

Women In Communications, Inc.

Women in Communication, Inc. (WIC) is the Chicago chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, the national professional club for women in journalism. Included are members from the media and the fields of advertising, public relations and free-lance writing as well as the editing of trade publications. Theta Sigma Phi monthly dinner meetings are forums to which prominent speakers are invited to discuss problems and disseminate information about journalism.

Theta Sigma Phi was established in 1909 in Seattle, Washington as an honorary professional fraternity for college women majoring in journalism. The fraternity's purpose is to provide a professional organization that promotes the interests of women in literary work and unites them in fraternal bonds of friendship and cooperation. By the 1920s a number of alumnae chapters were formed by charter members who had graduated from colleges with the Chicago chapter being one of the first to be established in 1919. Membership in the Chicago chapter was, at first, limited to women who had joined the group in college, but within a few years, memberships from women already working in journalism were accepted. Consequently, the Chicago chapter charter was not granted until 1941 when the Theta Sigma Phi bylaws were changed to admit non-collegiate chapters.

Theta Sigma Phi first meetings were held in the Old Tower Shop at 151 W. Chicago Avenue. In 1921, the Chicago chapter rented a house at 55 East Superior which provided housing for members as well as a place to meet. The residents elected three officers to run the house as a separate entity. Other house locations included 1215 N. Astor Street (1923), 87 East Elm Street (1926), and 50 East Cedar Street (1928-1952). When the Cedar Street building was sold, no suitable house was found to house residents.

Theta Sigma Phi early meetings and activities provided companionship for a group of aspiring writers and journalists. Their first project established a National Journalistic Register. The Register, as it was called, served as an employment bureau for women to find journalism jobs. It was operated on a part-time basis by the members of the Chicago chapter. Theta Sigma Phi, the national organization, took an interest in the Register and opened branches in several cities throughout the country. The Register existed until 1931 when lack of jobs and operating funds caused it to cease operation.

In 1922 College weekends were initiated. Seniors in the midwest were invited to spend a Spring weekend at the Theta Sigma Phi house where they would attend workshops with working women journalists. The students received advise on how to write a resume, job interviewing, and apartment selection in Chicago. This college weekend served as a model for other Theta Sigma Phi

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Alumna chapters to emulate. In 1962, a \$500 scholarship was awarded at a banquet concluding the weekend. In 1970, the group sponsored Minority Recruitment Conferences in Chicago area high schools to teach students about the profession of journalism.

In 1937, the Ladies of the Press Breakfast was held as a fundraiser where members discussed various fields of journalism. The breakfast frequently coincided with the college weekend. As attendance grew the Breakfast became a luncheon, and later a dinner. Panels of members were replaced, by a single speaker, often a prominent local journalist. Then in 1962, the Board of Directors decided to recognize good journalism by establishing the Jacob Scher Award for investigative reporting. This award was then presented at the annual dinner.

In the early 1970s, the national board of directors modernize the organization by changing its name to Women in Communications, Inc. and the group incorporated as a not-for-profit organization so funds could be made available for service projects. The national group also adopted the policy of admitting men to membership as the Chicago chapter was one of the first to admit male members and campaigned for this change.

All local chapters - alumnae, the collegiate, and at-large chapters for alumna in rural areas are supervised by national officers and a board of directors. The national organization at its Annual National Meetings determine policy decisions and make bylaws changes. The national group publishes a journal for members entitled The Matrix. It also sponsors the annual Headliner Awards for women with national prominence in journalism.

The Women in Communication, Inc., Chicago chapter records include annual and auditor's reports, board of directors' and regular minutes of meetings, the constitution and bylaws, correspondence, convention proceedings, articles of incorporation, The Matrix, membership directories, newsletters, newspaper clippings, photographs, slides, and scrapbooks.

The Women in Communications, Inc. records include information on its activities since its founding in 1919; career conferences for high school and college students; the Equal Rights Amendment; the Jacob Scher Awards; Ladies of the Press breakfasts; minority recruitment conferences; the National Journalistic Register; scholarships and service projects; student chapters at Northwestern University; the Women's Advertising Club of Chicago; the national fraternity, conferences and activities; and WIC's twentieth birthday dinner. The records cover the time period of 1918 to 1976.

