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ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

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## *Collections Policy*

### I. Introduction

#### **Center History**

Middle Tennessee State University acquired the congressional papers of Albert Gore, Sr. following his retirement from politics. Two professors from the Department of Political Science, Dr. Norman L. Parks and Dr. David Grubbs, were instrumental in persuading Gore to donate his papers to his alma mater. The papers first found a home with Dr. Jim Neal of the History Department, who began archiving process. In 1992, the papers moved to the Learning Resource Center, where the Albert Gore Research Center officially opened its doors in 1993 with Dr. Neal serving as the center's first director. During this time, the center began expanding its collections to include university and regional history. Space and storage issues pushed the center out of the LRC and into the renovated Andrew L. Todd Hall in the spring of 2005. In fall of 2011, the center hired Donna Baker, the institution's first University Archivist. Since then, the center's strongest collecting areas have been Tennessee politics and university history.

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Middle Tennessee State University's Albert Gore Research Center is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the records of the university and the unique collections pertaining to Middle Tennessee's political, social, and cultural history that support education, research, and civic engagement.

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The Albert Gore Research Center functions as an institution dedicated to the study of modern American politics, education, and southern history, with an emphasis on the participation of people and organizations from Middle Tennessee. As a member of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, the Gore Center actively seeks to acquire historical materials that fully document the political and policymaking process through papers, electronic records,

oral histories, ephemera, and select material culture. The Gore Center additionally pursues extensive documentation of the history of Middle Tennessee State University, and the history of the Middle Tennessee region's cultural, social, and economic issues and trends. The Gore Center also develops and conducts public programming, classroom exercises, and other educational materials to encourage research, civic engagement, and lifelong learning. To advance the mission and these educational goals, the Gore Center is open to collaborations with other institutions or individuals that support learning opportunities within the university and Middle Tennessee communities.

The Gore Center will exhaustively collect materials and oral histories as they pertain to the Subject Areas and Collecting Areas specified under the Collecting Criteria section of this policy. The Gore Center will also actively seek materials marked as Identified Limitations.

## II. Collecting Criteria

### **Basis for Collecting**

- i. Collecting Strengths: The Gore Center's collections are strongest in twentieth-century Tennessee politics (at the local, state, and national level), university history, twentieth-century wars and military conflicts, women's organizations and education in Tennessee, and Rutherford County history.
- ii. Identified Limitations: The Gore Center needs further development of subject material relating to women and people of color in politics and policymaking, environmental issues and activism, civil and human rights issues and activism. The Gore Center also needs to expand documentation of political parties in Tennessee beyond the Democratic Party.
- iii. Geographical Areas Collected: Tennessee with a targeted focus on the 41 counties that form the Middle Grand Division as described by the Tennessee state government.
- iv. Chronological Periods Collected: Twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
- v. Subject Areas Collected: The Gore Center focuses its collecting on political and policymaking history, university history, social and political activism, women's history, and veterans' history.

### **Types of Materials**

The Gore Center accepts manuscripts, government documents, business and organizational records, photographs, audio-visual materials, ephemera, electronic records, and certain artifacts.

## **Collecting Areas**

- i. Politics and Government: Congressional and state government documents, non-governmental organizations, campaigns and elections in Tennessee.
- ii. Social and Cultural Issues: Activism, public policy, and civic engagement on civil rights, human rights, gender and sexuality, the environment, economics and labor, and poverty. Emphasis on movements and issues in Tennessee and by Tennesseans.
- iii. War and the Home Front: Participation of Tennesseans in military conflicts, international diplomacy, veterans' rights and issues, and home front experiences.
- iv. University: Historical materials and permanent records of Middle Tennessee State University from 1911 to the present.

## **III. Procedures**

### **Collecting Methods**

The Gore Center actively seeks donations of historical materials from individuals and organizations on the local, state, and national levels. The center does not accept materials without a signed deed of gift and the legal transfer of title or copyright. All materials donated to the Gore Center are accepted if they fit the archive's mission and the educational goals of the University.

### **Exclusions**

With few exceptions, the Gore Center will no longer accept the following materials:

- Modern newspapers, books, plaques, trophies, and most genealogical documents.
- Political history unrelated to Tennessee or not involving Tennesseans.
- Partial manuscripts or collections, especially if major portions have already been donated to another institution.
- Reproductions and photocopies of archival materials.

### **Deaccessioning**

Duplicates and materials unrelated to the Gore Center's specified collecting areas may be subject to the deaccessioning process. This process entails one or more of the following procedures: notification of the donor or their successor, compliance with state and federal laws, and opportunities for more appropriate institutions to house the materials.

### **Cooperative Agreements**

The Gore Center recognizes that other institutions collect in similar subject areas and acquire overlapping unique materials. The Gore Center will use best judgement to determine that materials are housed in the most appropriate repository. In cases of direct conflict, the Gore Center will cooperate with other institutions to ensure that it is operating in the best interest of the public and scholarly community.

## **IV. Policy History**

This collection development policy is designed to achieve the goals of Middle Tennessee State University and the Albert Gore Research Center. The staff will review this policy every five years and make changes as needed to support the mission of MTSU and the Gore Center.

### **Dates of Revision**

August 2017