

Canadian Library Association / Association canadienne des bibliothèques Position Statement on Special Collections Interest Group Code of Ethics

Approved by Executive Council ~ February 1993

1. Preamble

1. Rare books and special collections librarians have, as do other members of the library community, responsibility for promoting scholarship by selecting, providing access to and preserving materials in their care in accordance with the criteria, policies, and repository commitments of their institutions;
 2. They shall accept and discharge this responsibility and shall act in a manner which will support the educational and research needs of their institutions and the wider academic community;
 3. They shall avoid all activities which could compromise the integrity of their institutions and of themselves;
 4. All persons employed within the rare books and special collections unit and subsequently all new employees should be apprised of this Code of Ethics, as well as all relevant criteria and policies relating to their institution.
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2. Selection

1. Rare books and special collections librarians shall not acquire, buy, or sell rare books, special collections materials and archival collections for monetary profit without the knowledge of their supervisors; they shall not recommend materials for acquisition either by institutions or by collectors or donors if they have any financial interests in these materials; they shall not accept any commission or any gift from any buyer, seller or donor of rare books, special collections materials and archival collections;
2. The personal collecting of rare books, special collections materials and archival collections by rare books and special collections librarians shall not conflict in fact or in appearance with the selection criteria and the interests of their institutions. Where such a conflict could arise the matter shall be discussed by the rare books and special collections librarians and their supervisors and clear guidelines shall be developed;
3. Rare books and special collections librarians shall not knowingly acquire nor allow to be recommended for acquisition any materials which have been stolen, or materials which have been imported in contravention of the applicable laws of the countries of origin or exporting countries;
4. Rare books and special collections librarians shall co-operate with the proper legal authorities in all matters relating to the theft or illegal importation of rare books, special collections materials and archival collections whether from their own institutions or from other institutions;

5. Rare books and special collections librarians shall not give, for personal profit, any certificate or statement of the authenticity, authorship or monetary value of rare books, special collections materials or archival collections in their institution's collections or in the possession of a potential donor, except where authorized by in accordance with the established purposes of their own institutions and with the knowledge of their supervisors.
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3. Preservation

Rare books and special collections librarians shall protect the physical integrity of the materials within their custody. They shall protect them against defacement, alterations and physical damage whether by use, in the arrangement or in the restoration of the materials.

4. Deselection

Rare books and special collections librarians shall deselect materials in their care only in accordance with the established criteria and policies of their institutions. They shall consult with other subject specialists and scholars within their institutions and where appropriate other specialists beyond their institution.

5. Access

1. Rare books and special collections librarians shall provide appropriate tools for the intellectual control to research materials in their care;
2. Rare books and special collections librarians shall provide equal access and service to all researchers;
3. Rare books and special collections librarians shall observe copyright regulations and negotiated donor restrictions;
4. Rare books and special collections librarians may use their institutions' holdings for personal research if full disclosure is made to their immediate supervisor and the appropriate senior administrator(s), and if such work is done on the same basis as other researchers utilizing the same holdings. Where a conflict could arise the matter shall be discussed by the rare books and special collections librarians and the appropriate administrators and clear guidelines shall be developed.