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The records, comprising 8.25 linear feet of material, were donated to the University Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago by the Chicago chapter of Women in Communications, Inc. on May 7, 1975 (accession 75-43), August 21, 1975 (accession 75-82), and August 22, 1977 (accession 77-60). This collection of records also includes some material relating to Northwestern University collegiate chapter.

The Women in Communications, Inc. records were arranged by the archivist in an alphabetical subject order and chronologically thereunder. An asterisk identifies those folder titles created by the archivist, while all other titles were assigned by one of the historian's of the Chicago chapter. See folder 98 for explanatory notes made by this club historian.

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The Women in Communications, Inc. Records are filed under the following titles:

1. Activities Vice-President's notebook
November 1, 1966 - March 12, 1971
2. Activities Vice-President's notebook
September 20, 1971 - April 15, 1972
- *3. Annual Reports
1927 - 1971
- *4. Annual Reports
October 25, 1972 - June 8, 1976
- *5. Annual Reports of National Officers
August 31, 1942 - 1967
- *6. Auditors' examination of records
January 30, 1934 - April 30, 1941
- *7. Award certificates
August 16, 1961 - 1972
- *8. Board of Directors minutes of meetings
June 5, 1963 - September 5, 1973
- *9. Board of Directors records
May 22, 1975 - November 25, 1976
- *10. Chapter notebook
1965 - 1967
- *11. Chapter notebook
1967 - 1970
- *12. Club activities
September 20, 1924 - May 17, 1974
- *13. Club hymn
N.D.
- *14. College weekends
January 17, 1958 - March 8, 1976
- *15. Constitution and By-laws
April, 1918 - August 26, 1975

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- *16. Conventions
April 29, 1920 - February 1, 1961
- *17. Conventions
1962 - 1976
- *18. Convention notebooks
August, 1938 - June, 1941
- *19. Correspondence
December 14, 1920 - April 17, 1968
- *20. Correspondence
September 12, 1968 - March 30, 1973
- *21. Correspondence: Associate members
February 7, 1950 - April 16, 1968
- *22. Correspondence: The Matrix (see also: F. 41, 42)
October 16, 1920 - May 22, 1972
- *23. Correspondence: President with national
April, 1943 - February 5, 1965
- 24. Equal Rights Amendment information
January 21, 1972 - May, 1976
- 25. Founding of chapter
June 25, 1919 - March 23, 1921
- 26. General information
1936 - 1975
- 27. Headliner nominations
January 10, 1950 - October 17, 1975
- *28. House
1926 - April 29, 1952
- 29. Incorporation
August 9, 1923 - January 9, 1974
- *30. Internships
January 17, 1976 - February 12, 1976
- 31. Jacob Scher Awards
September 29, 1961 - January 14, 1972

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32. Jacob Scher Awards
December 18, 1972 - April 20, 1976
33. Ibid.
- *34. Ladies of the Press Breakfasts
May 15, 1940 - June 3, 1952
- *35. Ladies of the Press Breakfasts
February 20, 1953 - August 19, 1955
- *36. Ladies of the Press
April 19, 1956 - October, 1962
- *37. Ladies of the Press
March 13, 1963 - May 21, 1967
38. Ibid.
- *39. Ladies of the Press
1968 - October 20, 1975
- *40. "Leadership Bulletins"
March, 1973 - February, 1976
- *41. Ledger
August 6, 1967 - May 27, 1969
42. Letterheads
June 6, 1975
43. The Matrix (See also: F. 22, 42)
June 1, 1922 - Winter 1976
44. "Matrix Table Manual"
1937 - 1948
45. Membership Committee
November 1, 1943 - May, 1973
46. Ibid.
July, 1973 - January, 1976
47. Membership directories and lists
1925 - 1962
48. Membership directories and lists
1963 - 1971

