

## **The Benefits of a Donation to the Clara Thomas Archives**

### **What Are We Looking For?**

The Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections preserves and makes accessible the records of individuals and organizations whose papers possess enduring research value in areas that support research and teaching at York University, particularly in the areas of Canadian women, Canadian writers, graphic and performing arts, social reform, and the multicultural imagination. Archivists look for documents that promote an understanding of issues unique to organizations or communities, that reflect the origins and changes of attitudes, policies or programs over time, and that serve as evidence of the key functions and activities of their creators. They include not only documents created by a donor, but also documents received from other individuals or organizations associated with the donor's activities. Examples include:

- Subject, project, and correspondence files
- Reports, minutes and related documents prepared for meetings of committees or boards of directors
- Financial records that capture the economic well being of individuals, organizations, and festivals, including grant applications
- Newsletters, annual reports, programmes, posters, and other publications that demonstrate how individuals and organizations communicated with their communities of interest
- Photographic and digital images that show people, events, and works of art
- Video and audio recordings of meetings, interviews, performances, and other events

### **General Benefits**

- Donation of records to an archives ensures that they survive and are available for use by donors for future reference to honour their obligations, enforce their rights, and develop new programs, while avoiding loss due to poor storage, disasters such as fire and flood, and disposal when moving office or home
- The contributions of donors to Canada's cultural heritage becomes better known through research by scholars and writers
- Donors can receive tax receipts for the market value of their papers as determined by an independent expert hired by York University Libraries

### **Preservation**

- Records are stored in a locked, alarmed area with a stable temperature and relative humidity to provide an environment suitable for the long-term storage of documents
- Records are transferred to archival storage containers such as acid-free folders and boxes for paper-based documents, and polyethylene sleeves and jackets for photographs and cassettes
- Conservation treatments are undertaken on a selective basis to repair damaged documents
- Textual documents, photographs, and audio and video recordings can be transferred to digital formats on a selective basis to promote preservation through reduced handling of the original records, which also permits simultaneous access for multiple users from remote locations

## Access and Use

- Records are described according to national standards, and inventoried at the file level
- Inventories are made available to donors and researchers through the Archives' website: <http://www.library.yorku.ca/web/archives/holdings/>
- A description of these records will be submitted to ARCHEION (the provincial electronic listing of archival holdings) and Archives Canada (the national list) to increase awareness of the availability of this material among an international community of scholars and the public
- While a donor's records must be accessible to support the university's mission of research and teaching, restrictions governing access and use of the records can be put in place for a finite period to protect time-sensitive information and the confidentiality of third parties
- Records do not leave the custody of the Archives unless they are transferred to a service provider for copying or conservation treatment, or are exhibited in a controlled environment that meets archival standards
- Faculty, students, and the public have access to archival holdings without appointment during regularly scheduled hours: Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Records are consulted in a reading room with controlled access and direct supervision, and in accordance with procedures designed to minimize damage from rough handling or copying
- Access for donors beyond regular hours can be arranged with sufficient notice
- While donors transfer physical ownership of the records to York University, they are not required to transfer copyright and can control the publication of the documents they created

## Why York University?

- York University is Canada's third largest university, and has played an important role in preserving and providing access to Canada's documentary heritage since the 1960s
- Holdings include the correspondence of Margaret Laurence, more than 1.25 million photographs from the Toronto *Telegram*, the records of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario and the Mariposa Folk Festival, and the papers of more than 400 actors, artists, arts administrators, authors, dancers, environmentalists, filmmakers, journalists, labour organizers, lawyers, poets, publishers, musicians, playwrights, politicians, scholars, social reformers, teachers, and related organizations
- Archival donations provide unique source material needed by growing numbers of students in the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and other disciplines to develop their skill in critical analysis, as well as by faculty, an international community of scholars, and the public who seek to understand changes in Canadian society during the 20<sup>th</sup> century

For further information, please contact:

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