

West Lafayette Public Library

The Sonya Margerum Collection

Circa 1971-2004



Processed and Compiled by Tiffany Chiang
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Finding Aid

Descriptive Summary

Reference Code: The Sonya Margerum Collection

Repository: Basement of West Lafayette Public Library. Climate controlled, moderate security access.

208 W. Columbia

West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

Dates Covered: Primarily 1971-2004.

Extent: Five and a half cubic feet (five cubic-foot boxes and one hinged-lid box).

Creator: Sonya Margerum

Scope and Content: This collection contains materials compiled by Margerum over the course of her career in public service in West Lafayette, Indiana. It includes some information regarding her time as councilwoman-at-large in the mid- to late- 1970s, but the bulk of the collection pertains to her time as mayor. She was sworn in on January 1, 1980, and she decided to make 2003 her last year in office. Her campaign information, particularly for the 1979 and 1983 campaigns, are represented in the collection, along with extensive newspaper clippings that cover the entire time span of the collection. It includes some material objects, such as her Mayor badge and nameplates, as well as many photos. There are some personal documents as well, but she characterized these as “stowaways” that did not necessarily fit with her original intention with this collection, which was to document her years in office and her campaigns.

Conditions Governing Access: This is a private collection accessible by appointment only.

Biographical & Historical Note: Margerum was the first female mayor of West Lafayette. She is also a Purdue alumna, having received her M.A. in Political Science from Purdue University in 1979. Her husband was a professor at Purdue, and he accompanied her on some of her official visits. She still lives in the house from which she ran her first campaign and has three grown sons, but little is known about her personal history.

Subjects: Sonya Margerum, West Lafayette, IN, mayors, Indiana mayors, women mayors, sister cities, Subaru-Isuzu, Ota, Japan, community development, 1970s newspapers, 1980s newspapers, 1990s newspapers, 2000s newspapers, college towns, 1970s political campaigns, 1980s political campaigns, 1990s political campaigns, 2000s political campaigns, Indiana mayoral campaigns, mayoral campaigns, working mother, town and gown, Democratic party, conservation, Lafayette, IN., railroad relocation, Wabash, city council, councilman-at-large, polling, elections, mayoral correspondence, city projects, Purdue University, Purdue alumna, St. Olaf College alumna, Purdue Exponent, Journal and Courier, Lafayette Leader.

Finding Aid: Content

Collection Overview

The Sonya Margerum Collection contains documents, print media, photographs, and miscellaneous objects related to the political career of Sonya Margerum, the first female mayor of West Lafayette, Indiana. Margerum was elected as councilman-at-large from 1975-79, and then served six consecutive terms as mayor from 1980-2003, retiring at the end of 2003. The documents in the collection reflect the issues facing West Lafayette as well as the public works projects that took place over Margerum's 28 years in public office. In addition, the collection also includes a concentration of materials related to her political campaigns, particularly her 1979 and 1983 mayoral campaigns. As a whole, the collection provides a record of Margerum's service to the city and insight into her as both a successful politician and deeply-invested, innovative member of the community.

Series 1: West Lafayette City and Mayoral Papers

Location: Box 1, Folders 1-44.

Series 1 contains an array of documents relating to West Lafayette and Sonya Margerum during her time in office. Subseries 1 contains general information about the city and surrounding area, brochures, and Margerum's overviews of it, as given in her annual State-of-the-City addresses and Strategic Planning documents, produced by the community forum steering committee. Subseries 2 includes an assortment of cases, projects, and issues facing the city. Subseries 3 contains documents related to the sister city relationship between the Greater Lafayette area and Ota, Japan, including trips to Japan. Subseries 4 includes state-related documents and publications, public statements issued by Margerum, and the city and mayor's relationship with Purdue. Subseries 5 consists of papers of a more personal nature, the main exception being letters to the Mayor, which includes all correspondence to the mayor that isn't organized under different topics (such as post-election congratulatory correspondence). There are many letters from constituents in this folder, while Personal Correspondence consists of letters and cards of a more personal nature, either from family or friends. Subseries 6 consists of awards, honors and distinctions presented to Margerum, official and unofficial. Subseries 7 contains documents related to Margerum's retirement at the end of 2003. Subseries 8 contains Condemnatories, which are intra-department City Hall newsletters, handwritten notes that were not sorted topically elsewhere, and miscellaneous documents.

