

## 1.1 Mission Statement and History

The mission of the MIT Museum is to engage the wider community with MIT's science, technology and other areas of scholarship in ways that best serve the nation and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The MIT Museum fulfills this mission by:

- Collecting and preserving artifacts that are significant in the life of MIT
- Create exhibits and outreach programs that are firmly rooted in MIT's areas of endeavor
- Engage MIT faculty, staff and students with the wider community

MIT seeks to advance knowledge for the benefit of society and to give students an active, practical education firmly associated with real world problems. The Institute supports thriving arts and humanities programs, as well as its world-renowned research and teaching in the sciences, technology and management, and carries out innovative and distinguished work at the meeting point of art, science and technology.

The Museum was founded in 1971 as the Committee for Institute Memorabilia, which later became the Committee for Historical Collections. On March 1, 1979, the Executive Committee of the Corporation passed a resolution designating the MIT Historical Collections as a permanent museum within the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an independent, coeducational, endowed university committed to "learning by doing," and to research based on the highest scientific principles. In 1980, the name of the MIT Historical Collections was changed by Executive Committee resolution to the MIT Museum and Historical Collections and has since been shortened to MIT Museum.

## 1.2 The Permanent Collections

MIT Museum's permanent collections are divided into five main components:

**The Architecture & Design Collection** includes the Student Drawings Collection, theses and project drawings executed by students of MIT's Department of Architecture between 1873 and 1968, and the Study Collection, drawings collected by the department for the purpose of instructing and inspiring students.

**The Hart Nautical Collection**, one of the oldest marine technology collections in the United States. Holdings include materials relating to the technical history of New England ship and small craft design and construction from the mid-19th through the mid-20th centuries, and the contributions to this field by MIT's Department of Ocean Engineering. The collections consist of ship and yacht plans, books, full, half and towing tank models, marine art, photographs, shipbuilding records and experimental/test-bed surface/subsurface vehicles.

**The Holography Collection**, the world's largest, is comprised of more than 1500 holograms, including the former archives and research library of the Museum of Holography in New York. In 1993, MIT Museum purchased the holdings of the MOH and has continued to build the collection, adding historically, technically, and artistically significant holograms.

**The MIT General Collection** is comprised of photographs, drawings, prints, films, videotapes, audio tapes, paintings, art objects, furniture, decorative arts, and written materials that document the history of MIT and its role in the development of science, technology, and engineering.

**The Science & Technology Collection** embrace myriad artifacts and documents, photographs, drawings, prints, films, videotapes, and audiotapes providing a record of the intellect, educational, and social-cultural-political history of MIT and MIT's role in the history of modern science and technology. It includes several world-class collections:

- Professor Harold E. Edgerton.
- MIT Radiation Laboratory Negative Collection – documents the history of the nation’s second largest R&D project during World War II and early history of American radar technology.
- Keuffel & Esser Company Slide Rule Collection – one of the largest publicly accessible collections of a vital and iconic scientific instrument. It is also one of three company collections in the world and the only American firm represented.
- MIT aeronautical and aerospace collections – largest university-based collections and includes the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Collection documenting the pioneering work of the MIT Instrumentation Laboratory in the field of inertial guidance and navigation. (See below PART III. The Collections; #5 Availability of Collections.)
- MIT Robotics Collection.

### 1.3 MIT Museum Code of Ethics

MIT Museum staff members abide by the guidelines set forth in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members (September 1997) [<http://web.mit.edu/policies/>] and adhere to the requirements designated for faculty members. However, this general document does not cover many areas of concern to professional museum staff and the code of ethics 1 outlined below applies not only to staff, but also to volunteers, members of the Advisory Board and its associated committees.

All of the above parties are guided by the following principles:

- Staff members owe their first professional loyalty to the MIT Museum and should fully and conscientiously fulfill the responsibilities of their employment.
- Staff members should avoid conflict of interest as described in the following code, and should discuss any potential conflicts with the Director.
- Staff members should not use their position at the MIT Museum for personal gain.
- Staff members should maintain the good name of the MIT Museum throughout the community and not misuse its name, reputation, property or services.
- A staff member may not intentionally do anything through family or friends that s/he may not do directly under these guidelines.

