S0745 Senturia, Ben (1943- )
Papers, 1976-1987
50 Folders, Artifacts, 12 Photographs, 2 Tapes

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shresearch@umsystem.edu.

This collection is stored off site. Please allow 3-5 business days for retrieval.

Related collections:

St. Louisan Ben Senturia (b. 9/23/43) donated these papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri St. Louis on August 28, 1992.

Long active in environmental, antiwar and political reform efforts, Senturia graduated from Washington University in 1966. He served as a research assistant for Barry Commoner, an early and ardent environmentalist, from 1966 through 1968. Senturia became a predoctoral fellow in the Environmental Field Program at Washington University at this time. Thereafter, he worked as an organizer and campaign consultant for a variety of public interest, non-profit organizations, chief among them were the St. Louis Coalition for the Environment (for which he served as Executive Vice President, 1970-1972, Executive Director, 1972-1977, and then as a member of the Coalition's Board of Directors) and the St. Louis based Clearinghouse for the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (as Education/Outreach Coordinator, 1982-1986.) Throughout this time and beyond, Senturia frequently acted as a consultant to numerous nonprofit organizations, assisting them in organizing and directing political or fund-raising campaigns as part of a private business, the Center for Active Citizenship, organized in 1989.


SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1-CITIZENS FOR REFORMED ELECTRIC RATES, PROPOSITION 1, 1976, FOLDERS 1-8

In December 1975, the Missouri Public Service Commission approved a policy called Construction Work in Progress (CWIP). CWIP allowed Union Electric to increase electric rates to finance in part the construction of its Callaway nuclear power plant. Consumers were expected to pay part of the construction costs of the plant before it began producing power (see collection S0423).

The public service commission's decision generated immediate opposition.' By March 1976, the Utility Consumers Council of Missouri, the Missouri Public Interest Group, the St. Louis
Coalition for the Environment, among several consumer and environmental groups, formed
the Citizens for Reformed Electric Rates. CRER headed a successful state-wide effort to
place a proposition on the ballot that would overturn the Public Service Commission's award
of CWIP to Union Electric. Voters approved Proposition 1 and reversed the CWIP decision.'
Arranged by topic under the following subseries: Petition campaign for Proposition 1 (f.1-2);
Campaign material for Proposition 1 (f.3-4); newspaper coverage of Proposition 1 (f.4);
nuclear power regulatory campaigns, various states, 1976 (f.6-8).

SERIES 2-CITIZENS FOR A RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY (CRP) 1980,
FOLDERS 9-12

In December 1979, environmental groups from across Missouri, opposed to the construction
of nuclear power plants, met to organize a political effort to prevent the completion of Union
Electric's Callaway nuclear power station. The groups, including St. Louis-based
environmental organizations, formed Citizens for a Radioactive Waste Policy. CRP worked
to place Proposition 11 on the November 1980 ballot. Prop 11 provided that any firm building
a nuclear power plant in Missouri had to develop a long term nuclear waste disposal policy
before construction permits could be issued. CRP succeeded in putting Proposition 11 on the
1980 ballot but voters soundly rejected the issue. Union Electric and its supporters outspent
the CRP $1,428,677 to $50,636.02. Arranged by topic under the following subseries: CRP
campaign material for Prop. 11 (f. 9); CRP get-out-the-vote effort (f.10);' newspaper
coverage of the Prop. 11 issue, (f.11) opposition to Prop. 11 (f12).

SERIES 3-ST. LOUIS COMMITTEE TO HELP HANDICAPPED EMPLOYMENT
AND LIVING PROGRAMS, 1980, FOLDER 13

HELPsupported St. Louis City Proposition No. 1 to levy a $.05 property tax increase to
provide funds for the support of handicapped adults living in the city. The funds would
provide sheltered workshop jobs and residential facilities. Material in this subseries deals
with getting yes voters to go to the polls in the August 1980 primary election (f. 13).

SERIES 4-NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREEZE CAMPAIGN (NATIONAL CLEARING
HOUSE, ST. LOUIS), 1982-1986, FOLDERS 14-38

(Note: WHMC holds the official records of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, donated
by its long-serving director Randy Kehler. ' See S0454 for a detailed description of that
holding.)

