

ACT-UP/Kansas City Chapter Records

This collection consists of the organizational records for ACT/UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), Kansas City, Missouri, chapter. The years covered include 1987, a year before the group was formed, to 1995 when the group disbanded.

Creator: ACT-UP. Kansas City, Mo. Chapter
Title: ACT-UP. Kansas City, Mo. chapter records
Dates: 1987-1995, bulk 1989-1995
Size: 5 boxes
Location: SC82

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Acquisition information: Gift, Jim Hull, December 1998, Accession #1998-58.

Custodial history: After initially processed, an additional box was processed at a later date.

Citation note: ACT-UP. Kansas City, Mo. chapter records (SC82), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

ACT-UP/KC was founded in September 1988. The organization used activism and fundraising to provide advocacy for persons with AIDS and to combat discrimination against gays and lesbians. They frequently staged demonstrations, picketed businesses and used confrontational tactics to bring attention to AIDS-related causes such as funding for research and treatment, drug pricing, safe sex and discrimination, and often worked in conjunction with other gay and lesbian organizations.

At its peak in the early 1990s, membership totaled about 50. The group had no formal leadership and operated out of members' homes. ACT-UP/KC disbanded in the spring of 1994 due to dwindling membership as a result of increased AIDS awareness, both locally and nationally, and a general move towards less confrontational methods of calling attention to AIDS issues.

Scope and content note

This collection consists of organizational records for the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power/KC (hereafter referred to as ACT-UP/KC). The earliest materials date from 1987, a year before ACT-UP/KC was formed, and belonged to organization member Mark Chaney, who held the position of Issues Chair.

The ACT-UP/KC collection consists of 42 folders of office records (correspondence, financial statements, press releases, etc.), newsletters, newspaper articles, flyers/posters and audio-visual materials (news segments). There is also a box of organizational artifacts including t-shirts, buttons and a parade banner. The records primarily focus on specific actions and demonstrations organized by ACT-UP/KC, as a result, the collection has been largely arranged by demonstration, event or person(s) involved. There are also

separate folders for miscellaneous correspondence, news releases and other organizational materials.

Notable items in this collection include: 1) a 1990 report by the KCMO Health Department, presented by Judy Moore-Nichols, which includes a number of AIDS statistics for the KC metro area, as well as a list of local health care agencies which treated/counseled HIV-positive patients (See: box 2, folder 18); 2) flyers and posters announcing demonstrations, boycotts and fundraising events; and 3) a brief manuscript by S.J. Walker entitled "ACT-UP/KC Takes Hold", which describes the early activities of the organization. There is also an article from the January 15, 1995 edition of the *Kansas City Star*, which gives a brief history of ACT-UP/KC and the reasons for its decline in membership. Copies of both items are included in the collection description folder.

The records arrived at Special Collections in two large cardboard boxes. A few items were stored in labeled folders, but most were loose and not organized. A number of items (primarily magazines) in the bottom of one box were coated with mold and mildew and had to be discarded. Slightly moldy items were photocopied and the originals were discarded. Photocopies were also made of correspondence printed on fax paper and hand-written notes on poor-quality writing paper. Approximately one-quarter of the collection consisted of duplicate documents and flyers, which were subsequently discarded. The collection is currently stored in two document and three flat boxes.

For more information in Special Collections regarding ACT-UP/KC, AIDS and gay and lesbian issues affecting Kansas City in the 1980s and 90s, see the department's newspaper clippings index (1976-1994), under the subject headings "Diseases – AIDS" and "Homosexuals."

Collection Inventory

Box 1

- Folder 1 – Beauty Unlimited Protest

Correspondence, notes and press releases pertaining to Loren Atterberry, an employee of Beauty Unlimited, who was allegedly fired for testing HIV-positive.

- Folder 2 – Contribution Letters

Correspondence and thank you cards acknowledging donations on behalf of ACT-UP/KC.

- Folder 3 – *Current News* magazine

Three issues: April 15, 1993; May 6, 1993; May 13, 1993.

- Folder 4 – Financial Reports 1989-1994

Miscellaneous quarterly and yearly financial reports (incomplete) and a Federal Income Tax Return statement for 1992.

- Folder 5 – Fundraising Events/Membership Information

Miscellaneous mailers requesting contributions to ACT-UP and flyers for various fundraising events.

