

Leadership and Legacy in History

Sample Topics & Related Records from the National Archives in Chicago

Michael Shakman made his stand against the Chicago political machine in 1969 by fighting against the practice of hiring or firing government employees on the basis of political loyalty. Our records include the court cases that ultimately led to the final agreement and court order known as the Shakman decrees.

Afro American Patrolmen's League. After facing harassment and mistreatment, Renault Robinson and other African American police officers in Chicago founded the Afro-American Patrolmen's League (AAPL) in 1968. We have the court cases that the AAPL filed against the Chicago Police Department alleging discriminatory practices.

Jo Carol LaFleur. In 1970, in Chicago, Cleveland, and many other cities across the country, female teachers had to leave the classroom because of maternity leave policies. Jo Carol LaFleur was a junior-high teacher in Cleveland, who challenged the school district's mandatory maternity-leave policy that forced her as a pregnant teacher out of the classroom in 1971.

Preston Tucker designed and built automobiles with new features, including safety measures, which are standard practice today. We have records detailing the Tucker's factory in Chicago and his subsequent bankruptcy.

Karen Frances Ulane. Kenneth Ulane was hired in 1968 as a pilot for Eastern Airlines, but was fired as Karen Frances Ulane in 1980 after undergoing sex reassignment surgery. Our records include the court case Ulane initiated charging Eastern Airlines with sex discrimination.

Lac Court Oreilles Band of Chippewa filed suit against the State of Wisconsin for interfering with Native tribal hunting, fishing, and gathering activities guaranteed in the Treaties of 1837 and 1842.

Eugene Debs was an American union leader and one of the founding members of the Industrial Workers of the World. Our holdings include a court case related to Debs' speech opposing World War I and his arrest for violating the Espionage Act of 1917 and Sedition Act of 1918.

These are just a few samples of NHD topics that can be explored at the National Archives at Chicago. To find out if there are primary sources about your National History Day topic, contact us today at chicago.archives@nara.gov.