



**UCLA** FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE

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William T. Murphy  
Coordinator, the State of  
American Television and Video Preservation Report  
Library of Congress  
M/B/RS Division  
Washington, DC 20540-4690

Dear Bill:

We are forwarding UCLA's camera-ready written submission on "The Current State of American Television and Video Preservation."

The submission is composed of two parts: 1) a revised version of the remarks I made at the March 6 hearing in Los Angeles, with emphasis on my policy recommendations concerning the national television collection and 2) a brief appendix giving background information on UCLA's television collection, including acquisition, preservation and programming activities.

Again, all of us at the UCLA Film and Television Archive are proud to have the opportunity to contribute to this important project.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Robert Rosen  
Director

Remarks of Robert Rosen  
Director, UCLA Film and Television Archive

The UCLA Television Archive was founded in 1965, in partnership with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. In 1976 it was administratively united with the UCLA Film Archive (founded in 1967), and in 1986 it adopted the name the UCLA Film and Television Archive. (See Appendix A for further background information.)

I would like to focus on several issues that are distinctive to public archives, with a few, hopefully modest proposals to go along with them. While we share certain concerns in common with all other archives, including industry archives, there are a number of specific issues confronted by archives that are in public institutions. I would like to suggest six of these.

1) We are inescapably in the middle of things. It is one of the existential facts of life of a public archive. On the one side, the vast number of materials we hold are under the copyright protection of someone else. We have owners of those materials who understandably want to protect the copyright interests they have and to minimize the use of those materials. On the other side, we are a public institution serving an array of users, and these are users who want to maximize access to the material in whatever way is possible. Our position as a public archive is to make both sides happy, to serve both of them, to harmonize, to mediate, to make the appropriate principled tradeoffs.

I propose that as a national plan evolves, we must keep in mind the need to facilitate the ability of public institutions to make those tradeoffs. For example, it would be useful to look at our system of archives across the country as in fact a network of archives, to provide means for the exchange of materials--whether via inter-archival loan or via new telecommunications technology--so that access is possible on a nationwide basis. It would be necessary simultaneously to devise guidelines and procedures to ensure that the interests of copyright proprietors are protected. This is a double-sided approach of increasing the archives' ability to serve a plurality of users on a national basis and at the same time to protect the interests of those people and companies whose materials we hold.

2) The second reality is that public archives deal with television in a variety of ways. Television at its best is a popular art form distinctive to this century. It is also a document of our history. It is a political force that influences our attitudes toward politics in general and--more specifically--gender politics and the politics of ethnicity. It is also a cultural artifact that we pass on to the future. It is a commodity on the marketplace. And on an individual level, television programs are the pegs on which we often hang our own autobiographical memories. People chart their own lives in relationship in part to the television they have watched over time.

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An archive serving a plurality of users must respond in different ways to all those different users. One important implication of this principle has to do with acquisitions. Keeping that plurality of users in mind, one must acquire a wide array of materials. The soap opera, of no particular interest to the student of television as an art form, is of enormous import to the social historian. One may be tempted to say we only need a sample of a particular series. But very often the heart and soul of that series lies in the formula that evolved over time. In the case of a show like "The Waltons," it is the evolution of the program that in essence contains its most important information. The single most important criterion for the archivist in making selections is humility, not precluding the possibilities for future generations to discover for themselves the value of these materials.

In a real sense, a public archive should be saving many things, if not everything. But the problem is there is so much that no one institution can do it alone. Therefore I would propose that we explore the possibility for a more extended division of labor among the nation's archives in the areas of acquisition and preservation, in a more coordinated way than exists at the present. Great cordiality now exists among the institutions, but very little formal cooperation. For example, we could explore the possibility that the Library of Congress itself should have annex collections at a number of institutions around the country, so that more material can be saved, but in a way that is practical given the allocation of resources.

3) A third issue that confronts public archives is that we have in our collections the television equivalent of "orphan films"--that is to say, television programming for which there is no clearcut commercial body to defend the interest. This includes early television, much of it in kinescope form, where the question of ownership is very murky, where there are many underlying rights such as music rights and literary rights, but ownership is problematic. It includes a vast amount of television produced by companies that no longer exist. It includes materials in the documentary area, such as our DeNove Collection on the Kennedy campaign. And potentially, it includes the vast collections of the master documentary filmmakers, who over time have collected materials--raw footage--that are as important as the final productions that were made. Where do these go? Ultimately, they have to go into public institutions. Much of the material at the more specialized archives around the country also falls into this "orphan" category. These materials have no obvious copyright owner to stand behind their preservation, so they are the responsibility of the public archives. Again, I would make the proposal that in a national television preservation plan special attention be given to those television materials that are in an orphan status.

