

Homemakers' Equal Rights Association (HERA) Records, 1971-1987, undated

Creator: Homemakers' Equal Rights Association

Extent: 2.75 linear feet (7 boxes)

Language: English

Repository: Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago. Please contact WLAarchives@luc.edu regarding use.

Administration Information

Access Restrictions: None

Usage Restrictions: Copyright was transferred to the Women and Leadership Archives for those materials created by the Homemakers' Equal Rights Association.

Preferred Citation: Identification of item, date, box #, folder #, Homemakers' Equal Rights Association Records, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Provenance: Karen-Elise Clay and Sherry Clay Rose donated the Homemakers' Equal Rights Association papers to the Women and Leadership Archives on September 23, 1994 (WLA1994.09) and December 3, 1994 (WLA1994.16).

Processor: Carol Heath. Updated by Elizabeth A. Myers, 2008. Updated by Ashley Eckhardt, 2010.

Processing Information: Finding aid updated December 2025 and August 2026.

Separations: Unknown

See Also: Beth Brinkmann Cianci Papers, Women and Leadership Archives

Administrative History

The Homemakers' Equal Rights Association (HERA) represents a national network of homemakers, organized at the neighborhood, city, state, and national levels to improve the legal and economic security of the career of homemaking and end the isolation and helplessness of American homemakers. Founded in 1973 as a committee for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) ratification effort in Illinois, HERA was established as an independent organization in 1975. The name, originally Housewives for the Equal Rights Amendment, was consciously chosen as a reaction against Phyllis Schlafly's argument that the ERA threatened homemakers. The acronym HERA was quite fitting and symbolic insofar as Hera was also the powerful wife of the mythical Greek god Zeus. As the national reputation of HERA grew, the organization decided to change its name in order to not appear solely focused on one issue, the ERA. The change to Homemakers' Equal Rights Association occurred in 1978.

HERA strove to reflect the broadening concerns surrounding homemaking. The organization recognized the need to ensure dignity and both legal and economic security for this forgotten,

unpaid career. By working to raise the social status of the homemaker, its members hoped to assume the honorable position to which they felt entitled.

In addition, HERA worked on both legislative and non-legislative solutions to the specific economic and social problems experienced by homemakers. HERA's concerns included establishing marriage as a legal and economic partnership in which the non-monetary contribution of the homemaker is of equal value to the financial contribution of the out-of-home partner, helping homemakers become an informed and powerful constituency that can speak for itself in the political process, working for the passage of state and federal legislation which would benefit women, families, and the general quality of life, supporting women in all types of paid and unpaid employment, establishing homemaking as a valid career choice, encouraging new understandings in children which will help them thrive in a more equal society, and helping women more fully realize their potential in the family, community, and workplace.

Scope and Content

The Homemakers' Equal Rights Association (HERA) Records consist of documents related to the organization's activities, particularly during the lobbying campaign to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s and early 1980s. The records in this collection relate to both the national HERA organization and the HERA-Illinois chapter. Materials include correspondence, meeting minutes, newsletters, audiocassettes, and memorabilia and are arranged alphabetically within each series.

Series 1: Organization Records, 1971-1987, undated, Boxes 1-3

This series contains documents related to the national HERA organization as well as some of the state chapters. The materials include administrative and governance documents, brochures, newsletters, and other items related to HERA's lobbying efforts on behalf of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Subseries 1.1: National and State Chapters, 1975-1984, undated, Box 1

Materials pertaining to the national organization and various state chapters, other than Illinois.

Subseries 1.2: Illinois Chapter, 1971-1987, undated, Boxes 1-3

This subseries consists of materials from the HERA-Illinois chapter, documenting the organization's statewide efforts to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. Items include administrative documents, correspondence, newsletters, programs and activities, and a photograph of HERA members with Governor James Thompson.

Series 2: Equal Rights Amendment, 1971-1984, undated, Boxes 3-4

The materials in this series include items related to the Equal Rights Amendment and the lobbying efforts by various state and national organizations to get it passed by Congress. Various booklets, brochures, articles, and other documents supporting the Equal Rights Amendment comprise this series.

Series 3: Audiocassettes, 1982-1984, Box 5

This series consists of five audiocassettes containing interviews with members of HERA-Illinois. The “Comment” radio show interviewed Jamie Gentzkow and Sherry Clay Rose in 1982, and Karen-Elise Clay interviewed members Beth, Kathy, and Sherry about their roles as homemakers and ERA-supporters in 1984. Tapes were digitized by Midwest Productions in Summer 2024.

Series 4: Memorabilia, 1980, undated, Boxes 5-7

Various items of memorabilia related to HERA and the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment comprise this series. These items include buttons, bumper stickers, a scrapbook, T-shirts, and a banner. Poles for the banner are stored separately.

