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About the McCormack Collection

Working in collaboration with the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, UMass Amherst was chosen by the McCormack family to house the esteemed Mark H. McCormack Collection in 2010. Special Collections and University Archives of the University Libraries manages, organizes, and preserves this incredible collection.

Containing more than 2,500 boxes of documents and over 5 million pieces of paper, the Collection comprises a vast archive. With records that represent the personal life of Mark H. McCormack and the intertwined corporate records of IMG, the McCormack Papers provide an inside look at the last 60 years of the business of professional sport. The archive contains correspondence, memos, drafts, reports, contracts, research files, marketing materials, and memorabilia across nearly every sport and continent.

It is housed at the top of UMass’ W.E.B. Du Bois Library, and a portion of its contents is currently being digitized. The goal is that in the near future, anyone will be able to access the documents online.

Faculty explore the Collection to create case studies and other instructional materials for students and for executive education, and professors and journalists from around the country frequently tap into it as well.

“The McCormack Collection and his legacy is, for us, very much about the present and the future,” Department Head Lisa Masteralexis emphasized.
I remember the day in Jan. 2011 that I caught my first glimpse of the McCormack Collection. I scanned a warehouse full of boxes in Cleveland, Ohio, the home of the original IMG headquarters. Saying the warehouse was vast would be an understatement.

It has been four years since that day, and we have taken a big leap into forming a rich collection. The process, through which I’ve had the opportunity to peek into the worlds of Mark H. McCormack and IMG, has been exciting. I’ve seen how deals in the business world are created, how different types of relationships are nourished, and how Mr. McCormack made his small athlete management firm into a worldwide power.

The documents in this collection span decades. Some reach back into the 1930s. There is no clear distinction between Mr. McCormack’s personal life and business life – it is all interwoven. Many of these documents are colorful, as are some of the random items we find, like an “Arnie’s Army” pin or a New York Mets cookbook.

We work on the digitization process daily. We also focus on preparing, preserving, and organizing documents, as well as uncovering resources for classes in the McCormack Department of Sport Management.

It has been a long process – as I knew it’d be that day when I stepped into the Cleveland warehouse – and there is much more to be done, but we are proud of what we have accomplished so far.

Kirstin Kay
Sport Innovation Archivist
UMass Amherst Libraries

As we enter the fifth year of partnership between Special Collections, the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, and the McCormack family, we lay down the path to see this most massive of collections come to its full potential.

With the academic programs firmly in place and digitization well underway, however, we are on the cusp of a new age for research.

The internet is allowing us to unlock the archive in ways that would have been inconceivable ten years ago and we are looking forward to seeing how this trove of letters and documents will bring together the worlds of academic research, business, and the classroom.

For a man who thought globally and who became a pioneer in the use of media, this new digital world will be an interesting starting place.

Robert Cox
Head of Special Collections and University Archives
UMass Amherst Libraries

Todd McCormack helped out by scanning a letter from Rod Laver during a visit to the UMass Amherst Special Collections and University Archives in July 2013.
Executive-in-Residence Program:
An Inimitable Advantage of the McCormack Department

Spring 2015: Stacey Allaster

Stacey Allaster, the first female CEO in Women’s Tennis Association history and our most recent Executive-in-Residence, expressed her aim to further the WTA’s reputation as an entertainment experience. She said her league considers itself the most exciting sporting organization in the world.

Allaster spoke on her league’s global reach, particularly in Asia, its fan-focused approach, and its mission of empowering girls and women.

Fall 2014: George Bodenheimer

George Bodenheimer, the longest-tenured president in ESPN history, visited UMass in November and delivered a keynote address on how the Worldwide Leader became the giant it is today -- through its mission, brand, and culture. Bodenheimer joined the network when it was a fledgling cable organization.

During his stay, Bodenheimer visited with two graduate classes and one undergraduate class, and he also participated in two lunches.

Spring 2014: Mike Slive

Mike Slive, Southeastern Conference commissioner, visited campus during a pivotal time for collegiate athletics -- when the NCAA was receiving more publicity than perhaps ever before. Slive spoke on his path to the top of the biggest conference in college sports, saying he never forgot the quote, “luck is when preparation meets opportunity,” which his father once shared with him.

He said the same quote can be applied to innovators -- they receive such a title when their preparation meets opportunity.
Fall 2013: Bob Kain

Bob Kain, a pioneer in marketing women’s sports, tennis, and figure skating, delivered his Sport Innovators Keynote Address entitled, “The Global Growth of IMG & The Business Behind the First Golden Age for Female Athletes.” He shared anecdotes and principles he had gleaned from his 30 years with IMG, and specifically from working with Mark H. McCormack.

Spring 2013: Brian Burke

Brian Burke, a four-time NHL General Manager, delivered an address on “The Current Landscape of Labor Relations in Professional Sports.” He discussed the ins and outs of labor relations, simplifying a complex topic in the field of sport management while also sharing his opinion on developing issues.

“This program is about access to insider stories on the challenges and rewards of the business of sport management. It is also about sport management and marketing innovators spending quality time with students in forums, in the classroom, in break-out sessions, at dinner, one-on-one -- a number of different ways that provide both the students and our guests a chance to get to know each other as people, as well as professionals. Relationships were important to Mark McCormack, and we wanted the program to reflect his legacy.” -- McCormack Department Head Lisa Masteralexis

2011-12 Executives-in-Residence

Fall 2012: Peter Carlisle

The super-agent discussed developing agent-athlete relationships while building a brand with the Isenberg and UMass Amherst communities.

