

C Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice, Records, 1973-1982
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INTRODUCTION

The Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice (MCCJ) was organized on 14 June 1975, as an expansion and replacement for the Missouri Citizens for Corrections which was active from 1973 through 1974. The coalition's purpose was to educate the public on prison conditions and promote programs of education and rehabilitation in cooperation with the Missouri State Division of Corrections. Grants from the Missouri Committee for the Humanities sponsored classes and tutoring sessions at the Missouri State Prison and the Renz Correctional Facility in Jefferson City, and the Women's State Correctional Prison in Tipton. Later grants funded panel discussions across the state. The narrative grant proposals and final reports, which detail the programming, are within the collection. MCCJ was a cooperative effort of many organizations and individuals but Dr. J. Noel Heermance, professor of English at Lincoln University, Jefferson City, was the director and driving force.

DONOR INFORMATION

The MCCJ Records were donated to the University of Missouri over the years from 1978 through 1984, by J. Noel Heermance, coordinator of the organization. See the Information Folder for complete donor information.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKETCH

In 1973 professors from Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri, taught humanities classes at the Missouri State Prison. On 4 June 1974 Gerald R. Higgins, Assistant Superintendent for the Department of Corrections at the prison, cancelled the educational programs. The work of Dr. J. Noel Heermance with these classes led him to organize the Missouri Citizens for Corrections which evolved into the Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice.

The purpose of Missouri Citizens for Corrections was to educate the public on issues of rehabilitation and education. Within this context issues of prison brutality and injustice were publicized. Most of the organization's work was grant funded by the Missouri Humanities Council and the Missouri Association for Social Welfare.

On 14 June 1975, the state-wide Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice was organized and supplanted the Missouri Citizens for Corrections. Among the groups participating were the N.A.A.C.P., the Coalition Against Racism and Political Repression, the Missouri Catholic Conference, the Women's Political Caucus, PUSH, the Missouri Association for Social Welfare, LIFERS INC., the Missouri Council of Churches, and the Church of the New Song. These groups hoped to combine their expertise and produce an organization able to effect change and promote education as a primary tool for rehabilitation.

By the second meeting in July 1975, membership had doubled from the initial 80. An official statement of purpose was ratified and three priorities were set. The purpose indicated a desire to work with the Department of Corrections to improve the prison system and return offenders to society as successful and productive citizens. The immediate priorities were to establish a newsletter, raise monies in support of the Department of Corrections' purchase of a bus

for the State Women's Correctional Center at Tipton, and organize legislative lobbying.

Grant funded panel discussions were held across the state to educate the public on the conditions existing within Missouri prisons and the problems of recidivism. The panels were conducted by Heermance with the participation of inmates and ex-offenders who gave firsthand accounts. The panels increased the readership of the organization's newsletter, *Missouri Corrections Newsletter* and led to testimony at legislative discussions on penal reform and rehabilitation.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection concentrates on the opinions and experiences of prisoners and their advocates. Similar information from the perspective of corrections officials is not included. The collection is divided into five series which reflect the development, funding and work of the Missouri Citizens for Corrections and the Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice. The series are: **Statement of Organizational Purpose and Grants, Correspondence, Information Packets, Creative Publications, and Newsletters.**

The **Statement of Organizational Purpose and Grants** series includes meeting arrangements, agendas, contact cards, and interest surveys. The narrative proposals and final reports for the grants which were the principal means of funding the organization are in this series. These give a detailed summary of the organization and how it functioned. The grants include appendices of correspondence, press clippings, and budgets. The remainder of the collection serves as supporting documentation.

The **Correspondence** series deals with grants, arrangements for panels, requests for newsletters, and other organizational details. There is also correspondence with inmates, correction's officials, legislators, and supportive organizations and individuals. Topics include the issues of rehabilitative versus custodial imprisonment, alternatives to incarceration, humane treatment, overcrowding, education, and training.

The **Information Packets** series contains handouts, mailers, and the materials assembled for lobbying and testimony before legislative committees. The "Basic Materials Packet" subseries contains information on prisons, prison reform, organizations interested in the subject, and the theory and practice of rehabilitation within the prison system. *Missouri Corrections Newsletters* were also inserted into this packet. The "Complete (Evolved) Packet" subseries dates from October 1974 through Spring 1976, and includes a folder of "results" from its dissemination. This section is foldered by the Table of Contents headings. The lobbying and testimony information was prepared and presented by J. Noel Heermance representing the Missouri Citizens for Corrections (#1, #2) and the Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice (#3 - #11) to various civic, religious and governmental groups.

The **Creative Publications** contain plays and poetry written and produced by inmates as part of the Humanities in the Prison Tutoring Program.

The **Newsletters** include the *Missouri Corrections Newsletter*, produced through grant funding. There is a complete run of the newsletters dating from 1977 through 1981. Following the newsletters are miscellaneous flyers and supporting items of publicity for both Missouri Citizens for Corrections and Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice and other organizations.

FOLDER LIST

Statement of Organizational Purpose and Grants Series

- f.1 Statement of purpose
- f.2-7 Contact cards and interest surveys
- f.8-9 Grant #MH-001-73, Proposal and Final Report: The American Dream From A Modern Perspective
- f.10-11 Grant #MH-028-74, Proposal: Establishing the Humanities in Missouri's State Prisons
- f.12 Grant #MH-028-74, Correspondence with Gerald H. Higgins regarding: Establishing the Humanities in Missouri's State Prisons
- f.13-14 Grant #MH-025-75, Proposal: Education's Role in the Rehabilitation of Missouri's Penal Residents and the Citizen's Role in Providing that Education
- f.15 Grant #MH-025-75, Flyers, 1974-1975
- f.16 Inmate Tutorial Program, 1976
- f.17 Grant #MH-016-76, Final Report (minus appendices): Is Effective Rehabilitation Possible in Missouri's Prisons?
- f.18 Grant #MH-016-76, Flyers, 1975-1976
- f.19-20 Grant #MH-019-77, Final Report and Appendices A-K13: Prisons, State Government, The Humanities, and You!
- f.21-22 Grant #MH-051-77, Final Proposal and Report: Prisons, State Government, The Humanities, and You! -- '78
- f.23-25 Grant #MH-039-78, Proposal and Final Report: Missouri Corrections into the '80s: Where Do We Go From Here?
- f.26 Grant #MH-065-78, Final Report (minus appendices): Missouri Corrections and the '80s: Where We Are Today
- f.27-28 Grant #MH-010-80, Proposal: Missouri Corrections in the Early '80s: Its Philosophies and its Practices

Correspondence Series

- f.29 Form Letters: 1975-1977, 1981
- f.30 1974
- f.31-34 1975
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Information Packets Series**Basic Materials Packet Subseries**

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- f.52 Missouri Association for Social Welfare information
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- f.56 II. General Conditions
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- f.58 III. Specific Recent Incidents
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- f.61 Missouri Citizens for Corrections lobbying and legislative testimony #1, March 1975
Missouri Citizens for Corrections lobbying and legislative testimony #2, April 1975
Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice#3, November 1975
- f.62 Missouri Coalition for Correctional Justice, Lobbying and legislative testimony #4 -
#11, 1976-1981

Creative Publications Series

- f.63 "In Search of Myself"; "Games People Play"; "Awakening"
- f.64 "Algoa Raps"
- f.65 "Just the Beginning"

Newsletters Series

- f.66 Volume I, Number 1-8, 1977
- f.67 Volume II, Number 1-11, 1978
- f.68 Volume III, Number 1-11, 1979
- f.69 Volume IV, Number 1-11, 1980
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