Guide to the James Bruen Papers
Acc. #2006.20 and 2022.02

Processed by Emily Sarazyn
April 2006
Edited by Daniel Carter
March 2021
Updated by Alexis Kantor
April 2023

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RMSC Museum & Science Center
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## Collection Summary

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<th>James Bruen papers</th>
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<td>Bruen, James T.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plitt, Jane R.</td>
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<td>Dates:</td>
<td>1964–2021</td>
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<td>Rules:</td>
<td>Describing Archives: A Content Standard</td>
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<td>Abstract:</td>
<td>This collection consists of the papers of former Rochester Jaycees President and founder of the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award, James T. Bruen. The materials date from 1964 to 2021. The papers are comprised of legal documents, correspondence, meeting notes, press releases, photographs, moving images, periodicals, news clippings, programs, and financial records.</td>
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Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition:

This collection was donated to the RMSC Museum & Science Center by James T. Bruen and Jane R. Plitt on March 24, 2005, accession #2006.20. Addition I was donated by Bruen and Plitt to the RMSC Museum & Science Center in December 2022, accession #2022.02.

Custodial History:

The materials were created by Bruen and Plitt in their efforts to get the Rochester Jaycees to admit women as full members with the bulk of materials having originated during Bruen’s tenure as Rochester Jaycees President from 1971 to 1974. Records from the Gary A. Scott Memorial award series were created through Bruen’s creation and maintenance of the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award.

Preferred Citation:

James Bruen papers, [box#:folder#]. RMSC Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY.
Restrictions

Conditions Governing Use:

Copyright is held by the RMSC Museum & Science Center but may also be held by the authors, or their heirs or assigns. Researchers must obtain written permission of the copyright holder and the RMSC Museum & Science Center before transmission, reproduction, publication, or presentation (public display, performance, internet presentation, etc.) for images from the collection. Quotations used must be cited as above.

Conditions Governing Access:

Access to academic transcripts is restricted due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) until 2088. All moving images have been digitized for access and are available upon request. Please contact the Archivist for an appointment to access the collection.
Biographical Note

James Terence Bruen was born January 30, 1939 in Yonkers, New York to William F. Bruen and Kathleen (Woods) Bruen. Bruen married writer, businesswoman, and activist Jane Plitt in 1974 and they have two children, Brett (b. 1980) and Beth (b. 1982).

Bruen served from 1956 to 1960 in the Navy as a combat aircrewman. When his service ended, he worked for Grumman Aircraft and Syracuse University Research Corp, Defense Systems Lab. He attended Syracuse University (SU) School of Management and graduated in 1967. After graduation, Bruen joined Eastman Kodak Company and was the Director of Business Research until 1991. Bruen received his MBA from the University of Rochester in 1979.

In the 1970s, during Bruens tenure as the President of the Rochester Junior Chamber of Commerce (Rochester Jaycees) women were only offered auxiliary membership which did not allow them access to the same benefits as men. When Jane Plitt, the first female management trainee at Rochester Telephone Company and future President of National Organization for Women Rochester branch, was referred to the Rochester Jaycees Auxiliary, she asked to meet with Bruen and his Board chair. She pointed out there was an Executive Order prohibiting discrimination based on gender. Bruen agreed to change the bylaws and together they advocated at the National and State level for membership equality between the sexes.

Bruen chaired multiple committees for various not-for-profit-organizations. He served as trustee for the Rochester Chamber of Commerce from 1971 to 1973, as Director and Treasurer of the Rochester chapter of the Center for Dispute Settlement from 1972 to 1973, and Parliamentarian for the Rochester City School Council from 1985 to 1987. Bruen served as interim Executive Director of the Manatee County Community Foundation from 2015 to 2016, and served on its Board of Directors from 2016 to 2021. He has sponsored various community organizations, including the RMSC Museum & Science Center and the Bishop Museum of Science and Nature.

In September 1963 Bruen arrived on campus at SU to start Freshman year. He was a 24 year-old veteran and did not know what to expect. The school assigned him to a small brick dorm, Sims II, with 18 year-olds of mixed races and religions. He was the “old man” of the dorm and made fast friends with the other residents, including Gary Scott. In 1969, alongside fellow alumni, Bruen developed the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award at Le Roy Junior Senior High School to support students who have overcome adversity in honor of Scott who was killed in action during the Vietnam War.

