

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Special Collections Department

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MS 584

Iowans for WOI-TV, Inc.

Records, n.d. 1991-1994

MS 584

Descriptive summary

creator: lowans for WOI-TV, Inc.

title: Records

dates: n.d., 1991-1994

extent: 4.62 linear feet (412 folders in 11 manuscript boxes)

collection number : MS 584

repository: Special Collections Department, Iowa State University.

Administrative information

access: Open for research

publication rights: Consult Head, Special Collections Department

preferred citation: lowans for WOI-TV, Inc., MS 584, Special Collections Department, Iowa State University Library.

Biographical / Historical note

lowans for WOI-TV, Inc., was formed on 1 June 1992 by a group of citizens (primarily lowans) in opposition to the Iowa Board of Regents' September 1991 decision to sell the university-owned station to a commercial interest.

WOI-TV was the first television station owned and operated by a United States institution of higher education. From 1950 to 1954 WOI-TV was the only station to broadcast a regular schedule of television programs to central Iowa. At its inception, WOI-TV was granted an FCC licence because of this unique status as an educationally owned television station. Through WOI-TV, Iowa State was one of the first educational institutions to broadcast college-level courses, and the station's pioneering use of television for educational purposes helped to stimulate support for similar initiatives throughout the United States.

Founders of lowans for WOI included Iowa State University Professor of Economics and Agriculture Neil E. Harl, who served as the group's president; Ames attorney Donald R. Payer, secretary, and retired Iowa State University Professor of Journalism, John D. Shelley. The three comprised the group's initial board of directors. Eventually, the board of directors was composed of thirty-seven members and included Iowa State University faculty and staff, as well as community members including bankers, farmers, attorneys, and journalists. An Iowa State University student group, Students for lowans for WOI-TV, was formally registered with the university in Spring 1993; its stated mission was to raise student and community awareness concerning the sale of WOI-TV by the Iowa Board of Regents. Neil Harl served as the group's faculty advisor.

On 24 June 1992 lowans for WOI-TV, Inc. filed a law suit against the Iowa Board of Regents, challenging the Regents' right to sell the station. The trial culminated on 22 October 1992 in an eighty-four page opinion in favor of the plaintiffs. The district court decision was subsequently appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court, which overruled the decision on 24 November 1993, and in March 1994 Iowa State University sold WOI-TV to Capital Cities Communications, Inc., the parent company of ABC Television.

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Collection description

The collection contains materials documenting the founding and activities of lowans for WOI, Inc., including memos, meeting minutes, correspondence, and press releases and papers concerning the sale of WOI-TV prepared by Neil Harl and other members for distribution and publication. Also included are legal documents consisting of court exhibits prepared by the litigants for trial (including photographs and a videotape), depositions, oral arguments, transcripts, and pleadings. Newspaper clippings document the activities of lowans for WOI-TV, Inc., and the events of the two trials.

Organization

The collection is arranged in three series. Series 1, general files, n.d., 1992-1994; series 2, legal documents, 1992-1994; and series 3, newspaper clippings, 1991-1994.

Description of series / container list

- Series 1** General files, n.d., 1992-1994
 extent: 1.68 linear feet (109 folders in 4 manuscript boxes)
 description: General files: includes materials documenting the founding and activities of lowans for WOI-TV, Inc., including memos; meeting minutes; correspondence; and press releases and papers concerning the sale of WOI-TV prepared by Neil Harl and other members for distribution and publication.
- box 1/1-31 General files, 1992-1994
 box 2/1-26 General files, 1992-1994
 box 3/1-43 General files, 1992-1994
 box 4/1-9 General files, 1992-1994
- Series 2** Legal documents, 1992-1994
 extent: 2.1 linear feet (291 folders in 5 manuscript boxes)

MS 584

description: Legal documents: consists of court exhibits prepared by the litigants for trial (including photographs and a videotape); depositions; oral arguments; transcripts, and pleadings.

box 4/9-18 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 5/1-14 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 6/1-14 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 7/1-61 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 8/1-90 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 9/1-97 Legal documents, 1992-1994
 box 9/98 Photographs, 1992
 box 10/1 Photographs 1, 1992
 box 10/2 Photographs 2, 1992
 box 10/3 Photographs 3, 1992
 box 10/4 Negatives, 1992
 box 10/5 Video tape of a brief press conference, ca. 1992

Series 3 Clippings, 1991-1994

extent: 0.42 linear feet (12 folders in 1 manuscript box)

description: Newspaper clippings: documents the activities of Iowans for WOI-TV, Inc., and the events of the two trials.

box 11/1 Clippings, 1991
 box 11/2-7 Clippings, 1992
 box 11/8-11 Clippings, 1993
 box 11/12 Clippings, 1994