INTRODUCTION

The papers of the director for New Directions for Women include personal and professional material, including her material concerning involvement in various feminist organizations. Included in the papers are correspondence, photographs, writings, awards, research projects, news clippings, and conference notes and speeches.

DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Paula Kassell on 5 April 2012 (Accession No. 6192).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Paula Sally Kassell was born on December 5, 1917, in New York City to Daniel and Bertha Kassell. In 1923, the family moved to Yonkers, New York, and soon after the move, Paula began school. After completing high school, Kassell enrolled in Barnard College, where she quickly discovered a passion for feminism, largely due to her reading Margaret Mead’s book Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies. Paula graduated in 1939 with degrees in psychology and sociology.

In August 1941, Paula married Gerson Friedman and moved to Dover, New Jersey. For a short time she worked in the social welfare field and after the birth of her son and daughter, she decided to stay home and raise her children. By 1955, Kassell was ready to rejoin the work force. She worked as a technical editor for a short time, but soon went to Bell Telephone Laboratories, where she worked until 1970.

When the feminist movement emerged in the 1960s, Kassell quickly became an avid participant. In 1967, she joined the National Organization for Women along with numerous other feminist organizations. Kassell became coordinator of New Jersey’s first statewide feminist conference in 1971, and coordinated numerous other conferences for decades afterward.

In addition to coordinating and attending both international and national conferences, Kassell also led several campaigns to further women’s rights. Her first campaign was to convince newspapers to integrate help wanted ads (they had previously been separated according to male and female categories). Other notable campaigns headed by Kassell were discrimination suits against The New York Times to encourage use of the term “Ms.” and a campaign for equal pay. In addition, Kassell founded and became chief editor of the New Directions for Women newspaper in 1971. New Directions for Women explored the political, legal, economic, and social issues that impacted women until the newspaper’s discontinuation in 1993. A collection of Kassell’s writings was published in 2009.

Paula Kassell continued her work furthering women’s rights until her death on August 20, 2012, at the age of 94.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Paula Kassell Papers have been arranged into two series: **Professional** and **Personal**.

The **Personal** series includes biographical information, awards, a diary, an autograph book, a scrapbook, college papers, correspondence with feminist friends, and articles chronicling Kassell’s achievements and awards. Also included in the series are photographs, cards, and invitations for birthday celebrations.

The **Professional** series includes research projects, correspondence, speeches, and writings. The bulk of the series relates to Kassell’s involvement in feminist conferences and organizations. The *New York Times* material includes correspondence concerning sexist language, and the use of the term “Ms.,” as well as newspaper clippings, notes from stockholder meetings, and notes relating to Kassell’s employment discrimination lawsuit. The Bell Labs material consists mostly of newspaper clippings and correspondence between Ms. Kassell and Bell Labs regarding the “de-sexreg” of phonebook directories. The Co-ops material includes correspondence between the ad sales co-op advisory board, formed by the Women’s Institute for Freedom of the Press, concerning advertising tactics, as well as example ad sales in magazines and newspapers.

FOLDER LIST

**Personal Series**

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f. 5    Miscellaneous correspondence, 1930.
f. 6    Barnard College, 1974-2004
f. 7-8  College papers, sociology, psychology, music, art, 1937-1941
f. 9    Miscellaneous non-feminist personal information, 1955-1987
f.10   Miscellaneous correspondence, 1939-1994
f.11   Publicity, 1970-2003
f.12   Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship Application, 1983
f.13   Who’s Who, 1976-2004
f.14   National Women’s Hall of Fame, 1990-1991
f.15   Woman Gathering, Aphra Behn Circle, 1983-1985
f.16   Veteran Feminists of America, 1992-2000
f.17   Feminist friends’ house parties, 1991-1999
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f.18a-20 Awards, 1955-2006

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  f. 22    East Coast Periodicals Caucus, 1985
  f. 23    Ernst-Van Prag, 1972-1986
f. 24 Feminist Press Conference, 1973
f. 25 How to market your talents and writings conference, 1976
f. 26 World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women, Copenhagen, 1980
f. 27 National Women’s Conference, Houston, Texas, 1977
f. 28 Investigative Reporters and Editors National Conference, 1979
f. 29-30 New Jersey International Women’s Year Conference, 1977
f. 31-32 Journalism and Women Symposium (JAWS), 1986-1996
f. 33-35 Affirmative action for women conferences (NOW), 1970-1972
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f. 37 NOW New Jersey, woman’s body/woman’s mind, 1973
f. 38-40 NOW AIDS, 1970-1972
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f. 60-65 New York Times
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- Speeches for Whippany Woman Speakers, 1962-1966
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  - Application for security clearance at Bell Labs, 1955
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  - Ad co-op advisory board, 1972-1996
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