Gary Arnold Scott was born July 11, 1945 the youngest of five children (Bill, Sylvia, David, and Dennis) to parents Mabel (Thomas) and William Scott. The Scott family moved to Le Roy, New York in the 1940s. Scott attended Le Roy High School (later Le Roy Junior Senior High School) and in 1963, his senior year, he was awarded the John N. Aramino Award, named after a former student who sacrificed himself to save another.

Scott earned a Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship to the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University (later SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry). While at SU, Scott was dorm mates with Bruen, and they bonded with a group of men in the same dorm, Sims Hall. The friend group competed together in every area of intramural competition and were an excellent team in life and sports. Toward the end of Freshman year, they appealed to the University to stay together and were moved to Scott cottage for their sophomore year and when it was closed, to the new Lawrenson Hall for their last two years.
Scott graduated top of his ROTC class in 1967 granting him a full commission and his choice of Branch. Scott chose the Infantry. According to Bruen, he cautioned Scott against this choice and told him this wasn't the time and Vietnam wasn't the place to demonstrate his very capable leadership and bravery. But, Scott told him that there were an insufficient number of African-Americans, like himself, in leadership positions in this country. Scott felt that the surest way to advance was by going where the fighting was fiercest. 2nd Lieutenant Scott was deployed to Vietnam as platoon leader in the 101st Airborne.

On March 29, 1968, Scott was killed when saving Army Medic Bruce Brattain during an ambush in Hue, Vietnam. When Scott’s body came home to Rochester in April 1968, his family now living in Rochester, asked Bruen if his Syracuse schoolmates would be honorary pallbearers - six came back to Rochester. After the military funeral, the group gathered in Bruen’s studio apartment and decided to set up, and commit to support, a fund at his high school.

Scott was posthumously awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. He is buried in Rochester Riverside Cemetery. Scott is memorialized on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall on Panel 47E, Line 5. His death is referenced in the book and the HBO documentary Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam.

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1 Developed with assistance from James Bruen and Jane Plitt in August 2023.
Scope & Content

This collection consists of the papers of former Rochester Jaycees President and founder of the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award, James T. Bruen. The materials date from 1964 to 2021. The papers are comprised of legal documents, correspondence, meeting notes, press releases, photographs, moving images, periodicals, news clippings, programs, and financial records.

Series I documents Bruen and Plitt's fight for the Rochester Jaycees to admit women. In the 1970s, during Bruens tenure as the President of the Rochester Junior Chamber of commerce (Rochester Jaycees) women were only offered auxiliary membership which did not allow them the same benefits as men. The Rochester Jaycees was the largest chapter in the world because of corporate underwritings of memberships. When Jane Plitt, the first female management trainee at Rochester Telephone Company and future President of the National Organization for Women Rochester branch, was referred to the Rochester Jaycees Auxiliary she asked to meet with Bruen and his Board Chair. Plitt pointed out there was an Executive Order prohibiting discrimination based on gender. Bruen agreed to change the bylaws, which six months later they did, only to be thrown out by the New York Jaycees organization in Batavia, New York. A series of lawsuits ensued. Ultimately, the Supreme Court in a separate case ruled that service organizations could not discriminate against women.

Correspondence in Series I consists of communications from various Jaycees chapters and their opinions on admitting women, the 1972 letter from the New York State Jaycees revoking the Rochester chapters membership and the Rochester chapters response, and attorney-client correspondence discussing legal strategies. The series contains correspondence with the Playboy Foundation and the New York Civil Liberties Union in their effort to obtain funding for the lawsuit and includes the agreement between the New York Civil Liberties of Rochester, Inc., the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the Rochester Jaycees to cover all litigation costs. The series includes many letters of support for the Rochester Jaycees from Rochester Mayor Stephen May, NOW, Monroe County Republican Committee, many regional businesses, and local religious institutions.

Newspaper clippings were printed in the Rochester area and National newspapers. The clippings cover the progress made in the legal battle, editorials, and legal decisions on the fight for women's admission to the Jaycees. The newspaper clippings provide an outside perspective and focal point of the developments that took place in the fight to allow women membership. Included in the collection are news and press releases distributed by the Rochester Jaycees providing information on the background of the Rochester Jaycees, the choice to admit women, public letters of support from organizations and politicians, and updates on the legal progress.

