

New Tool Helps with Video Digitization Projects

New York University, working in collaboration with its academic partners and technical advisors, is pleased to announce the release of a new publication. *Digitizing Video for Long-Term Preservation: An RFP Guide and Template* is intended to take an institution step-by-step through the process of drafting a request for proposals (RFP) for the transfer of analog video to digital carriers for preservation. This template can be used by libraries, archives, and other cultural heritage institutions and submitted to qualified transfer vendors. This new publication is available for download at library.nyu.edu/preservation/VARRFP.pdf.

With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, this publication was developed as part of the Video at Risk (VAR) project (www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/research/video-risk). The authors of this document set out to create guidelines to identify the key elements integral to the transfer of video and audio signals from Standard Definition VHS to a preservation-quality digital file. Vendors provided valuable comments and feedback on the document, and the VAR project partners (NYU; the University of California, Berkeley; and Loyola University, New Orleans) tested the RFP document.

In addition to the *RFP Guide*, the document also includes a number of appendices that aim to assist those unfamiliar with audiovisual analog-to-digital transfer projects. The appendices include a sample of a completed RFP by a fictitious institution, a suggested metadata model, a suggested method of collecting transfer notes from a vendor, a glossary of terms and concepts, and a selected resource list.

In Memoriam: Kenneth W. Duckett

(June 26, 1924–July 12, 2014)

By Patrick M. Quinn, University Archivist Emeritus, Northwestern University

Kenneth W. Duckett, an icon of the archival profession and a stalwart of the Midwest Archives Conference and the Society of American Archivists, passed away on Saturday, July 12, 2014, at the age of 90 in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Ken Duckett was a giant among his generation of archivists. His book, *Modern Manuscripts* (1975), guided manuscripts curators for many years. Like his close friend and equally prominent archivist, Maynard Brichford, founder of the University of Illinois Archives, Duckett was trained in history by the famed historian William B. Hesseltine at the University of Wisconsin. And, like Brichford, Duckett began his career as an archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society. He grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Prior to coming to Madison for graduate work in history, Duckett had served during World War II in the US Army and had attended the University of Denver, from which he graduated after the war.

Duckett left Madison to assume the position of manuscripts curator at the Oregon Historical Society. The next step in his archival career was the Ohio Historical Society, where he was catapulted to the national stage for his role in saving from destruction the letters of (US Senator and later President) Warren G. Harding to his lover, Carrie Phillips. As he recounted in his book, *The Shoe Box Letters* (2003), his role in saving the historically significant Harding

letters cost him his job at the Ohio Historical Society.

His long and productive archival career continued at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in Carbondale, Illinois. During the years he spent as curator of manuscripts in SIU's Morris Library, 1965–1979, Duckett became one of the most distinguished archivists in the United States. He built the manuscripts repository at SIU–Carbondale into one of the very best of its kind in the United States, a repository whose nationally prominent collections far exceeded what historians and literary scholars would expect to find at a small, previously little-known university in the “Little Egypt” region of far southern Illinois. Duckett became a national leader in the Society of American Archivists, the Manuscripts Society, and the Midwest Archives Conference. After he retired from SIU–Carbondale, he moved back to Oregon where he concluded his archival career at the University of Oregon.

But Ken Duckett was much more than a distinguished archivist. His quiet but engaging personality, combined with his archival expertise and accomplishments and his mentoring of the young archivists on his staff and in the archival profession, earned him the admiration and respect of an entire generation of archivists. I will dearly miss Ken. I am very grateful to have known him for more than four decades as a colleague and as a close friend.

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