



The Urbana Free Library

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Joan Severns Papers
Papers, 1950-2010, bulk 1973-1983

Collection #328

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Courtney Smith, February 2020 and Mary Pedraza, October 2020

Creator/Corporate name: The Severns Family

Inclusive Dates: 1950-2010, bulk 1973-1983

Physical Description: 4 boxes (4 linear feet).

Provenance:

The Joan Severns Papers were donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives in August 2019 by Karen and Chris Severns.

Access:

The records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Biographical Note:

Born May 2, 1929, Joan Severns (née Zagar) served as Mayor of Champaign from 1979 to 1983 and served as a City Councilwoman from 1973 to 1979. She was the first woman mayor in downstate Illinois. Born in Chicago to John and Alice Barnhart Zagar, she earned a bachelor's and master's degree in political science from the University of Illinois. She also earned a liberal arts degree at DePaul University. She was a member of the League of Women Voters, Phi Kappa Phi, and Alpha Omicron Pi. She was a past president of the Conservation and Preservation Society and a treasurer for life for the ALCU. With her husband John Severns, whom she married on June 22, 1952, she raised two daughters and a son. Severns died on August 29, 2003, at the age of 75.

Scope and Content Note:

The Joan Severns Papers date from 1950 to 2010, with the bulk of the collection ranging between 1973 - 1983. It mainly covers her political career as Champaign Mayor and City Councilwoman. The collection includes photographs, commemorative certificates, mayoral papers covering campaigns, and papers written by Severns on the politics in Illinois and the University of Illinois.

Related Materials:

Materials related to Joan Severns can also be found at the Champaign County History Museum.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged semi-chronologically by subject material. Box 3 features the contents of a scrapbook that was kept in the original order. **Note:** the researcher must maintain the order of the contents of box 3, folders 1 and 2.

Related Material:

"Severns, Joan" Photographs Envelope

"Severns Family" File



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Subject Terms:

Champaign (ILL.)
Champaign (ILL.). Mayor
Champaign (ILL.). Mayor—Elections
Champaign (ILL.). City Council—Elections
Politicians

Names:

Anderson, John (1922-2017)
Severns, Joan (1929-2003)
Zagar, Joan (1929-2003)
Severns, John E.

Container List

Box 1

Folder 1: 1969 Illinois Constitutional Convention Election, 1968-1969 and undated
Folder 2: 1973 Champaign City Council Election: Brochures, 1973
Folder 3: 1973 Champaign City Council Election: Campaign Workers, 1973 and undated
Folder 4: 1973 Champaign City Council Election: Correspondence, 1973 and undated
Folder 5: 1973 Champaign City Council Election: Press Releases, 1973-1976
Folder 6: 1973 Champaign City Council Election: Voting Information, 1970-1973
Folder 7: 1977 Champaign City Council Election, 1977
Folder 8: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Brochures and Flyers, 1979
Folder 9: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Campaign Workers, 1978-1979 and undated
Folder 10: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Candidate Petition and Official Notifications, 1978-1979
Folder 11: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Correspondence, 1979-1983 and undated
Folder 12: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Finances, 1979
Folder 13: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Guest Lists, 1979
Folder 14: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: News Coverage, 1978-1979
Folder 15: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Press Releases, 1978-1979
Folder 16: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Questionnaires, 1979
Folder 17: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Random Survey, undated
Folder 18: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Random Survey, undated
Folder 19: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Speeches, 1979
Folder 20: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Voting Information, 1979 and undated

Box 2

Folder 1: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Yard Signs, 1979
Folder 2: 1979 Champaign Mayoral Election: Yard Signs, 1979
Folder 3: Newspaper Clippings, 1978-1991
Folder 4: Political Events, 1981-1982



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Folder 5: Subject File: John Anderson Presidential Campaign, 1980
Folder 6: Political Advocacy, 1975-1983
Folder 7: Portrait of a City Mirrored by a Referendum, 1969 January 07
Folder 8: How a Bill Became a Law: State of Illinois Common School Distributive Fund Formula, 1970 June 01
Folder 9: Poverty and our Welfare Non-System, 1971 January 03
Folder 10: A New Constitutions for Illinois: Who Cared?, 1971 January 26
Folder 11: Legislative Implementation of the 1970 Illinois Constitutions: Business as Usual, 1971 December 14
Folder 12: The 1970 Illinois Constitutional Referendum: University Cities as a Source of Political Reform, 1972 January 18
Folder 13: Control of the Press, 1972 December
Folder 14: Correspondence, 1979-1999
Folder 15: Memorial and Funeral Service Programs, 2003 September 4
Folder 16: Subject File: Joan E. Severns, 1950-1965

Box 3

Folder 1: Scrapbook, 1979-2010
Folder 2: Scrapbook, 1977-1983
Folder 3: Photographs, 1979-1983
Folder 4: Photographs, 1977-1987

Box 4

Folder 1: 3 scrapbook items: Committee to Save the Cable Cars Certificate of Honor (1980 November), Children and Historical Research Book, Leal School (1991-1992), Mayor Joan Severns Calendar (1983 December)
Folder 2: Children's art on blue paper, Card in a folder
Folder 3: Air War College National Security Forum Files and Photograph (1981 May 17-22)