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The Institute for Civic Education (ICE)

Ann Kathleen Otto
ann@ann-otto.com

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Hail We Akron Institute for Civic Education (ICE) 1960s

Charles “Chuck” Blair, Director; Mary Elizabeth Chesrown, Assistant Director; and student leader Thadd Garrett are gone now, but the work of the Institute for Civic Education in the 1960s set the stage for the urbanization of Akron by raising awareness and providing education and programming on challenging issues.

Chuck began his career at the University as Director of the News Bureau in the 1950s and later was Dean of the Evening College and Assistant to the President. In that latter role, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine (NEOUCOM). Mary Elizabeth was Program Director for the Akron YWCA when I first met her as a high school student. Thadd went on to become a Republican Advisor on national and urban racial affairs in Washington. I was privileged to work with these dynamic leaders in multiple venues.

1968 was a pivotal year. I remember lively discussions on mayoral and presidential campaigns as well as civil rights. The Young Republicans on campus supported Nelson Rockefeller for the nomination. Several went to the national convention but were disenchanted when Nixon got the nod. The ICE also monitored the racial problems in Akron that summer.

Today, social media provides a platform and networking opportunities for civic issues. In 1960s Akron, it was The Institute for Civic Education.



*Thaddeus Garrett with Shirley Chisholm,
Representative D-New York
Circa 1972*



*Mary Elizabeth
Chesrown*



Charles Blair

Ann Otto

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