#### PART I. Personal Ethics

##### A. Staff

###### 1. Conflict of Interest

All MIT Museum staff members abide by "Faculty Rights and Responsibilities," MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members, (September 1997) [<http://web.mit.edu/policies/4.4.html>]

###### 2. Gifts and Gratuities

All MIT Museum staff members abide by "General Employment Policies, Procurement Policy on Gifts and Gratuities," and "Travel at Institute Expense," MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members. [<http://web.mit.edu/policies/>]

###### 3. Responsibility to Museum Property, Real and Intangible

No staff member should use, away from Museum premises or for personal gain, any object or item that is a part of the Museum's collection or under guardianship of the Museum, or use any other property, supplies or resources of the Museum except for the official business of the Museum. The name and

reputation of this Museum are valuable assets and should not be exploited either for personal advantage or the advantage of any other person or entity. Information about the administrative or non-scholarly activities of the Museum that staff may acquire in the course of their duties which is not generally known or available to the public must be treated as information proprietary to the Museum. Such information should not be used for personal advantage or for any other purposes. Staff members are responsible for maintaining the security of confidential records and information, and the privacy of individuals or groups who support the Museum.

MIT employees and visitors frequently request information on outside suppliers to the Museum, relying on the professional expertise of the staff. Museum staff should be circumspect in referring members of the public to outside vendors. More than a single qualified source (and three if possible) should be named in order to avoid the appearance of personal favoritism in referrals.

#### 4. Outside Employment

All MIT Museum staff members abide by the conduct outlined for faculty members in "Faculty Rights and Responsibilities," MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff (see section 4.5, pages 1-2). [<http://web.mit.edu/policies/4.5.html>]

#### 5. Outside Volunteer Activities

All Museum staff members abide by the guidelines listed above. In addition, all MIT employees complete an annual report of outside activities, listing positions served, organization and number of hours served in that capacity.

#### 6. Personal Collecting by Staff

The acquiring, collecting and owning of objects by Museum staff and the Advisory Board is not in itself unethical, and can enhance professional knowledge. However, the acquisition, maintenance and management of a personal collection by a Museum staff member can create a conflict of interest. No Museum staff member may compete with this institution in any personal collecting activity. No Museum staff member may use his/her museum affiliation to promote his/her or an associate's personal collecting activities. No staff member may participate in dealing (buying or selling for profit as distinguished from occasional sale or exchange from a personal collection) objects similar or related to the objects collected by the Museum.

### B. Volunteers and Advisory Board Members

Volunteers have played an active and important role in the MIT Museum for nearly thirty years. It is incumbent on the paid staff to be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide them with appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment. Volunteers have a responsibility to the Museum as well, especially those with access to the museum's collections, programs and privileged information. Access to the Museum's internal activities is a privilege and the lack of material compensation for effort expended on behalf of the Museum in no way frees the volunteer from adherence to the standards that apply to staff. Volunteers must work toward the betterment of the institution and not for personal gain other than the natural gratification and enrichment inherent in museum participation. Conflict of interest restrictions and gift policies applying to the paid staff of the museum must be explained to volunteers and be observed by them. Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of any proprietary information to which their volunteer activities give them access. Although the Museum provides special privileges and benefits to its volunteers, volunteers should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, meals, loans or other gratuities of value from other parties in connection with carrying out duties for the Museum.

Board and Committee Members, like paid staff and volunteers, have a responsibility to the Museum as well, especially those with access to the museum's collections, personnel, financial or any other confidential information. Access to the Museum's internal activities is a privilege and the lack of material compensation for effort expended on behalf of the Museum in no way frees board members

from adherence to the standards that apply to paid staff. Board members must work toward the betterment of the institution and not for personal gain other than the natural gratification and enrichment inherent in museum participation. Conflict of interest restrictions and gift policies applying to the paid staff of the museum must be explained to Board members and observed by them. Full and timely disclosure and discussion of all conflicts of interest with the Director is essential. It is the responsibility of a Board member to notify the Director of any conflict. Board members should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, loans, meals or other gratuities of value from other parties in connection with carrying out duties for the MIT Museum.

## PART II. Museum Management Policy

### 1. Personnel Practices and Equal Opportunity

All MIT Museum staff members abide by the personnel practices outlined in the MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members. (See "General Employment Policies," including Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies, sections 7.00-7.1.3, pages 1-4 and "Relations and Responsibilities Within the MIT Community," sections 9.0-9.4, pages 1-2.)

[\[http://web.mit.edu/policies/7.0.html\]](http://web.mit.edu/policies/7.0.html)

[\[http://web.mit.edu/policies/9.0.html\]](http://web.mit.edu/policies/9.0.html)

### 2. Ownership of Scholarly Material

All MIT Museum staff members, volunteers and Board members abide by the personnel practices outlined in "Information Policies," MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members (see section 13). [\[http://web.mit.edu/policies/13.0.html\]](http://web.mit.edu/policies/13.0.html)

### 3. Fundraising Practices

The MIT Museum staff adheres to the guidelines found in "Relations with the Public, Use of MIT Name, and Facilities Use," MIT Policies and Procedures: A Guide for Faculty and Staff Members (see section 12.6). [\[http://web.mit.edu/policies/12.6.html\]](http://web.mit.edu/policies/12.6.html)

### 4. Museum Shop and Other Commercial Activities

The Museum Shop and other commercial activities of the Museum, as well as publicity relating to them, should be in keeping with the Museum's mission, should be relevant to the collections and the basic educational purposes of the Museum, as determined by the Director, and must not compromise the quality of the collections. In arranging for the manufacture and sale of replicas, reproductions, or other commercial items adapted from an object in the Museum's collection, all aspects of the commercial venture must be carried out in a manner that will not discredit either the integrity of the Museum or the intrinsic value of the original object. Great care must be taken to permanently identify such objects as reproductions and to ensure the accuracy and high quality of the manufacturer.

