

Loretto Heritage Center Archives and Museum

Finding Aid: Loretto Feminist Network

LHC07.B.a

Date Range: 1980-2015

Creator: The Loretto Women's Network / Loretto Feminist Network

Extent: 2 linear ft.

Language: Eng.

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Citation: LHC07.B.a Post Vatican II Missions, Networks, Loretto Feminist Network [Folder i.d.] [Folder Title], Sisters of Loretto Heritage Center and Archives (Nerinx, KY)

Creator of Material Biography: The Loretto Community's formal involvement in the women's movement began in the 1970s, when the Loretto General Assembly passed resolutions supporting the Equal Rights Amendment and the use of gender-inclusive language. In 1977, a Women's Team was started, initially consisting of five Sisters of Loretto who wanted to actively work toward women's equality. Over the next decade, the group changed formats and names several times, at various times being known as the Women's Task Force and the Women's Committee. Around 1982, the group sent a questionnaire to the Loretto Community at large to gauge people's interest in women's issues. Finding that a number of Loretto members were interested, the Loretto Women's Network (LWN) was formed, consisting of dozens of members who received mailings to stay informed about women's issues and find out about opportunities to get involved in the movement. For about five years, the Loretto Women's Network existed as a sort of companion group that stood in solidarity with the original Women's Task Force/Committee. But in 1988, the two groups decided to form a single group that would be more activist in nature, with the aim of protesting, speaking, and writing publicly on women's issues. This iteration of the Loretto Women's Network voted in 2020 to change its name to the Loretto Feminist Network. It has always been open to all members of the community who are committed to equality for women, ending all forms of discrimination, and transforming patriarchal structures. Each year that a General Assembly or national gathering is held, the Loretto Women's Network selects several women to receive the Mary Rhodes Award, which honors women who have done outstanding work for justice, peace, and equality, particularly for women. From 1987-2014, the Loretto Women's Network published a newsletter called *couRAGE* that at one point had nearly 1,000 subscribers from across the world. *couRAGE* published its last issue in 2018 when its creator/publisher, Sr. Mary Ann Cunningham, SL retired. In 2019 a new publication named *Women of Spirit, Courage, and Action* was released by the network.

Description: Records of the Loretto Women's Network. The records are divided into three sub-categories: General Materials, *couRAGE* newsletters, and Mary Rhodes Awards. For the General Materials and Mary Rhodes Awards, the bulk of the records are from 1995 and later. Records prior to 1995 in those categories are found in the Administration (LHC03) materials.

Related Materials: Pre-1995 records from the Loretto Women's Network and its precursor organizations are found in the presidential papers of Marian McAvoy, Maureen McCormack, and Mary Ann Coyle (LHC03). See RG 3-12 Boxes 30 and 31a; RG 3-13 Boxes 31, 37, and 37a; RG 3-14 Box 37.

Arrangement

Material was grouped into sub-categories and files by the archivist, Laurel Wilson.

Box 1: LHC07.B.a.01

Consists of general materials documenting the Loretto Women's Network. Included are meeting minutes; memorandums sent to members; correspondence related to the group's business; materials from other organizations the group partnered with or supported; and a collection of feminist articles and other resources distributed to group members. In order by year.

Folder 1: History/Identity Statements/Music/Poems Used By the LWN

Timeline of Loretto's involvement in women's issues; different versions of the LWN identity statement and definitions of feminism the group adopted through the years; and music and poems the group used at their gatherings.

Folder 2: Undated Reflection and Resources

Folder 3: Meetings and Memos, 1980-1993

Folder 4: Correspondence, 1984-1994

Folder 5: Women-Church Convergence Materials, 1984-1994

Pre-1995 materials from Women-Church Convergence, a coalition of Catholic women's groups, of which the LWN is a member.

Folder 6: LCWR and Other Organizations Involved In, 1984-1993

Pre-1995 materials related to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and other groups LWN is involved with, including the Women's Ordination Conference and Women Religious Collaborating.

Folder 7: Articles, Readings, and Resources Pre-1995

Folder 8: Meetings and Memos, 1995

Folder 9: Correspondence, Issues, and Events, 1995

Folder 10: LWN Mailings, 1995

Folder 11: SAVE Mailings, 1994-1996

Informational materials sent to members of the group Stand Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE), which the LWN sponsored.

