

Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries

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2007-2010



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2025-03-19 Ella Winterling updated Existence and Location of Copies.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2008.020

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/2341

Unit Date

2007-2010

Language

The collection is primarily in English. Additional materials are in other languages, including Korean, Chinese, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Abstract

The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries consists mainly of condolence items received by the university in the wake of April 16, 2007 in which 32 faculty and students were killed. The subseries organization is by type of item. The bulk of materials were received in the first few months following April 16, 2007. There also is a very small series with items specifically sent to or relating to those killed, which is organized alphabetically by name.

Extent

ca. 500 Cubic Feet 518 boxes, 17 map case drawers, and standing racks

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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Source of Acquisition

The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries contains a selection of artifacts sent to the university between April 16, 2007 and June 2010. The material arrived in many thousands of separate accruals. The bulk of the collection was received in the first few months after April 16, 2007.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries commenced in July 2007 and was completed in summer 2010. Processing began at Virginia Tech's Corporate Research Center (CRC). In September of 2008, the collection moved to Newman Library, Special Collections.

Initial processing involved entering metadata about materials in lots. A lot might contain one item, for example, a quilt, or 32,000 items, such as a gift of origami cranes. After being photographed, selected items were arranged, described and housed in archival containers. Thus, there is a digital collection and a physical collection; both contain selected items, some of which are represented in only one of these collections. Close to 7,000 lots of items were accessioned.

Note: The names of the victims are given in their complete form in the finding aid even though they may be represented on the actual items in a much more informal way. Recognizing names was sometimes difficult.

Since there were two Daniels--Daniel Perez Cueva and Daniel Patrick O'Neil--and two Matthews--Matthew Gregory Gwaltney and Matthew Joseph La Porte--it sometimes was not clear which person was intended; therefore abbreviated names were included as they were written. An effort was made to record any instances in which a specific name appeared on an item. An effort was also made to record social commentary as it appeared on items.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries, Ms2008-020, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

On the morning of April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho shot and killed two students in West Ambler Johnston Residence Hall. About two hours later, Cho proceeded to Norris Hall, a building on the other side of the campus. When in Norris Hall he shot and killed five professors and 25 students, and injured over two dozen others, before turning the gun on himself.

The night of April 16, 2007, Hokies United, a student-organized response group, set up a memorial shrine with a semicircle of stones on the Drillfield in front of Burruss Hall, the university's administration building.

The next day students placed large plywood boards, painted white, on the Drillfield for people to sign and leave expressions of grief, support, etc. Other spontaneous shrines appeared on campus and in the community.

The events of April 16, 2007, received intense media coverage, and people around the world responded. Virginia Tech received over 90,000 condolence items from all 50 states and 80 countries. These items included banners, posters, books of condolences, sound materials, various media materials, poetry, correspondence, resolutions, textiles, memorabilia, ephemera, and handcrafted items. Thousands of these items were displayed for the university community through University Unions and Student Activities' Squires Student Union.

Items continued to be received for months and years afterwards, and families of those killed were offered the option of receiving many materials directly related to their loved ones from the Office of Recovery and Support, or having them placed in storage for later retrieval.

We continue to remember the 32 victims:

Ross A. Alameddine

Christopher James Bishop

Brian R. Bluhm

Ryan Christopher Clark

Austin Michelle Cloyd

Jocelyne Couture-Nowak

Daniel Alejandro Perez Cueva

Kevin P. Granata

Matthew Gregory Gwaltney

Caitlin Millar Hammaren

Jeremy Michael Herbstritt

Rachael Elizabeth Hill

Emily Jane Hilscher

Jarrett Lee Lane

Matthew Joseph La Porte

Henry J. Lee

Liviu Librescu

G.V. Loganathan

Partahi Mamora Halomoan Lumbantoruan

Lauren Ashley McCain

Daniel Patrick O'Neil

Juan Ramon Ortiz-Ortiz

Minal Hiralal Panchal

Erin Nicole Peterson

Michael Steven Pohle, Jr.

Julia Kathleen Pryde

Mary Karen Read

Reema Joseph Samaha

Waleed Mohamed Shaalan

Leslie Geraldine Sherman

Maxine Shelly Turner

Nicole Regina White

Scope and Content

The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries consists mainly of condolence items received by the university following the events of April 16, 2007. The bulk of materials were received in the

first few months following April 16, 2007.

The collection is arranged using standard archival procedures. Due to the unique nature of this collection (i.e., the way it was received, the variety of formats, and the content), archivists developed specialized arrangement and description procedures. Since the collection and its contents are unique, the arrangement and description of individual series and subseries may differ.

