

Chatham University Archives

Jennie King Mellon Library

Access to Records Policy

The University Archives, housed in the Jennie King Mellon Library at Chatham University, contains the records of the university and related collections and materials selected, preserved, and made accessible for their enduring historical and administrative value to the Chatham community. The Chatham University Archives is committed to making research materials available to users on equal terms of access in accordance with the professional policies on access adopted by the Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, and the Association of Research Libraries¹. As such, the Chatham University Archives does not deny any researcher access to materials, nor grant privileged or exclusive use of materials to any researcher, nor conceal the existence of any body of materials from any researcher, unless required to do so by law, Chatham University policy, or donor or purchase stipulation.

The Chatham University Archives encourages the uses of these collections through the dissemination of descriptive catalogues, online catalogues, and the provision of public services at the Archives. Descriptive guides to the collections in the University Archives are distributed from the Jennie King Mellon Library website and through online resource hubs, like Historic Pittsburgh, that reference the collection's origin at Chatham.

The collections in the University Archives are non-circulating and must be used in the Archives Reading Room. Records in the University Archives are open for use under the supervision of the Archivist by anyone, including outside researchers during Archives office hours and by appointment.

Additionally:

- All researchers are expected to follow the Reading Room Policy regarding handling of material, storage of personal items, and reproduction.
- The Archives Reading Room is reserved for individuals using our collections. Individuals seeking a quiet place to study should use areas in the building designated for that purpose.
- The Archives may limit access of an individual who has demonstrated such carelessness or deliberate destructiveness as to endanger the safety of its collections, or violated its policies and regulations.
- The Archives may require researchers to use access-copies of records in place of originals whose physical condition or format makes them unusable.

Reference Service:

The Archivist is available to assist with remote research and reference requests through email or telephone. Researchers, especially those from out of town, are encouraged to contact University Archives to make an appointment before visiting to ensure staff availability. Please allow 24 hours, not including weekends, for materials to be retrieved. Every attempt will be made to provide timely assistance.

¹ [ALA-SAA Joint Statement on Access: Guidelines for Access to Original and Research Materials](#), 1994, Revised 2009 and [ACRL/SAA Joint Statement on Access to Research Materials in Archives and Special Collections Libraries](#), 2009.

Loan of Materials:

University Archives encourages the use of its collections and is open to loaning collections or portions of collections for use in off-site exhibitions. Special borrowing privileges or loans of material must be approved in advance by the University Archivist and must follow procedures outlined in Chatham University Archives Loan Policy.

Restricted Materials:

When providing access to records, the University Archives balances two occasionally conflicting needs: the need to provide broad access and the need to protect legitimate privacy rights of individuals.

Additionally, the University Archives must comply with University policies and regulatory and statutory prohibitions on the release of information. Restrictions are based on content, status, and age of records.

The following materials are restricted in the University Archives:

- Unprocessed university collections are closed to research use. Unprocessed collections are those that have not been integrated into the collection and that remain as they were when transferred or collected by the University Archives.
- Records and meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees and its committees are closed for 50 years from the date of creation. During the restriction period, the office of origin may view these materials and all other patrons are to consult Procedures for Accessing Restricted Records in the Chatham University Archives.
- Institutional Records may be closed for a period of up to 40 years from the date of their creation as designated by the office of origin in consultation with the University Archivist. Institutional records (e.g., speeches, publications, policies) that were published by the records' creator are open for research immediately upon transfer to the University Archives and processing. During the restriction period, the office of origin may view these materials and all other patrons are to consult Procedures for Accessing Restricted Records in the Chatham University Archives.
- Student academic records are restricted during the lifetime of the student subject to the provisions of the Federal Family Education and Privacy Rights Acts (FERPA) of 1974.
- Records that contain FERPA-protected information such as credentials, grade sheets, correspondence, reports, notes, applications and all other records pertaining to past and present students are governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 and are restricted for 75 years from the date of creation. Directory information as defined by FERPA, (name; address; telephone number; email address; photograph; student identification number; dates of attendance; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities, organizations, and athletic teams; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees and awards; academic institution attended immediately prior to Chatham University) may be released to the public unless the student or their family has requested that the school not disclose directory information about them.
- Records related to faculty or staff personnel matters such as those pertaining to an appointment, employment, performance evaluation, payroll/salary information, disciplinary action, and similar personnel matters, when found in other University Archives collections are restricted for 75 years from the date of their creation.
- Medical records and patient/client files are restricted for 100 years from the date of creation.

- Records created by student organizations may be restricted at the discretion of the organization in consultation with the University Archivist for an approved limited period to protect personal information or privacy. The restriction will be recorded in the finding aid.
- Records donated by individuals or organizations outside of the University (including alumni) may be restricted at the discretion of the donor in consultation with the University Archivist for an approved limited period to protect personal information or privacy. The restriction will be recorded in the finding aid.
- Records of the above types, even where located in otherwise unrestricted collections are still considered closed and are not available for use by researchers.

Access to Restricted Materials

In certain cases, otherwise restricted materials may be accessed. Individuals interested in accessing restricted materials are to consult Procedures for Accessing Restricted Records in the Chatham University Archives.

The Chatham University Archives will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints about materials made available on its website, and will remove or disable access to (take down) the contested materials from the website pending resolutions of the complaint. Email comments to: jkmref@chatham.edu