Subjects:

Civil rights—United States
Equal Rights amendments—United States
Homemakers—Civil rights—United States
Homemakers’ Equal Rights Association
Housewives for ERA
Sex discrimination
Women’s rights—United States

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
		<i>Homemakers’ Equal Rights Association (HERA) Records, 1971-1987, undated</i>	
		Series 1: Organization Records, 1971-1987, undated	
		Subseries 1.1: National and State Chapters, 1975-1984	
1	1	Annual convention	1980-1984
1	2	Brochure	undated
1	3	Bylaws and constitution	undated
1	4	Concept paper	1981
1	5	Congress of Women: A Weekend of Unity	1982
1	6	Correspondence	1981-1982, undated
1	7	Financial information	1981-1984, undated
1	8	Handwritten notes	undated
1	9	<i>HERA Bulletin</i>	1982
1	10	HERA-Kansas	1981-1982
1	11	HERA-New Jersey	1981
1	12	HERA-New Mexico	1982-1984
1	13	HERA-Ohio	1982
1	14	HERA-Pennsylvania	1981-1982
1	15	HERA-Texas	1982
1	16	HERA-Virginia	1981
1	17	HERA-Washington	1979
1	18	Mailing list	undated
1	19	Newsletters	1979-1983
1	20	Newspaper articles	1981-1983, undated
1	21	Pamphlets	1980-1981, undated

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1	22	Press releases	1979-1984
1	23	Proposal for funds	1982
1	24	Public relations materials	1975, undated
1	25	Resolutions	undated
1	26	Songs	1977-1981, undated
1	27	Statement of Purpose	1982
1	28	Women's movement cartoons	1975-1982, undated
1	29	<i>Women's Network</i>	1981
		Subseries 1.2: Illinois Chapter, 1971-1987, undated	
1	30	Activities	1983-1984, undated
1	31	Business card	undated
1	32	Bylaws	1978-1983
1	33	Conference	1982
2	1	Correspondence: General	1978-1987, undated
2	2	Correspondence: Illinois legislators	1978-1982, undated
2	3	DuPage County chapter	1982-1984, undated
2	4	ERA lobbying information	1971-1983, undated
2	5	Gala events	1981-1983
2	6	Hostage Day	1982
2	7	Information on starting a local chapter of HERA	undated
3	1	Lake County chapter	1981-1984, undated
3	2	Meeting minutes	1978-1984, undated
3	3	Membership list	1983-1984
3	4	Newsletters: HERA-Illinois	1979-1984
3	5	Newsletters: Housewives for ERA	1978-1979
3	6	Partnership in Marriage program	1984
3	7	Photograph	1982
3	8	Public relations materials	undated
3	9	Resolutions	1982, undated
3	10	Roses Day	1978-1980
3	11	Woodstock Center	1982-1984, undated
		Series 2: Equal Rights Amendment, 1971-1984, undated	
3	12	<i>At Ease with ERA</i>	1979
3	13	Booklets	1971-1981, undated
3	14	Brochures	1977-1979, undated
3	15	Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women	1971-1972, undated
3	16	Equal Rights Amendment	1972-1982, undated
4	1	<i>The Equal Rights Handbook</i>	1978
4	2	"ERA Educational-Study Pack"	1979
4	3	League of Women Voters	1977-1982, undated
4	4	National Organization for Women	1978-1982
4	5	Newspaper articles	1976-1982, undated

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4	6	Testimonies	1977-1980
4	7	Women's movement	1978-1984
		Series 3: Audiocassettes, 1982-1984	
5	1	"Comment" radio interview [3 audiocassettes] [digitized]	1982
5	2	"Housewives ERA" [audiocassette] [digitized]	undated
5	3	Karen-Elise Clay interview with Beth [audiocassette] [digitized]	1984
5	4	Karen-Elise Clay interview with Kathy [audiocassette] [digitized]	1984
5	5	Karen-Elise Clay interview with Sherry [audiocassette] [digitized]	1984
5	6	Studs Terkel interviews [audiocassette] [digitized]	1978
		Series 4: Memorabilia, 1980, undated	
5	7	Buttons [5]	undated
5	8	"ERA Yes" banner drawing	undated
5	9	Scrapbook	undated
5	10	Stamp: "HERA Illinois"	undated
5	11	Stamp: "Homemakers Deserve Equal Rights"	undated
5	12	Stamp: "Ratify the ERA"	undated
6	1	Bumper stickers: "Another Family for Equal Rights" [2]	undated
6	2	Bumper stickers: "ERA YES" [2]	undated
6	3	ERA ribbons [3]	undated
6	4	National ERA March '80 sash	1980
6	5	T-shirt: "Democracy is NOT a Spectator Sport"	undated
6	6	T-shirt: "Equal Rights Amendment"	undated
6	7	T-shirt: "ERA Stars & Stripes & Equal Rights"	undated
6	8	T-shirt: "Eugenia Chapman for Congress"	undated
6	9	T-shirt: "March for the ERA"	undated
6	10	T-shirt: "Moms Ought to Have Equal Rights"	undated
7	1	Homemakers' Equal Rights Association banner	undated
--	--	Poles for HERA banner	undated