B1F0: Sonya Margerum Collection – Finding Aid

Subseries 1: City Information and Overview

- B1F1: West Lafayette Information
- B1F2: Tippecanoe County Information & Brochures
- B1F3: State-of-the-City Addresses
- B1F4: Strategic Planning
- B1F5: Strategic Planning

Subseries 2: City Projects and Issues

- B1F6: Mayoral Papers – Budget
- B1F7: Mayoral Papers – Various
- B1F8: City Council Issues, 1975-79
- B1F9: TV & Cable 1976-1980
- B1F10: Case #90-4246 Thomas Rhode
- B1F11: Sewage Plant – Thomas Rhode vs. City of West Lafayette
- B1F12: Urban Design Plan – Final Report
- B1F13: Storm Water Management
- B1F14: Waste Water Treatment Plant
- B1F15: Road Construction
- B1F16: Chamber of Commerce
- B1F17: Wabash Landing
- B1F18: West Lafayette Development
- B1F19: Community Involvement

Subseries 3: Sister City – Ota, Japan

- B1F20: Japan – Analyses of Bringing Subaru-Isuzu Auto Plant to Indiana, 1987
- B1F21: Japanese – 1987
- B1F22: Japan – 1993
- B1F23: Japan – 1998 Summit

Subseries 4: Other City/State/Mayoral Documents

- B1F24: State of Indiana Jobs Council Final Report
- B1F25: State Board of Accounts – West Lafayette Annual Financial Report
- B1F26: Conferences
- B1F27: Public Statements/Press by Sonya
- B1F28: West Lafayette/Sonya – Relationship with Purdue

Subseries 5: Personal Papers and Correspondence

- B1F29: Sonya at Purdue – Graduate Work
- B1F30: Travel
- B1F31: Letters to the Mayor
- B1F32: Personal Correspondence
- B1F33: Family

Subseries 6: Awards, Honors, and Distinctions

B1F34: St. Olaf Distinguished Alumna Award
B1F35: Russell G. Lloyd Award – Correspondence
B1F36: Other Honors

Subseries 7: Retirement

B1F37: Retirement – *Purdue Alumnus*
B1F38: Retirement
B1F39: Retirement – Correspondence

Subseries 8: Condemnatories and Other

B1F40: 1982-84 Condemnatories – City Hall “Coffee Break”
B1F41: 1982-88 Condemnatories – City Hall “Coffee Break”
B1F42: 1983-86 Condemnatories – City Hall “Coffee Break”
B1F43: Notes
B1F44: Miscellaneous

Series 2: Election Campaign Material

Location: Box 2, Folders 1-35.

Series 2 contains materials dealing with Margerum’s campaigns. She ran once, unsuccessfully, for city council in 1971, and then proceeded to win seven more elections—one for city council and the rest for mayor. The folders are ordered by election year and type of document. Promotional materials include campaign posters and flyers, not only for Margerum herself but also for members of her party who were running for city council and other offices. Polling includes poll sheets, instructions for canvassing and scripts for calling constituents, and lists of constituents by precinct. Issues & Miscellaneous includes any notes Margerum may have made for herself regarding the campaign and issues, as well as other documents such as press releases. Correspondence for the elections consists of congratulatory letters and cards after a victorious election.

B2F1: Pre-1971 Elections
B2F2: 1971 Election
B2F3: 1971-72 Issues, West Lafayette
B2F4: 1975 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F5: 1975 Election – Polling & Strategy
B2F6: 1975 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F7: 1975 Election – Correspondence
B2F8: 1979 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F9: 1979 Election – Polling
B2F10: 1979 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F11: 1979 Election – Correspondence
B2F12: 1979 Election – Correspondence
B2F13: 1983 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F14: 1983 Election – Polling
B2F15: 1983 Election – Polling
B2F16: 1983 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F17: 1983 Election – Legal Documents

B2F18: 1983 Election – Correspondence
B2F19: 1987 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F20: 1987 Election – Polling
B2F21: 1987 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F22: 1987 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F23: 1991 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F24: 1991 Election – Polling
B2F25: 1991 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F26: 1995 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F27: 1995 Election – West Lafayette Benchmark Survey
B2F28: 1995 Election – Polling
B2F29: 1995 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F30: 1999 Election – Promotional Materials
B2F31: 1999 Election – Issues & Miscellaneous
B2F32: 2003 Election (Jan Mills for Mayor) – Promotional Materials & Miscellaneous
B2F33: Off-Year Election Materials
B2F34: General Campaign Notes
B2F35: Crosstabs
Unlabeled Blue Folder: List of West Lafayette Residents by Address, Precinct

Series 3: Clippings and Articles

Location: Box 3, Folders 1-36 and Box 4, Folders 1-16

Series 3 contains newspaper clippings and other articles collected by or for Sonya Margerum. These may serve to supplement the other materials in the collection by providing a media perspective on issues, projects, elections, and other related topics. Subseries 1 consists solely of newspaper clippings and is organized chronologically by year. The vast majority of articles either directly mention Margerum by name or are related to a city project or issue that she was involved with. Subseries 2 consists of other types of print media. Miscellaneous Collected Articles are articles that were in the collection, presumably collected by Margerum although they don't directly relate to or mention her. Sonya in Non-Newspaper Media consists mostly of mentions of Margerum as they appear in magazines or newsletters.