Legal documents consist of published court opinions and decisions connected to the Rochester Jaycees fight. This includes Civil Action 73-C-66 and the Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Court. Official documents such as bylaws, meeting minutes, annual reports, board books, financial records, Constitution, and policies can be found throughout the papers.

Also included in the collection are an essay written by Jane Plitt entitled “A Time for Change,” a broadcast script of Tom Haight’s support of female membership, a P.O.W. bumper sticker, handwritten notes by James Breun and Jane Plitt, and a disc of the Ballad of the Gaspee Affair produced by the Rhode Island Jaycees.

Series II contains documents created through the foundation and day to day maintenance of the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award founded by Bruen. Gary Scotts death in Vietnam inspired Bruen to create a scholarship in Scott's
honor at Le Roy Junior Senior High School. The scholarship, started in 1969 and reinvigorated in 2003, supports students that have overcome difficulties.

In this series, the correspondence is comprised of electronic mail, greeting cards, and letters. It documents the fundraising efforts for the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award including donor solicitation letters, general updates on the status of the fund, thank you letters to donors and Jim Bruen from Leroy Central School, and letters from people who knew Gary Scott about the impact he made. The series includes greeting cards and electronic mail from award recipients expressing thanks and updating Bruen as to their academic status as a condition for receiving the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award. It also consists of personal correspondence from Bruen to Syracuse University.

Photographs in the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award series consist of Award recipients, Senior Honors Night at Leroy Junior Senior High School, SU Alumni Reunions with Bruen, Andy Olson, and Bob Auerbach, and photographs from around 1968 in the SIMS II dorm which include Gary Scott.

Most periodicals and news clippings in Series II are biographical articles about Gary Scott, the Memorial Award, and Jim Bruen. Some periodicals and news clippings pertain to SU in general, including an article written by Plitt and issues of Syracuse University’s periodical, Syracuse University Magazine. The New York Times includes an article about students in Le Roy who had physical ailments of unknown cause.

The collection also includes documents related to Le Roy Junior Senior High school including award letters, the 50th anniversary award program, Senior Honors night programs, lists of award recipients from 1968 to 2019, financial records, award selection criteria, and nomination forms. It also contains speeches given during Senior Honors Night by previous awardees, Jim Bruen, and Timothy McArdle, Principal at Le Roy High School.

Moving images of awards ceremonies and memorials for Gary A. Scott are in DVD format. Speeches were given by Bruen and others upon presentation or receipt of the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award. Academic transcripts for past recipients of awards are included in this series.
Arrangement

This collection consists of three boxes divided into two series:

Series I: Rochester Jaycees, 1966-1984
Series II: Gary A. Scott Memorial Award, 1964-2021

Related Materials


Jane Plitt papers, RMSC Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.


Processing Information

Material in Addition I was in no discernible order. Processor separated the materials into two distinct series: materials related to the Rochester Jaycees and materials related to the Gary A. Scott Memorial Award. Within the series, materials were sorted by media type, then by topic, and then chronologically. Metal fasteners, non-archival folders, and three-ring binders were removed for preservation purposes.

Subject Headings

Awards
Bruen, James T.
Civic Leaders
Civic Leaders—United States— New York (State)
Circuit Courts—United States
Courts—United States—Cases
Fund raisers (Persons)
Funds and scholarships
Bibliography


https://www.linkedin.com/in/james-t-bru-en-891599148


https://www.syracuse.com/kirst/2015/05/gary_scott_esf_syracuse_university_memorial_day_vietnam.html


### Container list

#### Series I: Rochester Jaycees, 1966-1984 – 2 boxes

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**Series II: Gary A. Scott Memorial Award, 1964-2021 - 1 box**

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<td>DVD - Gary Scott memorial - Neighborhood Alliance Church, May 30, 2004</td>
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Appendix A: Legacy finding aid

James Bruen Collection:
Rochester Jaycees and the Effort to Admit Women

Arranged by Emily Sarazyn, M.L.S.
28 April 2006

Schuyler C. Townson Research Library
Rochester Museum and Science Center
657 East Avenue
Rochester, NY  14607

For an appointment, contact Lea Kemp:
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James Bruen Collection:
Rochester Jaycees and the Effort to Admit Women

