

Ruth Stamm Dear Papers, 1942-2011

Preliminary Finding Aid

Creator: Ruth Stamm Dear

Extent: 9.3 linear feet (11 boxes and 1 folder)

Language: English

Repository: Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago

Administration Information

Access Restrictions: None

Usage Restrictions: Copyright for materials created by Ruth Stamm Dear was transferred to the Women and Leadership Archives.

Preferred Citation: Identification of item, date, box #, folder #, Ruth Stamm Dear Papers, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Provenance: Ruth Dear donated materials to the WLA in 2015 (WLA2015.08 & WLA2015.17). Additional materials were donated in 2018 by Rima Lunin Schultz (WLA2018.08) and by Dear's niece, Olive Karen Stamm (WLA2018.18).

Processing Information: This collection is unprocessed. Information in this preliminary finding aid was gathered through an initial inventory. Preliminary finding aid created in 2022.

Separations: None

Biographical History

Ruth Stamm was born January 16, 1914 in New York City to immigrant parents Anna and Simon Stamm. While attending Hunter College, she studied languages and was active in radical student movements. Through this activism, she met George Dear, a student at Princeton University. The couple moved to Chicago in 1937 and married the following year. Dear would live in the Chicago area for the rest of her life.

Dear came to identify as a Ghandi pacifist and took part in one-day strikes influenced by the Oxford Oath. Every Sunday, she joined a small group of peace activists to protest World War II in Chicago's Washington Park Open Forum in a court-ordered free speech area. Her social activism would continue throughout her life with activities focused on peace, racial equality, women's rights, and rights for older people.

Beginning in the 1950s, Dear was part of Circle Pines Center in Michigan, an organization and retreat center that promoted peace, social justice, environmental stewardship, and cooperation. She was active in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), Women Strike for Peace, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In 1963, Dear visited the Soviet Union to attend the World Women's Congress and an international peace meeting with women from North Vietnam. She soon after joined the Chicago Area Draft Resisters (CADRE) and protested the Vietnam War.

Dear moved to Oak Park, Illinois in 1974, where she became active in the local chapter of the War Resisters League. She joined the Gray Panthers to fight for the rights of older Americans and hosted a weekly radio program covering topics related to ageism, women's health, and more. Other organizations in which she participated included Citizens for a Democratic Society, Women Mobilized for Change, and the Chicago Pledge of Resistance.

In 1987, at the age of 73, Dear was jailed while protesting militarism and nuclear proliferation at the Arlington Heights military base.

Dear wrote numerous articles published in the publication of the War Resisters League, *Nonviolent Activist Magazine*, formerly titled *WIN Magazine*. In 2001, she published a memoir, *You Can't Not Do It- The journal of an older activist*.

Dear died March 31, 2017, at the age of 103.

Scope and Content

The Ruth Stamm Dear Papers consist of 9.3 linear feet of materials and span the years 1942 to 2011. The bulk of the collection relates to Dear's social activism and the organizations and groups in which she participated. The collection also contains materials documenting Dear's trip to the Soviet Union in 1963. Materials include journals, notebooks, issues of *WIN Magazine*, books, news clippings, correspondence, newsletters, pamphlets, conference materials, speeches, postcards, and photographs.