Subseries 1: Newspaper Clippings

B3F1: Pre-1971 Clippings
B3F2: 1971 Clippings
B3F3: 1972 Clippings
B3F4: 1972 Clippings
B3F5: 1973 Clippings
B3F6: 1974 Clippings
B3F7: 1975 Clippings
B3F8: 1975 Clippings
B3F9: 1976 Clippings
B3F10: 1977 Clippings
B3F11: 1978 Clippings
B3F12: 1979 Clippings
B3F13: 1979 Clippings

B3F14: 1979 Clippings
B3F15: 1980 Clippings
B3F16: 1981 Clippings
B3F17: 1982 Clippings
B3F18: 1983 Clippings
B3F19: 1984 Clippings
B3F20: 1985 Clippings
B3F21: 1986 Clippings
B3F22: 1987 Clippings
B3F23: 1987 Clippings
B3F24: 1988 Clippings
B3F25: 1988 Clippings
B3F26: 1989 Clippings
B3F27: 1989 Clippings
B3F28: 1990 Clippings
B3F29: 1990 Clippings
B3F30: 1991 Clippings
B3F31: 1991 Clippings
B3F32: 1992 Clippings
B3F33: 1992 Clippings
B3F34: 1993 Clippings
B3F35: 1993 Clippings
B3F36: 1994 Clippings
B4F1: 1995 Clippings
B4F2: 1995 Clippings
B4F3: 1996 Clippings
B4F4: 1997 Clippings
B4F5: 1998 Clippings
B4F6: 1998 Clippings
B4F7: 1999 Clippings
B4F8: 1999 Clippings
B4F9: 2000 Clippings
B4F10: 2001 Clippings
B4F11: 2002 Clippings
B4F12: 2003 Clippings
B4F13: 2004 and Later Clippings
B4F14: Clippings – Year Unknown

Subseries 2: Other Articles

B4F15: Miscellaneous Collected Articles
B4F16: Sonya in Non-Newspaper Media

Series 4: Miscellaneous Documents

Location: Box 4, Folders 17-18.

Series 4 contains miscellaneous documents, such as business cards and oversized flat items, which did not fit elsewhere in the collection. The oversized items are few enough that they are individually listed.

B4F17: Business Cards

B4F18: Oversized Items

Item 1: 1979 Mayoral Campaign – Hand drawn sketches of candidates

Item 2: “Sonya Wall of Honor” – Poster with selected articles from 1995 newspapers

Item 3: Framed photo, possibly from early 2000.

Item 4: Title XX Citizens Advisory Committee appointment certificate from the governor of Indiana

Series 5: Photographs

Location: Box 5, Folders 1-38.

Series 5 comprises the photographs collected and donated by Margerum. They include mayoral photos, photos of official events and trips, and an assortment of other photos.

B5F1: Negatives

B5F2: Photos – Public Relations 1979

B5F3: 1979-1980 Election – Photos 1

B5F4: 1979-1980 Election – Photos 2

B5F5: 1980 Photos

B5F6: St. Olaf, 1983

B5F7: Photos – 1983

B5F8: IACT Conference ‘89

B5F9: Washington Chamber Trip – April 1989

B5F10: Japan ‘89 Photos

B5F11: 1991 Campaign

B5F12: Slides – Arbor Day ‘95

B5F13: Wabash Century Pride, 1999 & 2000

B5F14: Pictures 2000

B5F15: 2000-2004

B5F16: Ota, Japan

B5F17: Framed Photos

B5F18: Photos from Natalie Leimkuhler

B5F19: Loose Pictures

B5F20: Inserts with Photos

B5F21: Signed Photos

B5F22: Photos from [Clippings 1992-1996]

B5F23: Photos from [Clippings 2003]

B5F24: Stating Her Case

B5F25: Peggy Owen, Unveiling of CT

B5F26: Purdue University Seal

B5F27: Fair

B5F28: Mayor-in-Action

B5F29: Mayor’s Pictures

B5F30: Andrew Place Groundbreaking '01
B5F31: Gov. Frank O'Bannan
B5F32: West Side Welcome
B5F33: Assorted Photos
B5F34: Assorted Photos
B5F35: Assorted Photos
B5F36: Assorted Photos
B5F37: Assorted Photos
B5F38: Assorted Photos

Series 6: Miscellaneous Objects

Location: Box 6, Items 1-7.

Series 6 consists of non-flat objects that came with the collection. The items in this series are few, and so are individually listed.

Item 1: Large Nameplate: MARGERUM - MAYOR

Item 2: Small Nameplate: SONYA MARGERUM, MAYOR, WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

Item 3: Small Nameplate: SONYA MARGERUM, COUNCIL-AT-LARGE, DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

Item 4: St. Olaf College Nameplate – SONYA MARGERUM '52, BOARD OF REGENTS

Item 5: Pin in black casing – reads, “Sonya Margerum, Mayor of West Lafayette, Ind. / State of Indiana”

Item 6: Poster – 2002 National League of Cities Board of Directors

Item 7: Pop-open Address book – Contains phone numbers