The collection contains two series, Series I: Condolence Series and Series II: Individual Collections. Series I: Condolence Material includes twelve subseries, described in the "Arrangement" note below. Series II: Individual Collections has no subseries.

Related Archival Materials

Digital items from the collection are available online at the Virginia Tech April 16, 2007, Condolence Archives of the University Libraries.

The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries DOES NOT contain any official documents. Official documents available to the public may be viewed at dedicated computers in Newman Library, Virginia Tech, and at the Library of Virginia in Richmond.

Other Virginia Tech resources, as well as several state and federal government resources, are available through the Scholarly Communication "Virginia Tech April 16, 2007, Archives of the University Libraries" webpage.

The Library of Virginia in Richmond maintains the Records of the Virginia Tech Review Panel. Accession 51144.

Special Collections and University Archives also has the April 16, 2007 Community Photograph Collection, M2013-022 and Marching Virginians' April 16, 2007 Condolence Collection, Ms2013-084.

Keywords

April 16, 2007 shootings
Blacksburg (Va.)
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Montgomery County (Va.)
University Archives
University History
Virginia Tech Shootings, Blacksburg, Va., 2007
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1970-)

Existence and Location of Copies

Over 7,000 digital images of selected items in this collection are available through the online Virginia Tech April 16, 2007, Condolence Archives of the University Libraries at VTechWorks. Some items in the digital Condolence Archives do not have a physical representation.

There are also two digital exhibits online, Unknown Origin: Anonymous gifts in the April 16, 2007 Condolence Archives and Communities of Caring: Community expressions of support in response to the events of April 16, 2007.

Some of this collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

The guide to the Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries by Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, is licensed under a CC0 (<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>).

Other Finding Aids

The entire contents list of both series, including all subseries, is available as a [single, 436-page pdf](#). The page numbers for each series and subseries are listed below.

The contents list of each series or subseries is available as an individual pdf file. Click on the link of the titles in the contents list for the subseries to view, search, and/or save the pdf.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in the following series:

Series I. Condolence Materials, 2007-2010. This series was arranged in 12 subseries. The items were arranged according to the person or organization who donated the materials. Within these groupings, the items were further categorized alphabetically.

Subseries 1. Banners, pp. 1-62.

This subseries contains banners received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Banners were defined as items that could be rolled or folded. Some banners were made of cloth or vinyl. Many of the banners were signed and/or included messages. In some cases, the finding aid includes notes about the content of these messages. An effort was made to note any instances in which the names of any of the 32 victims appeared on the banners.

Subseries 2. Posters, pp. 63-92.

This subseries contains posters received by Virginia Tech following the events that occurred on campus on April 16, 2007. Many of the posters were signed and/or included messages. In some cases, the finding aid includes notes about the content of these messages. An effort was made to note any instances in which the names of any of the 32 victims appeared on the posters.

Subseries 3. Books of Condolences, pp. 93-113.

This subseries contains books of condolences received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Although gathered under the broad term of books of condolences, the items in this series appear in a wide array of formats and sizes. While a number of the materials take the form of traditional books of condolences, most are of a more informal, impromptu nature. Many of the items in this subseries contain messages from people who gathered at memorial ceremonies throughout the United States and the world.

Other books had simply been put in public places to receive the names and messages of passersby before being sent to Virginia Tech. In addition to names and messages, many of the items in this series include photographs, original artwork, and poetry.

Subseries 4. Sound Materials: Audio CD, Sound Cassettes, Sheet Music, and Song Lyrics, pp. 114-125.

This subseries contains various sound materials such as audio CDs, audio cassettes, sheet music, and song lyrics received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. There is also some overlap between this subseries and Subseries 5.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 5. Videos, DVDs, CDs, and Slideshows, pp. 126-133.

This subseries contains materials that have visual content, including videos, DVDs, CDs, and slideshows that were received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. There is also some overlap between this subseries and Subseries 4.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 6. Correspondence, pp. 134-292.

Following the events of April 16, 2007, Virginia Tech received cards and letters of condolence from organizations and individuals across the United States and internationally. A majority of the correspondence appears in standard greeting card format, in letters, and in oversize cards. Some contain messages from several individuals. Many of these cards were handmade, and some senders enclosed newspaper clippings or religious literature. Many cards and letters feature artwork, especially items sent from children. Other significant materials include official letters from international embassies and governments.