Biography and Background Information

Early History of the Jaycees

Throughout the United States, local chambers of commerce had developed junior chamber of commerce organizations, and the Rochester Chamber of Commerce's junior group incorporated in 1944 as the Rochester Junior Chamber of Commerce. This was a combination of the previously existing Men's Chamber and the Seneca Indians (not a Native American group). In 1964, the national group changed its name to the United States Jaycees, because some of the chapters did not want to be considered a junior version of the chambers of commerce. The Rochester Jaycees' purpose, according to Article II of the constitution and bylaws, was to "render constructive civic services for the promotion of the welfare of the community and of the nation, through the organized efforts of the young men of Rochester." According to a brochure, they placed "a very strong emphasis on community service and the training and development of strong community leadership that results." This is exemplified in the Jaycee motto "Leadership training through community service."

The Rochester Junior Chamber of Commerce, also known as the Rochester Jaycees (RJC), was successful throughout the 1940s, and grew to as many as 2,500 members in the 1950s. The city's Jaycee group became the nation's largest at one time, in part due to a unique situation in the Rochester area. Membership dues and other financial support were offered by all major corporations in Rochester, with the idea that this experience would provide their employees with valuable leadership training and networking. Past RJC presidents and leaders evidenced the success of their organization, since most of them went on to become prominent politicians, CEOs, bank managers, and other types of business leaders.

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1 James Bruen, telephone conversation with author, 1 February 2006.
2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Memorandum by Kenneth R. Lockwood to Bruen, Tom Banaszewski, Frank Hamilton, and Ronald G. S. Au, 1 February 1972. (Folder 5: RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees)
7 Bruen, telephone conversation.
8 Ibid.
Women Seek to Join, Against the Jaycee Bylaws

By the 1970s, young women were noticing the advantages of belonging to such an organization and were asking to join. Previously, the secretary at the RJC office followed the organization policy by referring female inquiries to the women’s auxiliary group, which did not offer the same benefits of business networking and leadership experience. However, in 1971, Jane Selman (now Jane Plitt) requested an application to join the RJC, not the women’s auxiliary. When her request was turned down, she informed the Rochester chapter’s then president, James Bruen, that this policy violated federal discrimination laws. Plitt’s work experience as the first female management trainee at Rochester Telephone Company proved that discrimination against women existed elsewhere. She explained that her male colleagues excluded her during lunch, and she ate with the female clerks. She thought that allowing women to join the RJC would provide business networking opportunities, and RJC, led by then President James Bruen, was ready to offer the chance to women.

Bruen met in Buffalo with US Jaycee President Ronald Au to explain the situation. The U.S. Jaycees Metropolitan Conference contained member chapters from large urban areas around the country, and these chapters faced more pressure to admit women members than did their suburban and rural counterparts. The city chapters were heavily involved in community service projects in the area, while suburban and rural chapters, according to a Rochester Jaycee, tended to serve as “social clubs for a night out with the boys.” Therefore, the metropolitan chapters generally favored admitting women, while the other chapters generally opposed the idea.

When Bruen met with Au, the US Jaycee president verbally agreed to allow the proposed RJC bylaw changes from “young men” to “young people”, and said that it would be fine to admit women as full members of the RJC, while not changing the bylaws or policy of the US Jaycees. However, Au subsequently met with all of the presidents of the state Jaycee groups, most of whom were angry about this agreement. Thus, Au backed out and told RJC that they could not admit women members after all. RJC did not have the support of the New York State Jaycee president on the issue of admitting women, although the large chapter of New York City Jaycees also wished to allow female members.

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10 Ibid.
12 Good Guys People – Bad Guys People. [Summary of chapter correspondence regarding the admission of women, as of 23 July 1973]. (Folder 4B: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)
13 Bruen, telephone conversation.
14 Ibid.
15 Chuck Hutin to James Bruen, 21 January 1972. (Folder 4A: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)
Bruen asked Au to accommodate the Rochester situation by allowing a trial period for female membership, but Au urged them to “attempt to effectuate change at the March Board Meeting... rather than to provoke the by-laws of the organization.” While I am aware of the increasing demands upon all sectors of our society and male organizations to integrate females into active membership,” wrote Au in another letter, “the guidelines of this organization are unequivocally [sic] clear. The present by-laws and policies of the United States Jaycees prohibit women membership.” While the US Jaycees claimed to be concerned about adherence to their bylaws, and cited Rochester’s disregard of these bylaws as the reason for their suspension, the national organization had allowed other exceptions to the bylaws in the past. The national bylaws required that individual members of the Jaycees be at years of age, but the Michigan State Jaycees and Hartford Jaycees (Connecticut) had both changed their bylaws to allow for the admission of young men from age 18. These chapters did not suffer suspension for violating the US Jaycee bylaws.

