

Inventory of the

**League of Women Voters of the  
Rochelle Area**  
Rochelle, Illinois

Records

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 315**

## INTRODUCTION

Merilyn May, President, donated the League of Women Voters of the Rochelle Area to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on November 21, 2011.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear Feet of Shelf Space: 5; 306 digital files (18MB)  
Number of Containers: 9  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 315

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The League for Women Voters of the Rochelle Area organized in 1971 and became an official League in 1973. They work to provide information on relevant, voter oriented topics, as well as hold open forums for candidates, train future candidates, and register voters. The League often takes a two-year study on a particular issue.

The materials within the collection document the Rochelle League's formation and eventual acceptance into the National League of Women Voters. News articles relevant to League interests, such as candidate information, governmental issues and League events are included, as well as letters written to the editor from members. There are also more news articles in the two scrapbooks at the end of the collection.

Included in the collection are annual meeting minutes from 1973-2011. Meeting minutes are nearly complete, with a gap only occurring between 1994-1999. Information on the community dinners is also provided, including histories, invitations, and speaker invitations. The Hublights newsletter distributed to members are also complete.

Study material contains news articles, informational material, meeting minutes, and action notes about particular topics that the League chose to study. The material concerning Rochelle government, Ogle County government, accessibility, landfills, local transportation, and the equal rights amendment have the most information, with other topics containing only news articles.

Financial ledgers include disbursements, cash receipts, budgets, and financial reports. Fund-raising efforts and donors are also recorded. Though there is no complete list of membership from the earliest years, a list of the charter members can be found in "Rochelle League Formation", and memberships lists for several years are provided. There are no handbooks prior to 1983, but their run is fairly complete from 1983-2011.

Researchers should note that there is little internal information about voter registration and candidate forums. There are also no correspondence between the Rochelle Area League and the Illinois or National League.

Electronic records may be accessed in the Center's reading room.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

An attempt to form a chapter of the League of Women Voters in the Rochelle Area began in the 1950s, but only lasted a year or two. After reaching out to the Leagues in Rockford, DeKalb, and Chicago, Marguerite Thomas, Rosalia Strotmeister, and Barbara Guest worked to meet the requirements for starting a new league. On September 30, 1971, the League of the Rochelle Area was recognized as a provisional league and had its first general meeting with fifty members. After completing a "Know Your Town" survey that studied all aspects of Rochelle, the League became official in 1973.

Among the League's accomplishments is a 1989 a handicapped accessibility study. A complete study of buildings throughout Rochelle's downtown area, as well as churches and schools was undertaken. The League also studied Ogle County transportation, and helped create LOTS, Lee Ogle Transportation System, which provides transportation in and between the two counties.

The League has also been instrumental in helping change city and county government. A number of Rochelle city government studies attempted to determine what type of government was best. The League then educated voters on their findings. Eventually, Rochelle city council changed from a five councilpersons to seven, as well as hiring a county manager. They have also influenced governmental changes in Ogle County.

The group aims to provide information on a variety of issues. They also hold open forums before elections, and are active in voter registration. They have host community dinners that are open the public and feature different speakers. The League remains nonpartisan while studying political topics.

### SUBJECT TRACINGS

Elections  
 Equal Rights Amendment  
 League of Women Voters  
 League of Women Voters (Rochelle Area, Ill.)  
 Lee County (Ill.)  
 Ogle County (Ill.)  
 Rochelle (Ill.)  
 United States--Government and politics  
 Women--Societies and clubs

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	
1	1	League of Women Voters of Rochelle History, 1995-2011	
	2	Rochelle League Formation, 1971-1973	
	3	“Know Your Town”, 1971	
	4	League of Women Voters 75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1995	
	5	Skit, 1995	
	6	75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Amendment, 1995	
	7	90 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Amendment, 2008-2010	
	8	Correspondence, 1971-2003	
	9	Letter to the Editor, 2002	
	10-12	Newspapers, 1971-2011, no date	
	13	Annual Meeting Minute Highlights, 2010	
	2	1-2	Annual Meeting, 1973-2011
		3	Reservation, 2006
4		Meeting Agenda, (2004-2011)	
5-6		Meeting Minutes, 1971-1994	
3		1	Meeting Minutes, 1999-2011
	2	Board Members and Calendars, (1977-1985)	
	3	Calendars, (2002-2009)	
	4	Community Dinner, no date	
	5	History, 2002-2011	
	6	Invitations, 2002-2011	
	7	Speaker Invitations, (2001-2010)	
	8	Guests, 2002, 2005, no date	
	9	Press Releases, (2002-2011)	
	10	Speeches, no date	
	11	Name tags, no date	
	12	Progress Report, 2002	
		Studies:	
	13-16	Rochelle City Government, 1990, 1992, 1994, 2003-2004	
	17	Rochelle Home Rule	
	4	1	Ogle County Board, 2002-2004, 2010
		2	Accessibility, 1989
3		Child Care, 1993, 1996	
4		Education, 2004, 2011, no date	
5		Environment, (2003-2011), no date	
6		Equal Rights Amendment, 1982-1983	

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	4
	7	Immigration, no date	
4	8	Landfill, 2001-2003	
	9	Waste Disposal Contract, 1999	
	10	Land Use, 2007	
	11	Patriot Act, 2002	
	12	Tax Increment Financing District, no date	
5	1	Transportation, 2005-2009	
	2	United Nations, 2004	
	3-5	Handbook, (1983-2011)	
		Membership	
	6	List, 1984-2005	
	7	Addresses, 2002	
	8	New Membership Orientation, 2002	
	9	Plans, (2002-2008), no date	
	10	Financial Ledgers, 1971-1990	
6	1-2	Financial Ledgers, (1990-2004)	
	3	Friends of the League Donors, (2004-2007), no date	
	4	Fund-raising, 2008, no date	
	5-7	<u>Hublights</u> Newsletter, September 1971-March 1988	
7	1-4	<u>Hublights</u> Newsletter, June 1988-May 2006	
8	1	<u>Hublights</u> Newsletter, September 2006-April 2011	
	2	Program Ideas, 2002-2004	
	3	League Accomplishments, 2001-2004	
	4	League Website, 2008-2010	
	5	Candidate Forum, (2002-2011)	
	6	National Civic Participation Week, 2002	
	7	Training Session for Potential Candidates, (2002-2008)	
		Voters	
	8	Guide, 2003-2005	
	9	Registration, 2003, no date	
	10	Services, no date	
	11	Community Impact Award, 2009	
	12	League of Women Voters Postcard, 1990	
	13	Suffragist Photograph, 1915	
	14	CD of materials from donating member's computer, 2011	
		Scrapbook, 1971-1980	
9		Scrapbook, 1981-1989	