In general, all of the cards and letters were organized according to the sender; domestic and international correspondence remains separated. The items were arranged according to the nature of the creator from which they were received. Within these groupings, the items were further categorized alphabetically. Specifically, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Virginia Tech received many condolence artifacts, including correspondence and floral arrangements; these items were arranged separately. While a substantial portion of condolences were sent directly to Virginia Tech or one of its departments, some correspondence was sent to the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech police departments. Many of these cards came from fellow police departments, EMTs, fire departments, and other public service agencies; these items were arranged separately.

Subseries 7. Photographs and Digital Images, pp. 293-328.

This subseries contains photographs and digital images sent to Virginia Tech following the events of April 16,

2007. Groups and individuals are pictured, for example, wearing Virginia Tech colors, holding a memorial service, or raising money for the Hokie Spirit Fund. Other subseries may include photographs.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 8. Textiles, Memorabilia, Artwork, and Handcrafted Items, pp. 329-381.

This subseries includes a wide variety of items sent to Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. The subseries includes items such as quilts, drawings, paintings, a car hood, sports memorabilia, U.S. flags flown at various places in honor of the victims, t-shirts, and a life preserver.

Subseries 9. Poetry, pp. 382-412.

This subseries consists of poems composed or sent by individuals from across the United States. Some organizations sending poetry include schools, churches, colleges, and universities. Anonymous poems are also included.

This subseries was arranged into two groups: poetry sent by organizations or groups and poetry sent by individuals. Each group was alphabetized by the name of the organization or individual.

Subseries 10. Resolutions, Proclamations, Declarations, Bills, and Other Legislation, pp. 413-422.

This subseries consists of official resolutions and proclamations passed by the governing bodies for colleges and universities, organizations, and state and local governments. Additional correspondence accompanies some of the resolutions.

Resolutions were arranged in alphabetical order by organization name, with oversized items in separate boxes.

Subseries 11. Books, pp. 423-425.

This subseries consists of books and booklets received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Subjects of the books include handling grief and grieving or are offered as possible sources of consolation.

Books were arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 12. Sample Collection of Materials Received by Individual Families of Victims, pp. 426-431.

This subseries includes materials sent to the family of an individual victim. The material in the subseries, although anonymous, represents the cross section of gifts and items given to the families and the University community. The subseries contains music and DVD recordings of songs written for or performed on behalf of the victims, as well as recordings of memorial events on campus. There are cards, poetry, and books of condolences from schools, universities, religious organizations, and individuals. Memorabilia includes a flag flown at the United States Capitol, a knitted prayer shawl, original artwork from an alumna, and a candle burned at a New York University vigil. The subseries also contains publications and programs from memorial events on the Virginia Tech campus.

The subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the material.

Series II. Individual Series, pp. 432-433.

This very small series contains items either sent to or specifically relating to the individuals who were killed on April 16, 2007.

The series was arranged alphabetically. A separate box for Seung-Hui Cho is placed at the end.

Please note: The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries **DOES NOT** contain any official documents. Official documents available to the public may be viewed at dedicated computers in Newman Library, Virginia Tech, and at the Library of Virginia in Richmond.

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I: Condolence Materials

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55477

Unit Date 2007-2010

Scope and Content

The contents list of each series or subseries is available as an individual pdf file. Click on the link below for the subseries to view, search, and/or save the pdf.

The entire contents list of both series, including all subseries, is available as a single, 436-page pdf here.

Subseries 1: Banners, pp. 1-62

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55478

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains banners received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Banners were defined as items that could be rolled or folded. Some banners were made of cloth or vinyl. Many of the banners were signed and/or included messages. In some cases, the finding aid includes notes about the content of these messages. An effort was made to note any instances in which the names of any of the 32 victims appeared on the banners.

Subseries 2: Posters, pp. 63-92

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55479

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains posters received by Virginia Tech following the events that occurred on campus on April 16, 2007. Many of the posters were signed and/or included messages. In some cases, the finding aid includes notes about the content of these messages. An effort was made to note any instances in which the names of any of the 32 victims appeared on the posters.

Subseries 3: Books of Condolences, pp. 93-113

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55480

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains books of condolences received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Although gathered under the broad term of books of condolences, the items in this series appear in a wide array of formats and sizes. While a number of the materials take the form of traditional books of condolences, most are of a more informal, impromptu nature. Many of the items in this subseries contain messages from people who gathered at memorial ceremonies throughout the United States and the world.

Other books had simply been put in public places to receive the names and messages of passersby before being sent to Virginia Tech. In addition to names and messages, many of the items in this series include photographs, original artwork, and poetry.