Folder 12: Correspondence Re: SAVE, 1994-1996

Folder 13: SAVE Media List and Mailing List

Folder 14: SAVE Donations and Grant Proposal

Donation records for SAVE and proposal for a Hilton Foundation grant.

Folder 15: Meetings and Memos, 1996

Folder 16: Correspondence and Issues, 1996

Folder 17: LWN Mailings, 1996

Folder 18: Meetings and Memos, 1997

Folder 19: Correspondence, 1997

Folder 20: LWN Mailings, 1997

Folder 21: Meetings, Memos, and Membership List, 1998

Folder 22: Correspondence and Issues, 1998
Folder 23: LWN Mailings, 1998
Folder 24: Meetings and Memos, 1999
Folder 25: Correspondence, 1999
Folder 26: LWN Mailings, 1999
Folder 27: Meetings and Member Files, 2000
Folder 28: Correspondence, 2000
Folder 29: LWN Mailings, 2000
Folder 30: Meetings and Memos, 2001
Folder 31: Correspondence and Issues, 2001
Folder 32: Questionnaire Responses, 2001
Folder 33: Meetings and Memos, 2002
Folder 34: Correspondence and Resources, 2002
Folder 35: Meetings and Mailing List, 2003
Folder 36: Correspondence and Resources, 2003
Folder 37: Meetings and Mailing List, 2004
Folder 38: Correspondence and Resources, 2004
Folder 39: Meetings and Mailing List, 2005
Folder 40: Correspondence, 2005
Folder 41: Meetings, 2006
Folder 42: Correspondence, Coordinator Materials, and Resources, 2006
Folder 43: Meetings, Membership List, and Budget, 2007
Folder 44: Coordinator Materials, 2007
Folder 45: Correspondence and Resources, 2007
Folder 46: Meetings, Coordinator Materials, Membership List, and Budget, 2008
Folder 47: Correspondence and Resources, 2008
Folder 48: Materials, 2009
Folder 49: Materials, 2010
Folder 50: Materials, 2011
Folder 51: Materials, 2012
Folder 52: Materials, 2013-2015
Folder 53: Oversize Photo

Box 2: LHC07.B.a.02

1987-2004 issues of *couRAGE*, the newsletter of the Loretto Women's Network, which was published several times a year from 1987-2014.

Folder 1: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 1987-1991

Folder 2: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 1992-1995

Folder 3: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 1996-1999

Folder 4: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 2000-2004

Box 3: LHC07.B.a.03

2005-2014 issues of *couRAGE*, the newsletter of the Loretto Women's Network, which was published several times a year from 1987-2014.

Folder 1: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 2005-2008

Folder 2: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 2009-2011

Folder 3: *couRAGE* Newsletter, 2012-2014

Box 4: LHC07.B.a.04

The Loretto Women's Network organizes and sponsors the Mary Rhodes Awards, which honor women outside the Loretto Community who work for peace, justice, and equality, particularly for women. The idea for the award was initiated in 1981 when the Loretto Community faced a quandary. The General Assembly was scheduled to be in St. Louis that year, but Missouri had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, and many people in the Loretto Community wanted to boycott states where the ERA hadn't passed. However, because many community members would not be able to attend the Assembly if held elsewhere, it was decided to have the meeting in St. Louis as planned, but to honor three Missouri legislators who were fighting for women's rights and the ratification of the ERA. The award was named in honor of one of the pioneer women who founded the Sisters of Loretto. Two to four women are chosen to receive the Mary Rhodes Award each time Loretto holds a General Assembly or national gathering. The recipients are given a piece of artwork by a Loretto artist and their name is added to quilt displaying all the recipients through the years.

Folder 1: Award History

Booklets that compile the award's history and list of winners.

Folder 2: Pre-1995 Materials

Folder 3: 1995

Folder 4: 1996

Folder 5: 1997

Folder 6: 1998 Nominations (No Awards Conferred)

This was the first year that no awards were given. Initially, the LWN planned to still hand out awards even though there was no General Assembly. However, ultimately, it was decided not to give out awards during years where no national gathering was held.

Folder 7: 1999

Folder 8: 2000

Folder 9: 2002

Folder 10: 2003

Folder 11: 2005

Folder 12: 2006

Folder 13: 2009

Folder 14: 2011

Folder 15: 2012

Folder 16: 2015