The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign opened its St. Louis office in December 1981.' The
St. Louis office, dubbed as the National Clearinghouse, served as the permanent
administrative office for the NWFC. Ben Senturia served as political education/outreach
coordinator for the National Clearinghouse and this series reflects that role.' The records deal
chiefly with developing, organizing, and supporting state and local political activity in
support of a nuclear weapons freeze in the early and mid-1980s. The NWFC campaign
culminated in the 1984 elections with a nationwide push to elect senators and congressmen
willing to approve legislation freezing nuclear weapons production. Series 4 is arranged by
topic under the following subseries:‘ early lobbying efforts to win a nuclear freeze, 1981
through 1983, (f.21-34); the 1984 election effort (f.35-38).
In 1985, William "Bill" Bidwell, owner of the St. Louis Cardinals football team, threatened to move his organization to another city unless the city of St. Louis or St. Louis County built a domed stadium to house the team. St. Louis County Executive Eugene McNary embraced the idea and worked to find a private corporation to build the stadium while offering the county's political and financial support in the effort. Sverdrup Corporation, a major St. Louis construction firm, owned 500 acres of land near the Earth City complex in far western St. Louis County, along the Missouri River. Sverdrup sponsored a feasibility study on building a domed stadium on some of that property. County Executive McNary endorsed the idea. The proposed dome project led to the formation in February 1986 of a "No Dome" Committee organized by a coalition of environmental groups (notably the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and the St. Louis region Open Space Council) and other civic groups. Environmentalists particularly opposed the proposal because Sverdrup's property lay within a federally protected wetland area. The "No Dome" committee employed Ben Senturia to direct its "No Dome" campaign. The City of St. Louis, led by Major Vincent C. Schoemehl, Jr., and Anheuser-Busch, owner the baseball Cardinals, opposed the idea as well. For much of 1986, the "No Dome" Committee gathered petitions, advertised the "No Dome" theme, and urged county municipalities to approve resolutions opposing the plan. In the end, the stadium proposal failed to win widespread support. Arranged by topic under the following subseries: the stadium proposal (f.39); organizing and directing opposition to the dome (f.40-41); newspaper coverage to the campaign (f.42); study opposing the stadium, 1986 (f.43); legal action against the dome (f.44-45).
6. Campaign Material from California, to regulate nuclear power, 1976
7. Campaign Material from California, to regulate nuclear power, 1976
8. Campaign Material to regulate nuclear power, various states, 1976

Series 2-CITIZENS FOR A RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY (CRP), PROPOSITION 11, 1980

9. CRP, Proposition 1, Organizing the Petition effort
10. CRP, Get out the vote effort, Proposition 1
11. Newspaper Coverage on the Proposition 1 campaign
12. Opposition to Proposition 11

Series 3-ST. LOUIS COMMITTEE TO HELP HANDICAPPED EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING PROGRAMS, 1980

13. Campaign Material for the HELP issue, Proposition 1

Series 4-NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREEZE CAMPAIGN (NWFC, NATIONAL CLEARING HOUSE, ST. LOUIS, 1982-1986
17. NWFC National Committee Meetings, July 1984, 1985

BOX 2 (062517)
Folders 19-38

SERIES 4, (CONT'D)

20. NWFC, Closing the St. Louis Clearing House, 1984-1985
22. NWFC, the 1982 election and the nuclear freeze issue
25. General information on a nuclear weapons and a nuclear freeze, 1982-1984
27. News clippings on a nuclear freeze, 1983-1985
28. General information on nuclear freeze efforts, 1983-1985
29. Planning the "Freeze Voter Campaign" for 1984 election
30. Essays on a nuclear freeze
31. NWFC planning, 1983-1985
32. Direct action for a nuclear freeze, 1983-1985
33. "Lifecycle" in support of NWFC, 1984
34. Information on the economic impact of nuclear weapons
35. Nuclear weapons and 1984 election
36. "Bird Dog" campaign and nuclear weapons freeze, 1984 election
37. Freeze voter campaign, 1984
38. "Turn out the vote" effort, election-day, November 6, 1984

BOX 3 (067518)
Folders 39-49

SERIES 5-THE "NO DOME" CAMPAIGN, 1985-1986

39. The stadium proposal, 1985-1986
40. Organizing and directing the “No Dome” campaign
41. The petitioning effort, 1985-1986
42. Newspaper coverage of the “No Dome” issue, 1985-1986
43. Study opposing building the dome, 1986
44. Legal action against building the dome, 1986-1987
45. Legal action against building the dome, 1987

SERIES 6-CAMPAIGN HANDOUTS

46. Campaign handouts from all the series

SERIES 7-ARTIFACTS

47. Campaign button
48. Decals and bumper stickers

SERIES 8 TAPES

49. T745.1, T745.2

50. Photographs, 745.1-745.12