

Most infamous alum in fight over papers

Kaczynski could give writings to the University

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Ted Kaczynski, better known as the Unabomber, is in a court fight over the future of a collection of his letters.

While a Sacramento judge has approved a government plan to sell edited versions of the writings of the University's most infamous alum in an online auction to raise money to compensate the victims of his 17-year bombing spree, Kaczynski has other ideas. He wants to donate them to a library.

That means they could end up in the Labadie Collection, which is on the top floor of the Hatcher Graduate Library. The collection already holds much of Kaczynski's work.

The Labadie Collection houses thousands of works related to social protest and radical policy. Kaczynski donated a compilation of letters, books, and various writings and other effects to the library two years after his 1996 arrest.

Kaczynski is currently serving four life sentences in a super-maximum security prison in California.

The donation would include drafts of his 35,000-word book titled "The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future" as well as letters written by Kaczynski during his mail-bombing campaign. Many of the letters are correspondence between Kaczynski and his brother in the years leading up to his arrest; in others, Kaczynski speculates about the mental and emotional state of his victims.

The courts have the documents as government property since they were retrieved upon Kaczynski's initial arrest in 1996.

Kaczynski, however, has said that his property has been unlawfully taken from him. He requested a lawyer with expertise in First Amendment litigation to fight the auction and the proposed editing. If the court refuses to appoint him with a new attorney, he wants to represent himself.

The University said it has not yet made any decision on whether or not it would accept the Kaczynski writings, because the situation is unresolved.

"We are not a party to the court case," said University spokeswoman Kelly Cunningham. "There's a general understanding that we may be offered new material sometime in the future."

Julie Herrada, curator of the Labadie Collection, said the documents in question would fit with the current collection, particularly the manifesto drafts.

"We would have sought out anything like this," Herrada said. "It fits the subject matter."

The Special Collections Department, to which the Labadie Collection belongs, screens all of its acquired documents to ensure appropriateness and scholarly merit. Specialists in each collection area carefully examine each item for research value and longevity, the most important considerations during the screening process.

Herrada, who would examine the possible donation, does not know if the process would be altered because of the sensitive nature of the Kaczynski documents, but she said the library wouldn't be the only party involved in the evaluation.

When Kaczynski donated his first batch of documents to the University, he requested that many of the names be deleted from the documents to protect the people in them.

The courts allowed the initial donation because the pieces were acquired or written by Kaczynski after his arrest, making none of them pertinent in any of his court cases, Herrada said.

Ted's Leftovers

Some of the Unabombers personal items that may be auctioned off or could end up in the University library

- Samsonite briefcase containing the Unabomber's University of Michigan degrees
- Montana driver's license
- "Count Your Calories"
- "The Last Days of Hitler"
- "The Psychology of Women"
- "The Science of Fingerprints. Classification and Uses"

Source: Court documents posted on thesmokinggun.com

The Ted K Archive

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The Michigan Daily <books.google.co.uk/books?id=8vpJAAAAIBAJ&pg=PA57>

www.thetedkarchive.com