Subseries 4: Sound Materials: Audio CDs, Sound Cassettes, Sheet Music, and Song Lyrics, pp. 114-125

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55481

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains various sound materials such as audio CDs, audio cassettes, sheet music, and song lyrics received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. There is also some overlap between this subseries and Subseries 5.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 5: Videos, DVDs, CDs, Slideshows, pp. 126-133

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55482

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains materials that have visual content, including videos, DVDs, CDs, and slideshows that were received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. There is also some overlap between this subseries and Subseries 4.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 6: Correspondence, pp. 134-293

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55483

Scope and Contents

Following the events of April 16, 2007, Virginia Tech received cards and letters of condolence from organizations and individuals across the United States and internationally. A majority of the correspondence appears in standard greeting card format, in letters, and in oversize cards. Some contain messages from several individuals. Many of these cards were handmade, and some senders

enclosed newspaper clippings or religious literature. Many cards and letters feature artwork, especially items sent from children. Other significant materials include official letters from international embassies and governments.

In general, all of the cards and letters were organized according to the sender; domestic and international correspondence remains separated. The items were arranged according to the nature of the creator from which they were received. Within these groupings, the items were further categorized alphabetically. Specifically, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of Virginia Tech received many condolence artifacts, including correspondence and floral arrangements; these items were arranged separately. While a substantial portion of condolences were sent directly to Virginia Tech or one of its departments, some correspondence was sent to the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech police departments. Many of these cards came from fellow police departments, EMTs, fire departments, and other public service agencies; these items were arranged separately.

Subseries 7: Photographs and Digital Images, pp. 294-329

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55484

Scope and Contents

This subseries contains photographs and digital images sent to Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Groups and individuals are pictured, for example, wearing Virginia Tech colors, holding a memorial service, or raising money for the Hokie Spirit Fund. Other subseries may include photographs.

This subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 8: Textiles, Memorabilia, Artworks, and Handcrafted Items, pp. 330-384

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55485

Scope and Contents

This subseries includes a wide variety of items sent to Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. The subseries includes items such as quilts, drawings, paintings, a car hood, sports memorabilia, U.S. flags flown at various places in honor of the victims, t-shirts, and a life preserver.

Subseries 9: Poetry, pp. 385-415

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55486

Scope and Contents

This subseries consists of poems composed or sent by individuals from across the United States. Some organizations sending poetry include schools, churches, colleges, and universities. Anonymous poems are also included.

This subseries was arranged into two groups: poetry sent by organizations or groups and poetry sent by individuals. Each group was alphabetized by the name of the organization or individual.

Subseries 10: Resolutions, Proclamations, Declarations, Bills, and Other Legislation, pp. 416-425

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55487

Scope and Contents

This subseries consists of official resolutions and proclamations passed by the governing bodies for colleges and universities, organizations, and state and local governments. Additional correspondence accompanies some of the resolutions.

Resolutions were arranged in alphabetical order by organization name, with oversized items in separate boxes.

Subseries 11: Books, pp. 426-428

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55488

Scope and Contents

This subseries consists of books and booklets received by Virginia Tech following the events of April 16, 2007. Subjects of the books include handling grief and grieving or are offered as possible sources of consolation.

Books were arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the item.

Subseries 12: Sample Collection of Materials Received by Individual Families of Victims, pp. 429-434

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55489

Scope and Contents

This subseries includes materials sent to the family of an individual victim. The material in the subseries, although anonymous, represents the cross section of gifts and items given to the families and the University community. The subseries contains music and DVD recordings of songs written for or performed on behalf of the victims, as well as recordings of memorial events on campus. There are cards, poetry, and books of condolences from schools, universities, religious organizations, and individuals. Memorabilia includes a flag flown at the United States Capitol, a knitted prayer shawl, original artwork from an alumna, and a candle burned at a New York University vigil. The subseries also contains publications and programs from memorial events on the Virginia Tech campus.

The subseries was arranged alphabetically by donor name. The donor may or may not be the creator of the material.

Series II: Individual Collections, pp. 435-436

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/55490

Unit Date 2007-2010

Scope and Contents

This very small series contains items either sent to or specifically relating to the individuals who were killed on April 16, 2007.

The series was arranged alphabetically. A separate box for Seung-Hui Cho is placed at the end.

Please note: The Virginia Tech April 16, 2007 Archives of the University Libraries DOES NOT contain any official documents. Official documents available to the public may be viewed at dedicated computers in Newman Library, Virginia Tech, and at the Library of Virginia in Richmond.