



# ARCHIVES

OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

## Deaccession Policy

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Deaccessioning is the process by which an archives formally and permanently removes materials from its holdings and either disposes of them or transfers their legal ownership to a more appropriate repository.
- 1.2 When the Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle accepts custody of archival materials, it is with the intent of permanent preservation. Sometimes, however, it may be necessary to remove materials if it is determined that it is no longer appropriate to retain them. Materials to be deaccessioned are generally the result of overly broad collecting before the development of defined appraisal criteria and acquisition strategies.

### 2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 This statement is designed to describe the conditions under which materials held by the Archives of the Archdiocese may be deaccessioned. It also sets forth guidelines for the evaluation of materials to be removed from its custody and their methods of disposal.

### 3 ROLE AND MISSION

- 3.1 The Archives is responsible for identifying, preserving, and providing appropriate access to records which document the history of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.
- 3.2 The holdings of the Archives are preserved to maintain memory of our ministerial and corporate activities, enabling continuity in decision making and policy formation and facilitating historical research.
- 3.3 The Archives also oversees the management of current Chancery records and assists churches and schools in the development and administration of their own records programs.

## **4 LEGAL MANDATE**

- 4.1 The Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle is subject to and operates in accord with canons 482 and 486-488 of the *Code of Canon Law* of the Roman Catholic Church.

## **5 EVALUATION GUIDELINES**

- 5.1 The purpose of the Archives is to preserve records which document the key functions of the Archbishop of Seattle, the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, and its agencies. While the Archivist or the Chancellor may occasionally be required to determine the value of retaining previously acquired materials, only those that clearly fall outside the scope of the Acquisition Policy will be considered for deaccessioning.
- 5.2 The following general evaluative questions will be considered for all potential deaccessions:
- Does the material fall outside the stated acquisition policy of the Archives?
  - Is the material a duplicate, or does it duplicate information already held by the Archives?
  - Do donor restrictions, canon or civil law, or Archdiocesan policy apply to the confidentiality or disposition of the materials?
  - How will deaccessioning the material affect Archdiocesan operational needs and research expectations?
- 5.3 When considering deaccession of the records of the Chancery and Archdiocesan agencies, councils, committees, and boards, the Archivist will weigh the value of the aggregate in terms of their ongoing administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical importance or their ability to provide evidence of Archdiocesan business/pastoral policies and practices.
- 5.4 When considering deaccession of the personal papers of clerics, women and men religious, and members of the Catholic faithful, the Archivist will consider their ability to provide information on local Catholic history and identity or the merit of their creator's scholarship, leadership, or ministry within the Archdiocese of Seattle.
- 5.5 When considering deaccession of artifacts, the Archivist will evaluate them in terms of their significance to the episcopates of the Bishops of Seattle; their connection to important aspects of Archdiocesan history, culture, or identity; the preservation of liturgical traditions of the Catholic Church; and to their monetary value.
- 5.6 When considering deaccession of books and other published materials, the Archivist will consider whether they share a special relationship with acquired bodies of archival records or adequately document the history and development of the local Church.
- 5.7 The Archivist will also consider any legal restrictions, including legal title, copyright ownership or restrictions, and the donor's intent.

- 5.8 The decision to dispose of materials will be made only with the approval of the Chancellor or the Archbishop after full consideration of the operational requirements of the Archdiocese of Seattle and the needs of scholars and researchers.
- 5.9 Donor restrictions will be observed unless it can be demonstrated that adhering to them would be impossible or harmful to the Archdiocese of Seattle. Any departure from statements of donors' conditions will be negotiated with the donor or their heirs, or settled by appropriate legal procedures.
- 5.10 Because deaccessions must never be made for personal gain or for the suppression of historical facts and acts, the Archbishop requires the Archivist to define and document the reasons for all proposed deaccessions. This will help guard against any detraction from the Archives' reputation for honesty and will ensure that the deaccession process is carried out in a responsible and ethical manner in keeping with archival norms.

## **6 DISPOSITION**

- 6.1 The Archivist will initiate the deaccession process by submitting to the Chancellor a *Deaccession Recommendation Form*, outlining a description of the materials, creator(s), date(s), and justification for permanent removal.
- 6.2 On approval, the original accession record will be attached to the signed *Deaccession Recommendation Form* and filed in the office of the Archivist. Appropriate databases, finding aids, catalogue records, inventories, and box labels will be updated as required.
- 6.3 Reasonable attempts will be made to contact the donor or his/her heirs to discuss return of the donated materials.
- 6.4 If the donor or heirs refuse the return of the material (and if deemed appropriate), reasonable attempts will be made to determine if other research institutions have an interest in them. These include the Archdiocese of Seattle Library Media Center, the Palisades Library, and the libraries of Seattle University, St. Martin's College, Gonzaga University, and Mount Angel Seminary. When an offer is made, the Archivist will wait two weeks for a response before offering the materials to another institution.
- 6.5 Records and personal papers for which a suitable repository is not found will be destroyed in keeping with standard archival practice.
- 6.6 Artifacts and published works will be appraised for salability and sold at auction. No private sales or gifts of materials will be made to Archdiocesan staff, administrators, board members, or their immediate families. All proceeds from the sale of materials will be used for the operation of the Archives unless otherwise stipulated by the Archbishop.
- 6.7 Non-salable artifacts and published materials will be offered to charities or destroyed.