Rochester Jaycees Admit Women, Despite External Resistance

The Rochester Jaycees wrote to the US Jaycees, “Our organization must not concern itself with structure and procedure at the expense of being responsive to our community and member needs. Where would civil rights be today if we waited for our legislatures to decide among themselves what the needs of the blacks are?” Bruen held a meeting of RJC members to discuss the issues surrounding the admittance of women. Au even sent a representative to speak against the change, but when RJC voted, members were almost unanimously in favor of admitting women. Therefore, RJC decided that they would proceed in allowing female members.

On January 20, 1972, RJC approved a bylaw change to admit both males and females, changing the bylaws from stating “young men” to “young people”. This decision was the result of five months of investigation and correspondence with the state and national Jaycees, after which RJC determined that a change of bylaws in the US Jaycees to allow for female membership would not be realized for at least three to four years. Meanwhile, at that time, the international Jaycees organization was already admitting women as full members. Since the national bylaws only allowed for “young men” to be members, the RJC bylaw violation provoked the US Jaycees and New York State Jaycees to revoke the Rochester chapter’s membership.

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16 Bruen, telephone conversation.
17 Au to Robert Miller, 2 December 1971. (Folder 5: RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees)
18 Au to Bruen, 25 January 1972. (Folder 5: RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees)
20 Bruen to Au, 13 December 1971. (Folder 5: RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees)
21 Bruen, telephone conversation.
22 RJC to Metro Chapter Presidents, 1 March 1972. (Folder 4B: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)
23 Ibid.
24 Memorandum by Jane Plitt to Wilma, [April 1974?]. (Folder 2: Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence)
25 New York State Jaycees, Inc. to Rochester Jaycees, 1 February 1972. (Folder 5: RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees)
In the Rochester area, the RJC was the chapter within the city, and the surrounding suburbs had their own chapters. Some chapter leaders in the area offered RJC their support as individuals favoring the admittance of women, but not as representatives of their chapters. In fact, none of the suburban chapters in the Rochester area supported the admittance of women into the Jaycees.

Meanwhile, corporations for years had been sponsoring RJC membership among their employees, and were looking for a way out of this arrangement. When women's rights advocates pressured them for sponsoring Jaycees when the group was not open to women, many companies used this reason to back out of sponsorship. Since approximately 90 percent of the members had their dues and expenses paid by corporate sponsors, the dropping of sponsorships caused a decrease in membership. In the RJC, there was almost no internal resistance to the idea of admitting women, but membership decreased subsequently due to fewer corporate sponsorships.

RJC formed a committee, the Committee to Change the US Jaycee Bylaws (CTCUSJCB) in order to prepare for action against the national Jaycee group on the issue of admitting women. CTCUSJCB was comprised of experts such as past RJC presidents and RJC members who were connected with the media. All of their public relations actions were carefully planned so that RJC's side of the story reached the media early and first. The US Jaycees were shocked at the effort.

After being removed from the US Jaycees and the New York State Jaycees, the RJC was still in operation, but they did not send in their dues. The New York State Jaycees ordered that “all activities hitherto carried on under the auspices and name of Jaycees or Junior Chamber of Commerce should cease immediately.” The state organization further demanded that “all funds solicited or earned while using the names Jaycees or Junior Chamber of Commerce are henceforth to be held in trust for the New York State Jaycees, Inc.” and that they “should prepare to hand over all books, records, minutes and the monies referred to above to the Treasurer of the New York State Jaycees, Inc.”

In response, RJC's legal counsel sent a letter to the New York State Jaycees stating, “the Rochester Junior Chamber of Commerce will continue to use its legal name ‘Junior Chamber of Commerce of Rochester, Inc.’ until it is convinced that such use is illegal or that some other organization has a prior right to such name. Naturally, appropriate measure will be taken by the Rochester Chapter in carrying on fund-raising events to publicly state (on promotional literature, etc.) that it is in no manner connected with the
New York State Jaycees or the United States Jaycees." Furthermore, "The Rochester Chapter has no intention of turning over its 'books, records, minutes, and monies' to the New York State Jaycees as such an action is not required by the State law or by any by-law of the State organization of which I am aware." 

