



News from the

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Emerging from a Transformative Year

In the history of institutions, some years are more significant than others. Looking back at 2010, I would hazard to say that it will be viewed as a transformative year in the history of the Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC). First, in two of our primary collection areas we received donations that nearly doubled the size of those collections. Next, the addition of another range of compact archival shelving—including museum cabinets and audiovisual storage for the first time—significantly enhances the center's ability to store materials in its existing space and educate graduate students in public history about archival and museum methods. Finally, the center's participation in planning for the upcoming MTSU Centennial Celebration later this year has set the stage to formalize its role as the University archive.

This year will continue the trend of enhancements and change. We will debut a new web page later this semester

(<http://gorecenter.mtsu.edu>) that will provide greater and easier access to our growing collections. We will continue to develop the Democracy Education Center with a fully functional prototype of a simulation game of the democratic process. And, with any luck, our fundraising goal will be met so that we can proceed with the Museum of MTSU History as our distinctive contribution to the MTSU Centennial.

As a unit within the College of Liberal Arts, the AGRC takes pride in assisting students with research projects and in preserving the history of the college, its alumni, and MTSU. I hope you enjoy learning more about what we did in 2010 and what we have planned for 2011 and beyond. As always, we invite you to visit the center in Todd Hall 128.

Dr. Jim Williams
Director and Professor of History

Gore Center Receives Gordon Papers

With the unexpected announcement in December 2009 of Congressman and MTSU alumnus Bart Gordon's retirement after 26 years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, the lengthy process of transferring his papers to the Albert Gore Research Center began. In all, we have received more than 600 cartons of papers and an electronic database, all of which will document Gordon's career in Congress and his contributions to Tennessee's Sixth District.

Unusually for such donations, Gordon decided to include casework files that will document the ways in which Tennesseans call upon their elected officials to assist with health care, Social Security, veterans, and other life issues. The Gordon papers also include the first significant set of electronic records to be donated to the AGRC, in this case a constituent database that his offices used to capture incoming correspondence and staff replies in his last four terms of office.



Archivist Jim Havron shows Congressman Bart Gordon boxes transferred from his Congressional office to MTSU for archiving. Gordon dropped in for a visit in December.

The AGRC's partnership with the graduate program in public history at MTSU allows it to offer hands-on experience in the processing of large collections such as the Gordon papers and to prepare M.A. and Ph.D. students for careers in archival administration.

Center Collections Assist Faculty and Student Projects

The word "research" in the name of the AGRC is not an accident. The center's staff is pleased to help MTSU students, faculty, staff, and alumni with historical research projects. Two recent examples include a Facebook page for alumni of the School of Music's Blues Crusade ensemble and historical documentary filmmaking.

Dr. John Duke, professor of music emeritus, used scans of photographs he donated to the AGRC some years ago to create a Facebook page for alumni of the Blues Crusade, a music group he directed while teaching at MTSU. (Search Facebook for MTSU Blues Crusade Alumni group.) Meanwhile, several students in Dr. Lorne McWatters's documentary filmmaking class for undergraduates have used photographs and other materials in their films. Examples can be viewed on McWatters's website, www.mtsu.edu/digitalhistory.

In other cases, student work contributes permanent additions to the AGRC's collections. This semester, students in Dr. Jim Williams's Historian's Craft course will complete oral history interviews with World War II veterans that will be contributed to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project (www.loc.gov/vets) in addition to the Middle Tennessee Oral History Project at the AGRC.

AGRC Materials Featured in Traditions of Excellence

With many thousands of photographs related to the history of MTSU since 1911, the AGRC is naturally contributing significantly to the photographic history and website prepared for the MTSU Centennial. Visit www.mtsu.edu/centennial to view an illustrated timeline of the University's history and a short narrative history of the institution and to order *Traditions of Excellence*, the Centennial history book written by Suma Clark, a double graduate (B.A. '70, M.A. '77) of MTSU's English Department and longtime director of MTSU's Office of Publications and Graphics (now Creative and Visual Services).

Contribute to MTSU Centennial Projects in Liberal Arts

Alumni and friends of the College of Liberal Arts have multiple opportunities to help the AGRC preserve and present historical materials documenting the life of the college. The most substantial departmental archives in the AGRC, not surprisingly, come from Liberal Arts departments: Music, Speech and Theatre, and History. The music collection, for instance, contains scores of hours of audiotape and film of various band performances and other concerts. The theatre collection includes many play posters and photographs. Alumni interested in helping fund the digitization of these collections should contact the respective department chair or AGRC director Dr. Jim Williams (jhwillia@mtsu.edu).

Joan Hunt Donates Equine Library to AGRC

AGRC director Dr. Jim Williams presents a framed version of the Margaret Lindsley Warden Library for Equine Studies poster to Mrs. Joan Hunt, who visited the AGRC in May 2010. As she reached her mid-90s, Hunt decided her extensive library of horse-related books and magazines should find a permanent home where it could help others who shared her lifetime interest in horses. She chose the Warden Library, housed at the Gore Research Center, as the most suitable repository for her collection of nearly 900 books and 5,500 magazines. A native of England and a former diplomat in Hungary, Hunt has spent her life riding horses and, more recently, teaching riding near Pulaski, Tennessee. The Warden Library is a nationally significant research collection on all aspects of horses and horsemanship.



Unique Recording of MacArthurs on Campus Donated to the AGRC



Pictured here with Jim Williams are Joe and Kay Gaston, donors of the only known recording of Jean and Douglas MacArthur's speeches on campus on April 30, 1951. Mrs. Gaston and her brother, Tom Baker, donated the 78 rpm recording in memory of their parents, Thomas Burl Baker Jr. and Healan Brown Baker. Their mother was a great admirer of General MacArthur, and as founder and president of

WKDA radio in Nashville, their father was in a position to travel to Murfreesboro with sound engineers to record the speeches. Jean Faircloth MacArthur was a native of Murfreesboro, and as General MacArthur points out in his remarks, their visit to her hometown and the campus of MTSC coincided with their wedding anniversary. A digital version of the recording will soon be available on the AGRC website, gorecenter.mtsu.edu.

Ornaments Raise Funds for Museum of MTSU History

Brass Christmas ornaments featuring Kirksey Old Main are still available as part of the effort to raise funds to create a Museum of MTSU History in the AGRC conference room in Todd Hall. For more information about the museum and to order an ornament, visit <http://gorecenter.mtsu.edu/ornaments.html>. Those interested in donating to the museum project, or any other AGRC project, should contact AGRC director Dr. Jim Williams at (615) 898-2633 or jhwillia@mtsu.edu.

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