Fall 2011: Barry Frank

The Executive VP of IMG Sports Programming, told his audience that the most important thing in life is finding a job that fuels one’s passion. “There is no substitute for loving what you do,” he said.

Fall 2011: Arthur J. Lafave

Former IMG CFO Arthur J. Lafave, Jr.'s rich knowledge of the company and its international foothold was a treasure to the community as our first-ever Executive-in-Residence.
Recent Finds in the Collection

With the breadth of Mr. McCormack’s clientele and the fame of many of the figures whom he represented, nearly every folder in every box of the McCormack Collection contains fascinating material. There’s so much riveting material, in fact, that it’s easy to get engrossed by a box and lose track of time. Here is a smattering of some of the interesting things we have stumbled across recently.

NBA superstar Kevin Durant of the Oklahoma City Thunder recently signed an endorsement contract with Nike worth a reported $285 million. In 1960, Bob Cousy, the Boston Celtics’ legend, signed a one-year deal for $500 to endorse socks and hosiery. Jay Hebert, the 1960 PGA Championship victor, signed the same deal.

In 1987, IMG attempted to create a Junior Slam Dunk contest, in which children and young adults could compete in a dunk contest on hoops that were appropriate to their height. Competitors (ages 18 and under) were to be split into the following categories based on their height: 6 feet and over (10-foot rim), 5-foot-1 to 6 feet (8-foot-11 rim), 4-foot-1 to 5 feet (7-foot-8 rim), and 4 feet and under (6-foot-2 rim). IMG projected the entire program would have cost $688,320 and, searching for sponsors, pitched the idea to Molten and McDonald’s.

The invitation for Jack Nicklaus to play in the 1963 Masters. Nicklaus went on to win this Masters, his first of six.
McCormack Collection
Educational Initiatives

Digitization

The goal is that in the near future, anyone will be able to access 50,000 letters and memos online. Currently, more than 3,500 documents from 1957-1970 are available. The digitization has started with all of Mark H. McCormack’s incoming and outgoing correspondence (his “chron” files), and so far it has been completed up to 1969, now accessible online at Credo, Special Collections’ digital repository:

credo.library.umass.edu

Oral History Project

The McCormack Collection team has also been compiling oral histories – fascinating video interviews that will one day be available online. Each Executive-in-Residence has completed an oral history interview, as have several other prominent sport management figures, such as J.B. Bernstein (right) – UMass alum, sports agent, and subject of the 2014 movie Million Dollar Arm, starring Jon Hamm.

Case Study Project

Led by professors Steve McKelvey and Mark McDonald, the UMass Sport Management faculty and several carefully selected outside authors are assembling 15 case studies to be used for classroom instruction and potentially submitted for publishing. Utilizing the McCormack Collection and the McCormack Department’s rich contact list in the sport business world, these case study topics range from Michael Phelps’ return to swimming to the history of women’s professional soccer leagues in the United States.
About the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management

The Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management, created in 1972, is the second oldest of its kind in the world, with graduates going on to careers in the spectator sport industry. Widely respected for the breadth and quality of its curriculum and research, the UMass program has been hailed by The Chronicle of Higher Education, SportsBusiness Journal, and other publications as a world leader in its field. The department:

• Utilizes a cutting-edge, experience-based curriculum to best prepare students to be leaders in the spectator sport industry. Students get real-world experience from classes in event coordinating, sponsorship, community relations, and marketing.

• Has a large Sport Management industry-focused faculty that teaches lively and challenging classes.

• Includes the No. 2 M.S. in Sport Management program in the United States and No. 4 MBA/MS in the world.

• Boasts one of the few programs housed in a business school (Isenberg School of Management). Isenberg has climbed higher in the national rankings between 2010-14 than any other school.

• Has a 3,000+ member alumni directory. Many alumni who are industry professionals come back as guest speakers and mentor students.

• Has an extensive internship database with connections across the sport industry.
Dear Friend,

Nov. 3, 2010 was a revolutionary day. Not only did it change this university, school, and department – it changed the entirety of sport business.

That was the day the Mark H. McCormack Family visited campus to announce UMass had received Mr. McCormack’s archive. The family had considered several of the top sport management programs and business schools in the country, but it was the sport management department at the Isenberg School of Management in collaboration with the Special Collections and University Archives of the University Libraries at UMass Amherst that was chosen to be associated with Mr. McCormack, a legend in all facets of sport.

Today, more than four years later, the Collection is a point of immense pride for the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management. When we received the gift, we recognized that it was an incredible honor and an equally incredible opportunity – one that we planned to actualize as best as we possibly could. Our archive staff members work tirelessly to continuously improve the Collection’s categorization and its promotion. Though it was and continues to be an ambitious task, we have made huge strides and are proud of its direction.

With that being said, as the McCormack Department ambitiously executes many educational initiatives, and with the archive being housed in the W.E.B. Du Bois Library, it is easy for people to lose sight of the Collection. That’s why we decided to assemble this newsletter – to provide updates and lay out the direction of the Collection for friends of the department.

We hope you’ve taken a few minutes to scroll through this online newsletter and see what’s happening here in Amherst.

Mr. McCormack’s vision was to be the best in the world. That, too, has been our mission before and since the McCormack Family graciously chose our department.

The department is gaining momentum, and much of that is due to the inspiration of Mr. McCormack. We find more inspiration – and more about him – as we explore his Collection daily and look for ways to integrate his legacy with ours and at the same time activate the Collection to share the legacy of Mr. McCormack and IMG.

Sincerely,
Lisa Masteralexis