- Folder 6 – Good Samaritan Project

Correspondence, 1988 report and 1993 financial statement regarding the Good Samaritan Project, a Kansas City-based AIDS service organization. The 1988 report outlines areas of concerns, brought up by ACT-UP/KC, regarding financial and organizational policies of the project. **Note:** additional information can be found in the Local History Index.

- Folder 7 – Hull, Jim

Personal items of Jim Hull, including correspondence, business cards, membership cards, etc.

- Folder 8 – Human Rights Ordinance Project (HROP)

Informational material about the HROP, a Kansas City group seeking inclusion of HIV diseases in Kansas City's civil rights ordinance.

- Folder 9 – Jon Bell vs. Stauffer Communications, Inc.

Includes a photocopied court case record with an attached manuscript entitled "Addicted to Hate", an expose' of the Reverend Fred Phelps, an anti-gay & lesbian activist from Topeka, KS. The processor has added an October 1994 online article from the *Columbia Journalism Review* entitled "Twisted in Topeka", which gives background information on the controversial manuscript and subsequent lawsuit over ownership.

- Folder 10 - Kevin Oldham Funeral.

Various press releases and newspaper clippings, as well as a memorial service program. Mr. Oldham was a local AIDS victim whose funeral was protested by the Reverend Fred Phelps of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas.

- Folder 11 - Legal Matters

Correspondence from 1990-1993 between ACT-UP/KC and the law firm of Torrence & Wee, primarily regarding legal fees and payments received.

- Folder 12 - March on City Hall

Press releases and correspondence regarding a planned June 3, 1993, march on City Hall by ACT-UP/KC and the Queer Nation/Land of Oz, demanding that the City Council adopt civil rights legislation based on sexual orientation.

- Folder 13 - National Council Against Health Fraud Conference

Press releases and newspaper clippings regarding the protest of a national conference on health fraud, held in Kansas City from Sept. 15-18, 1990. Also

included are visitor guides to Kansas City and an informational packet entitled: "Act Up: National Action for Freedom of AIDS Treatment Choice."

- Folder 14 - Newspaper Clippings, Miscellaneous

Various newspaper articles, from 1988 through 1995, documenting ACT-UP/KC activities and other AIDS/gay & lesbian issues. Articles about particular demonstrations and protests can also be found in the folders specific to those events.

- Folder 15 - Payless Shoes Boycott

Letter from William A Hornburg, an employee of Payless ShoeSource, to ACT-UP/KC, regarding his being fired for allegedly being HIV-positive. There is also additional correspondence and notes pertaining to Mr. Hornburg and the boycott of Payless Shoes.

- Folder 16 - Press Releases (Misc. 1989-1994)

Note: documents specific to particular protests, boycotts, etc., can be found in corresponding folders for those events.

- Folder 17 - Republican National Convention Protest – Correspondence

Hand-written notes, faxes and other correspondence about ACT-UP/KC's presence at the RNC in Houston, Texas – Aug. 17-20, 1992. The correspondence primarily concerns arrangements for hotel rooms, meeting sites and equipment.

- Folder 18 - Republican National Convention Protest – Miscellaneous

Contains city of Houston visitor information, ACT-UP protest flyers and Houston-area gay & lesbian publications and directories.

- Folder 19 - Sam Rodgers Health Center

Contains press releases, flyers, petitions and news articles concerning a protest of the Sam Rodgers Health Center, as well as correspondence from ACT/UP-KC to Mayor Emanuel Cleaver and the director of the health center.

- Folder 20 - State Capitol Demonstration

Press releases and notes outlining a demonstration at the State Capitol in Jefferson City, held on Jan. 9, 1991, to draw attention to AIDS victims in Missouri.

- Folder 21 - Telecheck Protest

Correspondence, press releases, newspaper clippings, notes and photographs about the demonstration of Telecheck Mid-America in Overland Park, KS, in regard to the firing of employee Mark Sweetland.

- Folder 22 - Wal-Mart Boycott

Informational brochure: "Wal-Mart and the American Way"; October, 1989 news article from *The Lesbian and Gay News-Telegraph*, concerning the termination of Wal-Mart employee, Michael Poyner.

Box 2 (Oversize Documents)

- Folder 1 – ACT-UP Network (1989-1992)

Contains documents associated with the ACT-UP international network, including contact lists, meeting agendas, correspondence and financial reports.

- Folder 2 – AIDS Information

Informational materials regarding AIDS awareness, safe sex and homosexuality. The items are undated except for one title: "HIV A to Z: A Pocket AIDS Dictionary" (Sept. 1993).