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- *49. Membership petitions to Theta Sigma Phi
March 1, 1920 - December, 1922
- 50. Minority Recruitment Conferences
November 5, 1971 - November 8, 1975
- 51. Minority recruitment information
n.d.
- 52. Ibid.
- 53. Minutes (bound)
September, 1919 - May, 1957
- 54. Minutes (bound)
September, 1957 - September, 1964
- 55. Minutes
September 21, 1967 - May 17, 1973
- *56. National awards
May 3, 1973 - May, 1976
- 57. National Journalistic Register
December 11, 1920 - April 26, 1928
- 58. Newsletters
September, 1953 - September, 1966
- 59. Newsletters
October, 1966- May, 1976
- *60. Newsletters from national
December, 1968 - March, 1976
- *61. Newspaper clippings: club activities
September 21, 1940 - February 10, 1972
- 62. Ibid.
February 17, 1972 - February 24, 1973
- 63. Ibid.
March 1, 1973 - April 4, 1975
- 64. Ibid.
April 19, 1975 - April 16, 1976

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- *65. Newspaper clippings: club members
August 17, 1941 - June 28, 1976
- 66. Ibid.
August 17, 1941 - June 28, 1976
- 67. Ibid.
- *68. Newspaper clippings: miscellany
October 28, 1973 - May 9, 1976
- 69. Officer and committee lists
September, 1962 - 1975
- *70. "Outlines for Officers"
October 14, 1965
- *71. Outstanding member award
March 10, 1951
- *72. Past Presidents' Council
February 21, 1963 - May 20, 1976
- 73. Photographs
ca. 1920 - April 16, 1964
- 74. Photographs
1965 - February, 1976
- 75. President's notebook
July 14, 1970 - June 7, 1971
- 76. President's notebook
June 23, 1971 - June 6, 1972
- 77. President's notebook
June 23, 1971 - June 6, 1972
- 78. President's notebook '72-'73
1972 - 1973
- 79. President's notebook '72-'73
1972 - 1973
- 80. President's notebook '72 - '73
1972 - 1973

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81. President's notebook
April 4, 1974 - April 22, 1975
82. President's notebook
December 22, 1972 - May 8, 1975
83. "Procedures Manual"
1972
- *84. Professional Liaison Committee
May 18, 1964 - 1970
- *85. Program Committee
July 6, 1965 - January 16, 1976
86. Publicity Committee
October, 1965 - 1971
- *87. Representative samples of members' work
1947 - 1948
88. The Ritual
April 19, 1933 - January 27, 1967
89. Salary survey forms
1965 - March 30, 1973
90. Scholarship
September 27, 1961 - May 13, 1968
91. Scholarship
April 14, 1971 - November 25, 1975
92. Scrap Book for Chicago Alumna Chapter of Theta Sigma Phi
1938 - 1950
93. Scrapbooks
1951 - 1963
94. Ibid.
95. Scrapbooks
1965 - 1969
96. Ibid.
- *97. Service Projects
October, 1940 - March 7, 1972

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98. Student Chapters
August 16, 1971 - January, 1974
99. Student Chapters: Northwestern University Chapter notebook
1924 - August 20, 1968
100. Student Chapters: Northwestern University Chapter notebook
May 15, 1958 - June 1, 1969
101. Theta Sigma Phi Manual
1953 - 1963
102. Treasurers' notebooks
June 28, 1968 - September 1, 1970
103. Treasurers' records
April 12, 1923 - June 30, 1965
104. Treasurers' records
October 12, 1965 - January 22, 1974
105. Twentieth birthday dinner
August 8, 1939 - August 18, 1939
106. Women's Advertising Club of Chicago - Woman of Distinction
January 29, 1957 - February 25, 1957
- *107 Original envelope of club historian
n.d.
108. Slides: College Career Conference
n.d.
109. Slides: Minority Career Conference presentation
n.d.
110. Ibid.
111. Slides: TAM and All-City Chapter
n.d.
112. Slides: Theta Sigma Phi Activities (used for 1970 convention
Exhibit by Jackie Pledger Skwerski)
1969-1970
113. Ibid.

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114. Ibid.

115. Ibid.

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