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4) A fourth issue in the area of television concerns preservation. We all want to do preservation, but we are not terribly sure what preservation means. We know that, minimally, preservation is putting a program onto the stablest possible format, in as close as possible to its original condition, in the best possible storage for the longest period of time--and that process involves minimally the differentiation between a preservation master and a use copy. But how do we proceed in the area of television when we are not even sure what the master is? If there is a kinescope of early television on 16mm acetate film, is that the master? And is the making of a reference copy, a use copy, so that the kinescope can be put away for safekeeping--is that what preservation means? What happens if one has programming that is shot on film, as is very often the case in the industry, then transferred to video for editing, with a video master made? Is the video master the master, or is it the original film material? And what happens if that original film material had never been constructed into a negative that conforms to the final product?

Then, what does preservation mean when we are confronting a dizzying array of formats, 2" tape of various kinds, 1/2" reel to reel, VHS, beta, and now an increasing number of video formats?

I propose three ideas for a national plan. The first is that a differentiation be made between retrospective and prospective preservation. Retrospective deals with the first fifty years of television history. It deals with obsolete formats, such as 2" tape. It deals with the problems of kinescope. Prospective preservation ideally is done at the time of production and will involve a close working relationship between the archives and the industry in the establishment of standards. But it seems to me that retrospective preservation dealing with the first fifty years must be the principal focus of the public archives.

The second idea I would propose is that the archiving or preserving of television technology be part of the overall effort. When there are materials in the vaults that may be in fine shape, but cannot be seen because the technology no longer exists, it's a shame. So television technology is not just a sideline activity, not just a complement to preservation--it is integral to some of the preservation issues themselves.

Third, I would propose that we take up the challenge of examining the implication of new digital technologies in relationship to preservation. The public archives should take up also the problems of seeing how those technologies can become applicable in the cash-strapped context of public institutions.

5) One of the facts for public archives is that we are not alone. We exist as part of a community of institutions involved in

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television preservation. Some, such as UCLA, the Museum of Television and Radio, the University of Wisconsin, are extensive in their collections. Others are more specialized, dealing with local television news, political commercials, advertising and so on. The national collection is thus at a plurality of institutions, philosophically diverse, geographically dispersed, which share a common commitment. A key principle in planning on a national level is recognizing this plurality of interests, making sure that every institution has an appropriate place at the table, and gaining advantage from the ways in which these various activities can complement one another.

6) Finally, not only are we not alone, we can't do it alone. We are dealing with public institutions that confront decreasing budgets, where fundraising is more difficult than it ever was. So the final thing I would underline is that the concept of a public/private partnership must be at the core of the development of a national plan.

The television industry and the archives really do need one another. The archives were responsible for saving literally thousands of valuable programs that would have been tossed away at a time before all the ancillary markets developed for that programming. The public institutions are a very economical way for the industry to serve the public interest by providing risk-free access to the history of television. And the public institutions, by foregrounding what is most interesting in the history of television, have helped to sustain and maintain history as part of the collective memory. Conversely, without the industry, the archives wouldn't have the holdings, nor would they have the ability to make these materials accessible to the plurality of users.

I propose that a national television foundation be created, comparable to the one proposed for film in the National Film Preservation Plan. This should involve a partnership between the private sector on the one hand, and government on the other, on behalf of the entire system of archives across the country. The entities that already exist at the interface between public and private, such as the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, should be included in a very significant way in the planning, but the foundation should be under the aegis of the Library of Congress. This working partnership is essential, because all of the discussion is abstract unless the resources are there to carry it out.

These I think are the core issues and most realizable proposals concerning a national plan for television preservation. I look forward to the future discussions around these issues.

APPENDIX A

THE UCLA FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE

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### The Archive

The UCLA Film and Television Archive is a public service unit of the University of California at Los Angeles and is closely aligned with the University of California at Los Angeles' School of Theater, Film and Television.

### The Collection

The television collection at the UCLA Film and Television Archive was established in 1965 through the signing of an agreement between the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and the Regents of the University of California to create a "National Television Library." In the 1970s, the television collection was brought together with the University's motion picture collection to form the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

The Archive's television collection numbers about 60,000 titles which span the history of the medium from 1946 to the present, equally divided between film and various videotape formats. The collection reflects the broad range of American television production, including both commercial and public programming; national, regional and local Los Angeles area programming; broadcast and cable programming. Strengths lie in the areas of 1950s live production; network programming from the 1950s to the present; local Los Angeles area programming from the 1940s to the present; and television advertising. The Archive maintains an interest in and holds examples of foreign television programs from many countries, although on a much more selective basis.

The backbone of the Archive's television collection is its Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Collection of over 5,000 programs received via the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and consisting primarily of Primetime, Daytime and Los Angeles area Emmy Award nominees and winners from the 1950s to the present. This collection grows at a rate of approximately 700 titles per year.

