

## Collection Development Policy

### Jennie King Mellon Library Special Collections

Revised December 2017

#### I. Introduction

The following policy document establishes guidelines for the development and maintenance of Special Collections at Chatham University's Jennie King Mellon Library in keeping with the Library's overall Collection Development Policy.

The purpose of this policy is twofold: 1) to ensure clear rationale for the inclusion of materials in Special Collections and 2) to communicate this rationale to all stakeholders (namely the faculty, students, staff, and alumni of Chatham University but also any outside researchers or donors).

#### II. Current Collections Overview

The Jennie King Mellon Library's Special Collections consists of several distinct collections as follows:

- a. **The Pennsylvania Collection** is made up primarily of materials relating to the Pittsburgh area and includes early histories of Western Pennsylvania, institutional and corporate histories, as well as biographies of notable Pittsburgh families and individuals.
- b. **The Snowdon Mesoamerican Collection** was donated by the Snowdon family and contains a wide range of materials on Mesoamerica. It contains an excellent selection of materials on South and Central America, and in particular the history, archaeology, and anthropology of those areas.
- c. **The Wray Collection** is a large donation from Dr. Wendell Wray, part of which is housed in Special Collections. The collection focuses on African-American issues, history, literature, oral history, travel, and art.
- d. **The Melanie and Fred R. Brown Collection** is a large donation of literary fiction first editions collected and donated to Chatham University by the Browns. The collection contains fiction and mystery titles, with many bearing author signatures and arranged by literary award.

- e. Special Collections also houses a small collection of **Rare and Fragile Books**. These items were separated from the general collection because of their age, rarity, or special characteristics such as signed copies and limited special editions

### **III. Special Collections Mission**

The mission of Special Collections is to identify, preserve, and provide access to and reference assistance for rare, fragile, and unique materials held by the Jennie King Mellon Library, including materials of considerable scholarly, cultural, or monetary value. The mission of library staff in acquiring and maintaining these materials is to support research and instruction at Chatham University as well as the integrity of our subject specific collections.

### **IV. Selection and Evaluation Responsibility**

Primary selection and evaluation responsibility resides with the librarian in charge of Special Collections in consultation with the Library Director and subject-specific liaisons.

### **V. Acquisition and Evaluation Criteria for Special Collections**

Materials are added to Special Collections by generally one of two means: either through transfer from the general circulating and reference collections or through outside gifts. In both circumstances, library staff utilizes the following criteria for all acquisition and evaluation decisions. These criteria are also employed when an item is considered for withdrawal.

#### **a. Relevance to Current Subject Strengths**

Special consideration will be given to materials that will enrich current collection strengths, particularly Western Pennsylvania history.

#### **b. Curriculum Support**

Priority will be given to materials that support the current and planned curriculum of Chatham University but are deemed inappropriate for the general collection (see Factors of Rarity, Value, Age, Format, and Physical Condition).

#### **c. Accruals to Existing Collections**

Additional donations to existing collection are accepted in accordance with donor agreements, where applicable.

**d. Factors of Rarity, Value, Age, Format, and Physical Condition**

Factors such as rarity, value, age, format, and physical condition will be considered in all Special Collections acquisition and evaluation decisions. Particular attention will be given to items printed before 1850.

**VI. Gift Procedures**

See the Library's overall Collection Development Policy for gift policy and procedures.

Please note that the library staff reserves the right to assess gift collections for placement in Special Collections on an item-level basis.

In accordance with tax law, the library staff will not formally appraise gifts or participate in an appraisal.

**VII. Transfer Policy**

Materials in the general circulating and reference collections will periodically be assessed for placement in Special Collections. This process will be performed by the Head of Technical Services in consultation with the librarian in charge of Special Collections.