Some other metropolitan chapters supported the idea of admitting women, but rather than risk having their membership revoked from the US Jaycees, they developed creative ways to circumvent the national bylaws. For example, several chapters admitted women using their initials rather than a first name, so that women could be full members in the local chapter, but not officers. The Chicago chapter developed an umbrella organization, the Chicago Junior Association of Commerce and Industry, with a female membership at 10 percent. The Association had several subsidiaries: the Chicago Jaycees (affiliated with the state and national Jaycees), a Wives' Auxiliary, and a Women's Affiliate. These second two subsidiaries allowed women to participate in the Association as full members, with their own organization and board of directors. These creative solutions did not satisfy RJC, who wanted women to be openly admitted as full members and to have the opportunity to serve in leadership positions. The US Jaycees wanted to ignore the issue, pretending that it did not exist, but RJC's position forced the national organization to act.

**Rochester Jaycees enter into a lawsuit against the US Jaycees**

By August 1974, Jaycees chapters in Rochester, Philadelphia, New York City, San Francisco, and Kansas City all had their memberships revoked from the US Jaycees after admitting women as full members, against the national group's bylaws. The Rochester, Philadelphia, and New Orleans Jaycee metropolitan chapters joined together in a lawsuit against the national Jaycee organization and other Jaycees affiliated organizations, in protest to the US Jaycees' discrimination against female members. In contrast to the other chapters, the New Orleans Jaycees preferred to remain within the US Jaycees by not violating the bylaws, but still fighting for female membership. However, the fact

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34 David M. Call, Wiser, Shaw, Freeman, Van Graafeiland, Harter, and Secrest to Joseph G. Sacco, 28 April 1972. (Folder 2: Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence)  
35 Ibid.  
36 Bruen, telephone conversation.  
37 Keith Johnson to Bruen, 9 December 1971. (Folder 4A: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)  
38 Bruen, telephone conversation.  
40 United States Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit. *Contents of Rochester Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce of Rochester, Inc.) Legal Files Pertaining to the Record on Appeal.* (Folder 1A: Lawsuit Official Documents)  
41 Memorandum by Eric R. Peterson to Special Committee on the Lawsuit, 10 July 1973. (Folder 2: Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence)  
42 Memorandum by President, St. Louis Junior Chamber of Commerce to Metro-Chapter Presidents, 3 March 1972. (Folder 4B: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)  
43 Richard B. Fulton to John T. Jankowiak, 3 March 1972. (Folder 4B: Jaycee Chapter Correspondence)  
that the New Orleans Jaycees entered into the lawsuit with RJC and the Philadelphia Jaycees threatened the chapter’s membership in the Louisiana State Jaycees. The lawsuit also included various departments of the United States government, since the RJC felt that these departments were illegally supporting the Jaycee organizations with government grants and other funds, despite the fact that the Jaycees discriminated against female members.

In order to file a lawsuit against the federal government, there had to be an argument made from a constitutional basis. In this case, RJC argued for equal rights for men and women. Legally at the time, government funds could be granted to groups, even if they discriminated as to who could belong to their organization, provided that there was no discrimination toward recipients of the benefits of those government funds. For example, a project to help alleviate poverty could not discriminate by sex or race as to who would be the beneficiaries of said project. RJC made the case that since the Jaycees’ main purpose was leadership development of its own members, the organization was in fact breaking this law by discriminating against female members as recipients of those benefits.

Bruen determined that there were three potential places where the RJC could approach the federal courts with their lawsuit. While the federal court in Buffalo, New York was the closest one to Rochester, and therefore the RJC’s local court, Bruen had observed that this judge was “not friendly to women’s issues.” Another choice was Tulsa, Oklahoma, where the headquarters of the US Jaycees was located. Bruen felt that the courts there would not be sympathetic to their position either. The RJC decided to take the case to Washington, D.C., where they had support from some law firms offering free legal services. The federal courts there moved the case to Tulsa, where the RJC lost. Their case went on to appeals court, and finally the Supreme Court, but to no avail. The lawsuit ended accomplishing little toward the admission of female Jaycees.

