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PRESIDENT FORD DEEDS PAPERS TO U. S. ;
LIBRARY, MUSEUM TO BE IN MICHIGAN

President Ford has donated the papers and other historical materials of his years in public life to the Federal Government for preservation in the State of Michigan.

His letter of gift provides that the papers and related archival materials be housed in a Gerald Ford Library to be built at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and that the memorabilia be exhibited in a museum to be situated in or nearby his home town of Grand Rapids.

The President's offer to convey his "rights, title and interest" in the papers and materials accumulated from the time he first ran for Congress in 1948 until his term as President expires on January 20, 1977, was made in a letter signed Monday and addressed jointly to Archivist of the United States James B. Rhoads and University of Michigan President Robben W. Fleming.

Under terms of the offer, the Federal Government will receive the papers and other materials and is to administer the twin facilities, but the library building is to be constructed and owned by the University of Michigan and "a suitable building" is to be provided for the museum by "an appropriate organization"--possibly The Gerald R. Ford Commemorative Committee.

Rhoads, who heads the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration which administers Presidential libraries as part of the national archival system, accepted the papers and other materials Monday night. He also agreed to the library and museum plan subject to "all legal requirements" of the Presidential Libraries Act. These requirements include laying the detailed offer of such facilities before the Congress for a 60-day period.

Fleming received his copy of the letter this morning in Ann Arbor and accepted the University's role in the arrangement "with the understanding that the University will use its best efforts to raise the necessary funds for, and to accomplish the design and construction of, the contemplated archival facility."

(MORE)

U.S. General Services Administration, Washington, DC 20405 (202) 566-1231

President Ford, first President in the Nation's history to make an outright gift of his Presidential materials while still in office, said in his letter of gift that his choice of "a long-established, diversified and distinguished institution of higher learning" as the site for his Presidential library would make it "readily available to a large resident faculty and student body and to visiting scholars and researchers from throughout this nation and from other countries." He said that "the usefulness of the materials deposited will be enhanced by the availability of many other scholarly resources within the University and by the general stimulation and support for scholarly research and educational activities which the University provides."

The President noted that the selection of the University of Michigan permits use "on a temporary basis" of facilities for his papers and for their processing while completion of a new building is awaited. His Congressional papers already are housed--and have been processed--in the University's Bentley Historical Library.

Rhoads said that the President's action in immediately relinquishing rights, title and interest in his papers "assures unbroken Federal custody of his materials at a time when difficult questions have arisen over the disposition of Presidential papers."

The Archivist said that he was pleased that the President's conveyance plan calls for early processing of the papers to speed public access to them for research purposes. Rhoads called the placing of the proposed library in a university setting "a plus for scholarship."

Standards to be followed for access to the materials are generally those recently adopted by the Society of American Archivists which call for equal terms of access, preparation of finding aids, and reasonable terms of restriction upon access and use. Material under restriction is not to remain closed beyond 13 years except for that protected by law or Executive Order or specifically identified by the library director as requiring longer restrictions.

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