Major television collections include the Hallmark Hall of Fame Collection of over 300 dramatic productions aired under the Hallmark Hall of Fame banner between 1951 and 1996; the Jack Benny Collection of approximately 200 kinescopes and television films of THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM comedy series broadcast between 1950 and 1965; and the ABC Collection of approximately 24,000 television films and kinescopes representing virtually all of the ABC network's primetime entertainment programming from the early 1950s to the end of the 1970s. Other significant collections include the Denove Collection of 16mm film and 2" videotape shot for and during the John F. Kennedy presidential campaign of 1960; the KTLA Collection of kinescopes, television films, newsfilm and 2" tapes produced by and broadcast on the pioneering Los Angeles station

from the 1950s through the 1970s; the Dumont Collection of approximately 300 kinescopes, television films and kinescope negatives of programs originally broadcast over the Dumont network between 1949 and 1956; and the KCET Collection of approximately 200 videotapes (2" and 1") of programs produced by and broadcast on the Los Angeles PBS affiliate KCET between 1964 and the early 1980s. A major collection received in recent months is the Mark Goodson Collection of approximately 600 kinescopes of television game shows produced by Goodson-Todman Productions between 1950 and 1967, including WHAT'S MY LINE, TO TELL THE TRUTH and I'VE GOT A SECRET.

The vast majority of the Archive's television holdings are received as donations and deposits from networks, studios, production companies, advertising agencies, individuals who are part of the television industry, and private collectors. The Archive does not purchase materials. Approximately 2,000 new titles are received each year. In addition, the Archive does maintain a program of taping news and public affairs programming off-air. This News and Public Affairs Collection consists of 127,400 programs, taped off-air since 1979.

### **Storage**

The television collection is now housed, along with the Archive's motion picture collection, in a new temperature and humidity-controlled storage facility on the UCLA campus. Temperature for film and video reference materials is 60 degrees Fahrenheit and 45% relative humidity. Preservation materials are housed in a room separate from the general collection at 45 degrees Fahrenheit and 40% relative humidity.

### **Preservation**

Since 1986 the Archive has maintained an ongoing television preservation program primarily consisting of copying and remastering materials existing on obsolete video formats (mainly 2") onto contemporary videotape formats (D2, Digital Betacam, 1"). More complex restorations, such as the Archive's historic and Emmy-winning work on AN EVENING WITH FRED ASTAIRE have involved extensive equipment modifications in order to be able to play and transfer the unstandardized videotape on which the programs were originally recorded. Approximately 100 programs have been preserved by the Archive in the past 10 years, including AN EVENING WITH FRED ASTAIRE (1958) and two other Astaire specials from 1959 and 1960; two 1959 specials starring Gene Kelly; ESTHER WILLIAMS AT CYPRESS GARDENS (1960); THE GEORGE BURNS SHOW (1960); the July 1959 NIXON-KHRUSHCHEV "debate" held at the International Trade Exhibition in Moscow; and preserved from the oldest color videotapes known to survive, the May 1958 dedication ceremonies for the new studio facilities of WRC-TV, NBC's Washington, D.C. affiliate, at which President Eisenhower gave a short address.



Other programs preserved by the Archive include episodes from the landmark Los Angeles area series RALPH STORY'S LOS ANGELES (1965-1970); THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER (1960); and a number of speeches, appearances and paid political programs produced for the 1960 John F. Kennedy presidential campaign.

### **Exhibition**

The Archive exhibits programs from its collection to the general public at its annual Festival of Preservation and on an ongoing basis through "Archive Television Theatre," presented in conjunction with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences at the Academy Plaza Theater in North Hollywood. Recent presentations have included screenings of two specials starring Gene Kelly which were preserved by the Archive; a salute to George Burns on his 100th birthday; three live dramas featuring appearances by Grace Kelly; two episodes of the UNITED STATES STEEL HOUR; and three classic half-hours from THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM featuring guest appearances by Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart and George Burns.

### **Cataloging**

The entire television collection is cataloged on-line on the ORION computer system, developed for public access by the UCLA Libraries. The collection is also searchable via the Internet on MELVYL, the computer system designed to unite all the library collections of the University of California. The collection is cataloged on at least one of three levels: approximately 4-5% of the collection is fully cataloged; approximately 20% is at the enhanced inventory level; and approximately 75% at a minimal level. Standards employed are USMARC and AACR2 revised Library of Congress subject headings.

### **Research**

Television materials are available for research viewing at the Archive Research and Study Center on the UCLA campus. Appointments are made one day in advance for the viewing of materials in the reference collection. For items not yet in the reference collection, appointments are made five to seven days in advance so that a reference copy can be made. Videotapes are placed by Archive personnel into video machines located behind a central counter. Viewing takes place at over 70 individual study stations and 20 small viewing rooms equipped with a television monitor and video machine controls. The viewing of 35mm materials takes place at the Archive's viewing room at its Hollywood vault location. Access is free except for a small service fee charged for access to view materials only available on the 35mm format.

The television collection has attracted thousands of researchers from around the world whose projects include articles, books,

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dissertations, and film and television productions. The Archive's Research and Study Center has also become an integral part of the UCLA community by providing research and curricular support to faculty, students and staff.