- Folder 3 – *Alternate News*

Two issues: vol. 9, no. 49, October 7, 1988 and vol. 11, no. 38, July 20, 1990. Both issues contain articles about ACT-UP/KC.

- Folder 4 – Barbara McClintock Project

The Barbara McClintock Project was an ACT-UP plan for developing an AIDS cure, spear-headed by ACT-UP/New York. Items include: a draft of the McClintock Project Bill to be introduced into Congress, a copy of "The Barbara McClintock Project to Cure AIDS" plan and a few informational hand-outs.

- Folder 5 – Bylaws

Two versions of: "Bylaws of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power/Kansas City ACT-UP/KC" – last revision, January 28, 1990.

- Folder 6 – Calendars

Includes two office calendars (1993 & 1994), as well as miscellaneous calendar sheets from 1989-1990, with meeting times, demonstration dates, conference calls, etc.

- Folder 7 - Catholic Church Demonstration

Press releases, flyers and newspaper clippings related to a March 25, 1990 demonstration held at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and regarding the Catholic Church's policies on AIDS education, safe sex and homosexuality.

- Folder 8 – Chaney, Mark

Correspondence, notes and press releases of Mark Chaney, a founding member of ACT-UP/KC. Much of the materials are items written by Mr.

Chaney or correspondence concerning his arrest for protesting the Osco Drug store chain. A copy of his obituary, from the 7/10/01 edition of the *Kansas City Star*, was added by the processor.

- Folder 9 – Correspondence (Misc. 1989-1993)

Organizational correspondence from 1989-1993. Some items are undated.

- Folder 10 - Flyers/Posters – Demonstrations
- Folder 11 - Flyers/Posters – Miscellaneous
- Folder 12 - Names Project National Tour

(1) program for the 1988 Names Project National Tour, a touring event that promoted AIDS awareness by adding names of victims to a memorial quilt

- Folder 13 - National March on Washington – 1987, 1993

(2) commemorative programs:

1) "National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights – Act. 11, 1987";

(2) "The 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation."

- Folder 14 - Newsletters

Three ACT-UP/KC newsletters – September 1989, January, March/April 1990

- Folder 15 - Nova House

Correspondence between Jim Hull and Sean Lampier, an AIDS activist attempting to build an AIDS-victims hostel (Nova House) near Volga, Iowa. Also included, are newspaper articles about Mr. Lampier's efforts and the resistance he encountered.

- Folder 16 - Photographs

(4) miscellaneous color photographs, (16) B&W photographs showing a ACT-UP demonstration held at the Telecheck Mid-America office on March 2, 1989.

- Folder 17 - Records, Miscellaneous

Notable items include: 1) "Report on Anti-Gay and Lesbian Violence in Kansas City" (Nov. 1989); 2) "ACT-UP/KC Takes Hold" manuscript by S.J. Walker; 3) List of ACT-UP/KC activities for 1991.

- Folder 18 - Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Hearing

Primarily consists of reports and testimonials, submitted to the Missouri Senate Public Health and Welfare Appropriations Hearing (Feb. 8, 1990), regarding the AIDS epidemic in Missouri. Of special interest, are HIV/AIDS statistics for the KC Metro area and lists of agencies which provide HIV/AIDS programs.

- Folder 19 - Stickers/Miscellaneous Artwork

A variety of AIDS awareness stickers and ACT-UP/KC logo artwork.

Box 3 (Oversized 11"x17" Posters)

- Folder 1 – Fundraiser Events

(14) black & white posters advertising "Beer Bust" events at the Dixie Bell night club – (2) are duplicates

- Folder 2 – Protest/Demonstrations

(6) black & white and color posters, (4) are for City Hall demonstrations.

Box 4 (Audio-Visual Items)

(9) VHS tapes: news segments, protests, city council coverage

(6) audio cassette tapes: answering machine recordings

Box 5 (Artifacts)

(21) buttons, promoting AIDS awareness and ACT-UP/KC

(2) t-shirts (new)

(1) duck call (presumably used as a protest noisemaker)

(1) ACT-UP/KC parade banner (canvas)

Processed October 2000 by Special Collections Associate Janice Lee; another box discovered 2/26/01, second box processed and incorporated into the existing collection 12/2003 by Special Collections Associate Jeremy Drouin. The collection description and inventory list completed 1/12/04.