

C New Directions for News, Research Project, Papers, 1972-1988  
3901 7.4 linear feet and 1 audio cassette

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## INTRODUCTION

Papers consist of newspaper clippings, research data, reports, correspondence and miscellaneous material documenting a 1981-1983 research project that analyzed U.S. newspaper coverage of several women's issues and events of the previous decade and published its findings in a report in 1983. Virginia R. Allan was director, Catherine East was issues specialist, and Dorothy Misener Journey was media specialist on the project. The project led to the establishment of an independent newspaper think tank and research organization of the same name at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. Material related to the MU program is in a separate collection.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The New Directions for News, Research Project, Papers were donated to the University of Missouri by the originators of the study: Dorothy Journey on 19 October 1988, with additions on 24 May 1989, 12 June 1989 and 18 July 1989 (Accession No. 4886 ); Catherine East on 11 May 1990 (Accession No. 4953); and Virginia Allan on 12 August 1992 (Accession No. 5210 ). The papers are part of the National Women and Media Collection.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SKETCH

In 1979 Virginia R. Allan, head of the Women's Studies Program and Policy Center at George Washington University, conceived a research project designed to analyze whether U.S. newspaper coverage played a role in the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment. A former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and President of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Allan became director of the project.

Catherine East, a staff member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission and executive secretary for the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women and the Citizen's Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1963 to 1975, held the position of issues specialist. Dorothy Misener Journey's distinguished career as a reporter and editor on several newspapers qualified her as media specialist for the project. Journey and East coauthored the 1983 report resulting from the study.

To increase objectivity and provide a comparison, the project studied the newspaper coverage of five other women's issues and events from 1972 to 1980 besides the E.R.A. They were: domestic relations law; the 1977 National Women's Conference at Houston, Texas; the 1980 United Nations World Conference for Women at Copenhagen, Denmark; pay equity; and the enforcement of Title IX (equality in education). The study analyzed 1,096 clippings from ten newspapers of differing sizes and geographical locations: *Arizona Daily Star*, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Dallas Times-Herald*, *Denver Post*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The study was financed by nine newspapers and newspaper foundations and sponsored by George Washington University.

The findings and recommendations were published in a twenty-four page, tabloid-style

report in 1983. The report's main conclusion was that newspaper coverage of all six topics was generally inadequate or mishandled. According to the report, many editors either lacked knowledge of the topics or had no understanding of their impact on the readers.

Academic and journalistic advisors involved with the project felt that the study's findings could be applied not only to women's issues, but to the reporting of other social issues as well. A committee of interested people began to consider taking New Directions for News into a second phase---one that would encourage newspapers to shift some of their attention from immediate news happenings to social trends and to the consequences of major news developments in areas such as sociology, business, industry, physical science, politics, ethics, the family, religion, and education. The new program, also called New Directions for News, would bring editors and publishers together with various experts in workshops and seminars. They would explore new approaches to journalism and develop reporting techniques for improved coverage of emerging trends in these fields. NDN would then provide video and audio tapes and seminar transcripts to newsrooms around the country.

Between 1984 and 1987, a Council of Advisors, comprised of distinguished news people and academics, was named, and the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism was chosen to house the NDN program and staff. Fund raising efforts produced the necessary financial support to establish the new program at MU in March 1987 with Jean Gaddy Wilson as director.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The New Direction for News, Research Project, Papers consist of newspaper clippings, research data, reports, correspondence and miscellaneous material documenting a 1981-1983 research project that analyzed U.S. newspaper coverage of several women's issues and events of the previous decade. The papers consist of donations from project participants Virginia Allan, Catherine East, and Dorothy Journey and are arranged into three series, **Correspondence**, **Project Data**, and **Phase II**. Those materials from Ms. Journey's papers that have no relation to New Directions for News were removed from this collection and form a separate collection of personal papers.

The **Correspondence** series, arranged chronologically, 1979-1988, consists of both incoming and outgoing correspondence from the papers of all three donors, with the bulk generated by Dorothy Journey. This series documents the initial planning of the project, opinions of other journalists, requests for support, and exchange of ideas among the participants of the project. After the 1983 publication of the report generated by the study, Journey and others, including Jean Gaddy Wilson of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism, corresponded about the possibility of establishing a second phase of New Directions for News as an ongoing program. The search for a location, staff and funding to carry out the findings of the research project engaged Journey and Wilson until 1987.

The **Project Data** series, comprising the bulk of this collection, is arranged roughly chronologically into three sections: background material for the project, the six issues upon which the study is based, and documents dealing with the production and distribution of the 1983 report. The background material consists of biographical information about the participants; grant proposals; fund raising requests and budgets; advisory board membership, correspondence, and meeting agendas; and clippings, reports and pamphlets of background research on various

topics related to media and women.

The second section of this series, the specific issues and events studied in the project, is arranged by issue in the order covered in the 1983 report: domestic relations law, the 1977 National Women's Conference at Houston, the 1980 World Conference for Women at Copenhagen, the legal impact of the Equal Rights Amendment, pay equity, and the enforcement of Title IX (equality in education). Within each of these subdivisions are clippings, reports, and statistics of background data for each issue, as well as information about coding the articles, computer printouts of the statistical data, and drafts of the findings for the published report. Folder 332 in the ERA section includes an audio cassette of the reactions and comments about the newspaper coverage by the graduate students who read and coded the articles for the study.

The largest part of each issue subdivision consists of the actual clippings used in the study, arranged alphabetically by the participating newspaper. These clippings provide an interesting survey of what was being written about women's issues during the 1970s and are the basis for the conclusions drawn by Dorothy Journey and Catherine East in the published report.

The third section of the **Project Data** series includes material related to the production, promotion and distribution of the 24 page, tabloid-style report of the findings of the study. A copy of the published report is in folder 439.

The **Phase II** series, also arranged roughly chronologically, consists of clippings, reports, proposals, fund raising data and promotional material related to the planning and establishment in 1987 of New Directions for News, an independent newspaper think tank housed at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. Folders 459-479 contain newspaper and magazine articles on a variety of social, scientific, and business trends and issues for use as ideas for NDN seminars and workshops to help develop reporting techniques of the future. Material related to the MU organization after 1987 can be found in a separate collection.

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