

Donation of Records to the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research

The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research, an agency of the University of Wisconsin working with the Wisconsin Historical Society, is actively engaged in collecting, preserving, and making available to researchers significant materials in film, broadcasting, and theater. For over forty years we have acquired and encouraged research in the papers and audio/visual materials of significant producers, directors, writers, actors, and organizations who collectively make up the history of American film, broadcast, and theatrical culture. We are interested in collecting business records, contracts, correspondence, scripts, manuscripts, personal papers, photographs, stills, scenarios, shooting scripts, and publicity materials, as well as films, tapes, and digital recordings; in short, significant primary materials that will enhance our understanding of American media culture. Our website <http://www.wcftr.commarts.wisc.edu> provides extensive information about our collections, which include many of the most significant figures in American media history.

The collections of the Center are housed in the manuscripts archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, where they are arranged, inventoried, and catalogued by our professional archival staff. Since our overall objective is to make materials accessible for scholarly study, it is not our regular policy to place restrictions on access to archival materials. However, in special cases, confidential papers and correspondence can be closed to researchers for a designated period of time. We will work with each donor to make sure a balance of interests is obtained.

It is our hope that you will entrust us with those parts of your records no longer in current use, and that we can continue to receive further materials over time as they become non-current. Should a need arise for your own access to some of your papers or audio/visual materials after donation has been made, we will gladly arrange to lend items to you or copy them and send them to you as expeditiously as possible.

We recommend that any process of donation of a significant size begin with a visit of one of our archivists to view the collection. The donor is responsible for packing and shipping the collection. We will reimburse you for such expenses, unless you decide to make a gift of the amount to the WCFTR. Once the materials arrive in Madison, an initial inventory is made and a Deed of Gift prepared for mutual signature. At this point the physical materials become the property of the University of Wisconsin, though the rights to use of their content remain with the donor. Permission to publish or disseminate any of the materials, outside of fair use allowances, rests with the donor and may be permitted or denied as you prefer, on a case by case basis. Your donation of records to the Center may be tax deductible. We recommend that you consult with your tax advisor, as there are restrictions. We can provide some initial information about this process if you contact us at the addresses below. We cannot ourselves perform appraisals.

Our primary objective is to preserve for future generations the history of American media culture, and to make these unique documents available to scholarship as widely as possible. At the basic level, we process, index, and make such records physically

available to scholars who visit our archives. With the arrival of digital media in the 1990s, we have created an extensive online catalogue which describes our holdings at the collection level (ArCat; see the link under “Search” on our website). For many processed collections, an extensive online finding aid allows keyword searches of detailed inventories (see the Finding Aids link under “Search” on our website). For additional types of development, such as dedicated websites with selected digitized materials, more extensive indexing, or other kinds of preservation and dissemination, we rely on donor funding and have a number of suggested levels of support.

Please email, call or write us with questions about donating materials to the Wisconsin Center for Film or Theater Research.

Professor Michele Hilmes
Director, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research
Department of Communication Arts
University of Wisconsin-Madison
6040 Vilas Hall
Madison, WI 53706
mhilmes@wisc.edu
608-262-2547
608-262-9953 fax

Mr. Ben Brewster
Assistant Director, WCFTR
University of Wisconsin-Madison
6039 Vilas Hall
Madison, WI 53706
brbrewst@wisc.edu
608-262-9706

Ms. Maxine Ducey
Film Archivist, WCFTR
412 Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706
mfducey@wisc.edu
608-264-6467