

Office of Women's Rights Women Firefighters Project Records, 1974-1980

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Seattle (Wash.). Office of Women's Rights
Title	Office of Women's Rights Women Firefighters Project Records
Dates	1974-1980 (inclusive) 1974 1980
Quantity	.4 cubic foot, (1 box)
Collection Number	8402-02
Summary	Records (1974-1980) relating to monitoring of the Seattle Fire Department's pre-recruit training program for prospective women fire fighters.
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Note

The Office for Women's Rights, an agency of the Executive Department, was established in 1973. Prior to 1973, the Women's Division was a separate office within the Office of Human Resources, serving as staff support for the Seattle Women's Commission. The Office developed and coordinated programs to promote equal opportunity for women and sexual minorities. The office was abolished in 1997, and its responsibilities were assumed by the Office for Civil Rights.

In 1975, Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman and the City Council ordered the Seattle Fire Department to begin hiring women as firefighters. Seattle Personnel/Civil Service, the Fire Department, and the International Association of Firefighters began recruiting women and minorities for firefighting work. However, of 45 women who applied, only nine were able to pass the physical examination, and none of the seven who entered the recruit class completed the program. Physical ability and mechanical ability were cited as "deficiencies" that made completion of the training difficult for women recruits. Personnel and Civil Service created a Pre-Recruit Firefighter Program which would involve both physical training

and mechanical education; the program, beginning in January 1977, was intended to prepare women recruits for further training as firefighters.

The Fire Department administered the program, while Personnel and Civil Service provided support. Dr. T. Lee Doolittle of the University of Washington prepared a physical training program; training took place at YMCA facilities and was supervised by YMCA staff. Covered in the mechanical section of the program were plumbing, electricity, and lumber, as well as hoses, ropes and knots, and ladders. Two of the three women who enrolled in the initial pre-recruit training program resigned; the remaining recruit, Bonnie Beers, completed the program in 1977. Beers went on to complete recruit training and became Seattle's first woman firefighter; she became a lieutenant in 1981 and a Battalion Chief in 1996.

Throughout 1977 and 1978, recruitment of women continued and the pre-recruit program was further refined and developed.

Content Description

Records relate to monitoring of the Seattle Fire Department's pre-recruit training program for prospective women fire fighters. Also included are regulations, procedures, and overviews of training sessions; background material on SFD/women relations; copies of the Doolittle Reports on strength and endurance training; appeals from rejected women recruits; evaluations of women pre-recruits; and files related to the SFD's recruiting practices and apprenticeship programs. Seattle Fire Fighters' Pension Board Minutes are also included in the records.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Item and date], Office of Women's Rights Women Firefighters Project, Record Series 8402-02. Box [number], Folder [number]. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Materials are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Related Materials

See also the Public Safety Civil Service Commission Women Firefighters Project Records (Record Series 6801-01).

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Office of Women's Rights Women Firefighters Project, 1974-1980

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Apprenticeship Program	1978-1979
1/2	Background to Fire Department/Women Relations	1974-1975
1/3	Complaints, LEOFF (Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System) Standards	1976-1977
1/4	Evaluation of Recruits	1977
1/5	Evaluation of Recruits	1978
1/6	Medical Evaluations (Doolittle Reports)	1976-1979
1/7	Office of Management and Budget Report	1978
1/8	Press Clippings	1974-1979
1/9	Program Evaluation	1978
1/10	Recruit Dismissals and Resignations	1976
1/11	Recruit Training Program	1977-1979
1/12	Recruiting Effort	1977-1978
1/13	Recruits	1976
1/14	Seattle Firefighters' Pension Board	1977-1978
1/15	Seattle Firefighters' Pension Board	1979-1980

Names and Subjects

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.).

Occupations :

Fire fighters--Physical training--Washington (State)--Seattle

Women fire fighters--Washington (State)--Seattle

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

Doolittle, Dr. T. Lee
(creator)

Corporate Names :

Seattle (Wash.). Fire Dept.
(creator)

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2004