The Years Following

In February 1975, the Tulsa National Organization for Women (Tulsa NOW) recognized “Eight Outstanding J.C. Chapters” who allowed women members, despite the disapproval of the US Jaycees. These chapters were: Kansas City, Rochester, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York City, Minneapolis, and Miami.

45 Memorandum by Eric R. Peterson to Special Committee on the Lawsuit, 10 July 1973. (Folder 2: Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence)
46 United States Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit, Contents of Rochester Jaycees (Junior Chamber of Commerce of Rochester, Inc.) Legal Files Pertaining to the Record on Appeal. (Folder 1A: Lawsuit Official Documents)
47 Bruen, telephone conversation.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
The US Jaycees gave the status of Jaycee affiliate to the Rochester chapter in 1975 in order to allow female admission, but revoked their membership for a second time in 1980. Therefore in 1981, RJC formed the Rochester Chamber Associates, and instead affiliated themselves with Vector International, “an international group of former Jaycees chapters that were banished from the organization.”

A U.S. Supreme Court Decision Allows for Female Jaycees

Another lawsuit began in Minnesota and ended in 1984 with the U.S. Supreme Court and a different ruling. When the Minneapolis and St. Paul chapters admitted women in 1974, the national Jaycees tried to revoke their charters, but the local chapters filed a discrimination lawsuit with the state. When the state ruling sided with the chapters and admitting women, the US Jaycees took the case to the US Supreme Court in 1979. According to a news report of the event, the high court ruled on July 3, 1984 that “states can force the Jaycees . . . to admit women, because the constitutional right of groups to choose members can be limited by the ‘compelling’ need to eradicate discrimination.”

The ruling applied to the Jaycees and other “large and basically unselective groups,” explained Justice William J. Brennan, since they “lack distinctive characteristics that might afford constitutional protection to the decision of its members to exclude women.” On the other hand, the ruling was not likely to apply to the Kiwanis Club, since they had a formal procedure for choosing members, based on selective criteria. The court also indicated that this policy may not extend to other groups such as college fraternities, religious clubs, and political-advocacy groups, which required members to hold to a particular point of view.

After spending 12 years and one million dollars in legal battles to fight female admission, the US Jaycees voted on August 16, 1984 to change the national bylaws to allow female members. Despite three previous votes of the membership, in which the US Jaycees had rejected female admission, the high court decision brought the change. Following the US Supreme Court decision, the US Jaycees held this special national meeting during which delegates voted on the issue, with over 93 percent voting in favor of female admission.

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54 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
Scope and Content Notes

This James Bruen Collection contains legal documents, letters, meeting notes, newspaper articles, official Jaycee documents, press releases, and other items collected primarily by James Bruen, and secondarily by his wife Jane Plitt, between 1966-1984. The majority of the documents fall between the years 1971-1974, including the time when Bruen served as RJC President (1971-1972). This collection chronicles the effort to admit female members into the Rochester Jaycees, an effort that began during Bruen’s presidency. Plitt became one of the first female members.

The museum acquired this collection on March 24, 2005 from Plitt and Bruen. The original organization method used by the collectors was preserved, with some modifications to allow for more categories by which to divide the collection. Originally, some of the collection was organized by categories and in chronological order, some simply by category, some simply by approximate chronological order, and some had no apparent order. Therefore, documents were reorganized first by category, then in chronological order.

When possible, documents without dates were given an approximate date based on their content and the dates on papers that had surrounded them. Documents without dates appear at the front of each category folder. Those with only a year appear at the beginning of the documents for that year in each folder, and those with only a month and year appear at the beginning of that month. The rest of the documents contain exact dates or estimated dates, and are organized chronologically. The term circa (abbreviated [ca.]) was used in the notation whenever a date was estimated, whether it was inferred from the item’s content or other related materials. For example, [ca. August 8, 1973].

*** See . . .” means that there is another part of this piece classed elsewhere, with a copy of this piece there also. “* See also . . .” refers to a related item.

Scope Notes by Folder

The following scope notes are included to clarify the relevance to the collection of certain items, or to explain the purpose or background information about an item for which such is not immediately obvious. Other notes highlight some items that have no known relationship to the Jaycees or the admission of women, but were nevertheless included in the collection by the collectors.

Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence in Folder 2

○ A list of lawyers that were members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Rochester, Inc. as of June 7, 1972. The list was used to involve RJC members in the lawsuit process for legal counsel, advice, or volunteer time.63

○ Two documents (19 July 1973 and 31 July 1973) about grant funding received by the Jaycees and their affiliates. Such grants were opposed by RJC and the other

63 Bruen, telephone conversation.
plaintiffs as grounds for the lawsuit, since the Jaycees received U.S. government funds despite their discriminatory practices against female membership.\textsuperscript{64}

- A memo from Eric Peterson to the Special Committee on the Lawsuit (10 July 1973). Peterson was the RJC historian and archivist.\textsuperscript{65}

Kodak Correspondence Concerning RJC in Folder 23

- A handwritten note, Ernie to Jim. Ernie was Bruen’s boss at Kodak, and attached to the note was an article (“A Liberal Wave Rocks the Jaycees,” \textit{Business Week}, 26 January 1974.).

Manuscripts in Folder 25

- A typed manuscript of Plitt’s (Jane R. Selman) essay \textit{A Time for Change} (ca. 9 November 1971), which later appeared in the Jaycee Hotline publication. Attached is a handwritten note of feedback on the essay from Bill C. He was Plitt’s boss at Rochester Telephone.\textsuperscript{66}

- Radio broadcast script (Aired 5 March 1972 on WEHH-AM, FM, Elmira, N.Y.). It was a viewpoint editorial by Tom Haight in support of female membership in the Jaycees.

Miscellaneous Items in Folder 26

- Bumper sticker. “Don’t let them be forgotten POWs (Prisoners of War) – MIAs (Missing in Action)”.

- Bumper sticker. “P.O.W.’s never have a nice day”.

- Page that appears to have been torn out of a book. Frederick Douglass quote from 4 August 1857: “Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground . . . .” This paper was found in an accordion folder surrounded by documents related to the lawsuit, and it is possible that someone used this quote in court.

- Photographs of four males holding two trophies (August 1968). Pictured is probably Bruen (left) during an inner city project. He was involved with basketball leagues and developing settlement houses for teens.\textsuperscript{67} The photograph was stored in an envelope from the Eastman Kodak Company where Bruen worked.

- Record disc with case. \textit{Ballad of the Gaspee Affair} by Robert Archetto: A Commemorative Issue Series 1. Includes a short story about the “Burning of the HMS Gaspee” and events preceding the Revolutionary War. The Rhode Island Jaycees were involved in the production of this record (1975).

\textsuperscript{64} Bruen, telephone conversation.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
### Box 1

**Folder 1**
- A  Lawsuit Official Documents
- B  Lawsuit Official Documents
- C  Lawsuit Official Documents

**Folder 2**  Lawsuit Issues and Personal Correspondence

**Folder 3**  RJC Internal Correspondence

**Folder 4**
- A  Jaycee Chapter Correspondence, 1971 – February 1972
- B  Jaycee Chapter Correspondence, March 1972 – 1975

**Folder 5**  RJC Correspondence with National and State Jaycees

**Folder 6**  RJC Correspondence with Others

**Folder 7**  National Jaycees Correspondence with Others

**Folder 8**  Others’ Correspondence with Others

**Folder 9**  RJC Bylaws and Official Documents

**Folder 10**  RJC Financial Documents

**Folder 11**  RJC Committee to Change the US Jaycee Bylaws (CTCTUSJCB)

### Box 2

**Folder 12**
- A  RJC Meeting and Committee Notes, 1971
- B  RJC Meeting and Committee Notes, 1972 – 1973

**Folder 13**  RJC Annual Reports

**Folder 14**  RJC Leadership Guides

**Folder 15**  RJC Ephemerata

**Folder 16**  National Committee to Study the Restructuring of the US Jaycees

**Folder 17**  Jaycee Conference Publications

**Folder 18**  Jaycee News Publications

**Folder 19**  News and Press Releases

**Folder 20**  Newspaper Articles, 1968-1972

**Folder 21**  Newspaper Articles, 1973-1984

**Folder 22**  Magazine and Other Publications

**Folder 23**  Kodak Correspondence Concerning RJC

**Folder 24**  Other Organizations’ Documents

**Folder 25**  Manuscripts

**Folder 26**  Miscellaneous Items
Related Materials


Bruen, James
plitt, Jane
2 boxes 26 folders