## PART III. The Collections

### 1. Management, Maintenance and Conservation

Museums generally derive their mission from their collections, and these holdings constitute the primary difference between museums and other kinds of institutions. A museum's obligation to its collection is paramount. Each object is an integral part of a cultural or scientific composite. That context also includes a body of information about that object which establishes its proper place and importance and without which the value of the object is diminished. The maintenance of this information in an orderly and retrievable form is critical to the integrity of the collection and is a central obligation of those charged with collection management. An ethical duty of a museum is to transfer to its successors, when possible in enhanced form, the material record of human culture and the natural

world. They must be in control of their collections and know the location and condition of the objects they hold. Procedures must be maintained for the periodic evaluation of the condition of the collections and for their general and special maintenance.

In keeping with the Museum's responsibility to provide continuous curatorial and protective care for its collections, it must endeavor to protect such collections from potential damage from the effects of smoke, beverage, or food service around exposed collections, or the dangers of inappropriate building environmental conditions. The physical care of the collection and its accessibility must be in keeping with professionally accepted standards. Where gross deficiencies exist, a decision may be made by the Museum management to dispose of the collection, preferably to another comparable institution.

## 2. Interpreting the Collections

It is the responsibility of museum professionals to use museum collections for the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Intellectual honesty, balanced arguments, and objectivity in the presentation of objects is the duty of every museum professional. The stated origin of the objects or attribution of work must reflect the thorough and honest investigation of the curator and must yield promptly to change with the advent of new facts or analysis. Museums may address a wide variety of social, scientific, artistic or political issues. Any can be appropriate, if approached objectively and without prejudice. Museum professionals must use their best efforts to ensure that exhibits are honest expressions and do not perpetuate myths or stereotypes. Exhibits must provide, with candor and tact, an honest and meaningful view of the subject. Sensitive areas such as ethnic and social history are of most critical concern. The research and preparation of an exhibition will often lead the professional to develop a point of view or interpretive sense of the material. That individual must clearly understand the point where sound professional judgment ends and personal bias begins. S/he must be content that, as far as possible, the resultant presentation is the product of objective judgment.

## 3. Acquisition and Disposal

The MIT Museum policies and procedures for acquisitions and deaccessions are fully described in the MIT Museum Collections Management Policy (April 1995, 4-10) and the corresponding forms are found in the MIT Museum Collections Management Manual (April 2006).

## 4. Appraisals

Donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law; however the Museum cannot appraise items for a private owner. Donors, therefore, are expected to get independent appraisals for the objects they are donating prior to making the donation.

## 5. Availability of Collections

Although the public must have reasonable access to the collections on a nondiscriminatory basis, the museum assumes as a primary responsibility the safeguarding of their materials and therefore may regulate access to them. The judgment and recommendation of professional staff members regarding the use of the collections must be given utmost consideration. In formulating their recommendations, staff should let their judgment be guided by three primary objectives: the continued physical integrity and safety of the object or collection, scholarly or study purposes, and public access/education. In addition, the MIT Museum Collections Management Policy states the following regarding general and specific collections:

- Unprocessed collections and objects undergoing retrospective cataloging, conservation, exhibition or loan purposes will not be made available to researchers.
- Access to the Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Historical Collection is restricted. Researchers wishing to use this collection must first notify the Technical Information Center at Draper Laboratory of their intent and Draper Laboratory must inform the Museum if the request has been approved. Materials in this collection cannot be copied or reproduced without prior approval from

Draper Laboratory.

- The archives of the Museum of Holography are open to researchers in accordance with general MIT Museum policy; however, due to the technical requirements of viewing holograms, those not currently on exhibit are generally not made available, except by special arrangement with the Collections Manager/Registrar or the Director. In purchasing this collection at auction, the MIT Museum became the owner only of those copyrights and other intellectual property rights previously owned by the Museum of Holography.
- In accordance with the policies of MIT's Alumni/ae Association, the Museum will not give the address, phone number, or any other contact information of living alumni/ae. Researchers wishing to contact living alumni/ae will be referred to the Association, who will initiate contact on the patron's behalf.