations, including the League of Women Voters and the NAACP, to urge Senator Thomas Eagleton to establish a merit nominating process on the state level. Senator Eagleton's resistance to this idea led MOPIRG to work successfully for legislation
requiring the President to develop merit selection guidelines.

Other issues MOPIRG has been involved with include requiring school testing services to make test results available to students, curbing utility rate increases, reforming media practices, and passing a national advisory referendum that would allow a non-binding public vote on government policy questions. Although funding for the group has decreased with a concomitant decrease in student activism, MOPIRG continues to work for social reform.

The Missouri Public Interest Research Group records of 1971 to 1981 document the founding and early history of the group, the development of MOPIRG legislative proposals, attempts to establish PIRG's on other St. Louis campuses, and group campaigns for various social reforms, with significant amounts of material on consumer protection, landlord-tenant law, and the merit selection of judges.

Included with the collection are board meeting minutes, bylaws, news releases, press clippings, public testimony, memoranda, legislative research and proposals, notes, correspondence, surveys, petitions and publications.

The collection is divided into four series: (1) Organizational Records; (2) Subject Files; (3) Publications; (4) Scrapbooks.

SERIES DESCRIPTION
The organization and Administration series includes board meeting minutes, bylaws, news releases, correspondence, press clippings, and legislative memoranda. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES 2 - SUBJECT FILES, 1971-1981, Folders 31-140
The Subject Files series include notes, public testimony, correspondence, surveys, memoranda, reports, legislative proposals, notes, petitions, newscloppings, flyers, and endorsements. Arranged alphabetically with substantial amounts of material filed under Consumer Protection Law (Folders 46-56); Landlord-Tenant Law (Folders 81-95); and Merit Selection of Judges (Folders 96-112).

The Publications series includes handbooks, guides, information booklets and proposals published by MOPIRG. It also includes issues of MOPIRG News Notes and MOPIRG Reports. Arranged alphabetically.

SERIES 4 - SCRAPBOOKS, 1971-1977, folders 161-165
The Scrapbooks series includes five press clippings scrapbooks. Arranged chronologically.

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2. Board Meeting Minutes, 1971-1973
3. Board Meeting Minutes, 1973
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8. Introduction to Political Fund Raising, nd.
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22. Press Clippings, Campus, 1974-1978
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27. University of Missouri, MOPIRG Chapter, Attorney General's Opinion, 1975
28. University of Missouri-St. Louis, Legal Memorandum and Correspondence on Establishing MOPIRG Chapter, 1972-1975
29. University of Missouri-St. Louis, Proposal to Establish MOPIRG Chapter, 1972-1975
30. University of Missouri-St. Louis, Proposed MOPIRG Chapter Correspondence, 1973-1975 (See also University Archives Student Organizations)

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34. Citizens Consumer Advisory Commission, Correspondence, 1972
35. Class Action Suits, General, 1972
36. Comments and Petitions to Federal Agencies, 1974-1976
37. Consumer Affairs Division, Missouri Statute, nd.
38. Consumer Affairs Office, St. Louis, Candidate Surveys, 1977
39. Consumer Affairs Office, St. Louis, Correspondence, 1973
40. Consumer Affairs Office, St. Louis, Established Support, 1977
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42. Consumer Affairs Office, St. Louis, Notes, Reports and Newsclippings, 1977
43. Consumer Affairs Office, St. Louis, Pending Support Sources, 1977
44. Consumer Cases, KMOX Call for Action, 1978
45. Consumer Groups, Descriptive Literature, 1972-1973
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58. Credit Life Insurance, Correspondence, 1976
60. Federal Trade Commission, Cigarette Advertising, Correspondence, 1975-1977
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64. Federal Trade Commission, National Advertising Board of Review Petition, 1976
67. Federal Trade Commission, Used Car Financing in St. Louis, Correspondence, 1976

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75. Holder in Due Course, Reports and Testimony, 1972-1973
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77. Housing, The Model Lease, nd.
78. Housing Project, nd.
79. Juvenile Court Commissioner Appointment, December, 1977
80. Laclede Gas, Non-Rate Policies, Notes and Report, 1975
81. Landlord-Tenant Law, Background for Tenants Handbook,, 1979
82. Landlord-Tenant Law, Board Bill 198, 1980
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145. Emergency Medical Services in St. Louis, A Review of 911 Phone Systems, Categorization of Hospital Emergency Services, St. Louis City Ambulance Service, nd.
146. Handbook on Women and the Law in Missouri, 1977
151. MOPIRG News Notes, 1974
152. MOPIRG Reports, 1974-1981
156. Public Service Guide for Radio and TV, 1980
159. What Can We Do About the City Jail? A Proposal to Establish An Ombudsman for the St. Louis City Jail, 1973
160. Workmens' Compensation in Missouri, 1973

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