

Information for Potential Donors

The Special Collections Department Solicits the following Materials:

Manuscript materials:

The Special Collections Department houses several manuscript collections, and actively solicits and collects the following types of manuscript materials: civil rights litigation materials, Howard University School of Law faculty papers, Howard University School of Law administrative and historical records, and Howard University School of Law alumni papers.

Rare Books:

The Special Collections Department houses more than 250 volumes of rare law books, and collects books that are truly rare, and document civil rights, the legal history of the District of Columbia, or the history of Howard University School of Law. The Special Collections Department also collects law books which come from an important legal provenance (e.g., Thurgood Marshall, Felix Frankfurter).

Visual Materials:

The Special Collections Department actively solicits and collects photographs and other visual materials which portray the history of Howard University School of Law, and materials which portray the history of civil rights litigation.

Benefits of Donation:

When a donor transfers materials to the Howard University Law Library Special Collections Department, the Library organizes and preserves the donation and makes it available to the public.

The following is a list of services the Special Collections Department will provide regarding your donation.

1. The donation will be organized and, if appropriate, a bibliographic record and/or finding aid (index) will be created to describe the content and the arrangement.
2. The donation will be physically stabilized and preserved; materials will be placed in non-damaging containers and stored in facilities that provide appropriate temperature and humidity control and security.
3. The donation will be available to researchers in the Library after it is organized, physically stabilized, and prepared for use.
4. The Special Collections Department will provide reference services for the donation and, if appropriate, will have the materials listed in national and international bibliographic sources and online databases.
5. Should the Deed of Gift contain temporary restrictions on portions of the donation, the restrictions will be strictly enforced.
6. The Library will require that appropriate and complete citations be included in all information relating to the donation, such as exhibitions, publications, and media productions.
7. The Library will permanently maintain confidential files documenting the acquisition of the donation and its use.

Deed of Gift:

All donations to the Special Collections Department must be accompanied by a deed of gift. A deed of gift is a formal, legal, agreement that transfers ownership of, and legal rights in, the materials to be donated. Executing a deed is in the best interests of both donor and repository. After discussion and review of the various elements of the deed, it is signed by both the donor, or donor's authorized agent, and an authorized representative of the University. The signed deed of gift establishes and governs the legal relationship between the donor and the Law Library and the legal status of the materials. As part of its deed of gift text, the Library requires donors to transfer any copyright they may hold in the materials to the Howard University School of Law.

Unsuitable Donations:

The Special Collections Department receives many donations which do not fit into its collection policy. The Library does not have the resources to care for such collections, and such collections will be returned to the donor. The department will try to suggest an alternative repository for manuscript or visual materials. In the case of book donations, the Library director will be consulted to see if the book fits into the general library collection, and if so, with the permission of the donor will be placed there.

Howard University Law Library

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