

Claire Withycombe/Capital Bureau

The Mark O. Hatfield Library at Willamette University in Salem.

Hatfield's Senate papers tucked out of view until 2022

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The records of former U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, one of Oregon's most prominent politicians, won't be made public until July 12, 2022, on what would have been the Republican's 100th birthday.

Hatfield, who died in 2011, climbed to national prominence over the course of three decades in the Senate and built a reputation that close supporters still protect.

The Dallas-born politician served in the state Legislature before being elected secretary of state in 1956. He served as governor from 1959 to 1967, when he ventured to Capitol Hill to represent Oregon in the U.S. Senate, a post he held until 1997.

Records that observers say could be of national significance — he chaired the influential Senate Appropriations Committee and opposed the Vietnam War and the nuclear program — are kept at Willamette University in Salem, a hearty stone's throw from the state capitol.

Representatives of the university, a private institution, can't say much about the specific contents of the collection. The trove includes speeches, correspondence, memos, legislative records, photos, videos, campaign records, artifacts and other items spanning 2,200 linear feet of storage space, including 2,000 boxes of paper records.

Hatfield's widow, Antoinette, said the release date was chosen after he died.

"Well, I would rather have them (made public) after I was in the grave, to be truthful, because I couldn't answer any of the questions they would ask about his papers," she said.

Antoinette Hatfield, who now lives in Portland, maintained that she was not involved in her husband's political affairs. "I didn't do anything in his office over the years," she said. "It was not my business."

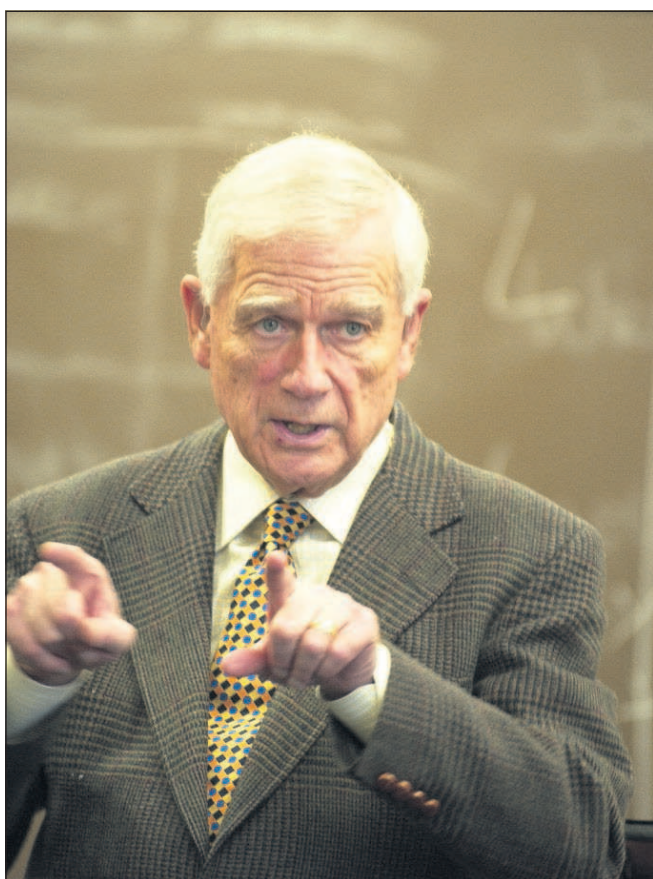
She said that Hatfield's 100th birthday "seemed like a nice round number to have them come out."

The papers generated by federal legislators are considered their personal property, not public documents, Karen Paul, the archivist for the U.S. Senate, said. It's their responsibility to have them boxed and ready for shipment to the location of their choice the day before their final term ends.

Hatfield got a jump on the process. Willamette began preparing the collection even before he left the Senate.

A spokesman for Willamette said Richard Jones, a historian at Reed College, was initially hired by the university to start sorting through the collection in 1985, 12 years before Hatfield left the Senate. Staff of the university's Hatfield Library took over processing in 1992.

Generally, the archiving process tries to preserve the original order of the papers, says Willamette University Archivist Mary McRobinson. The archival process also includes



Kirk Hirota/George Fox University

The late Mark Hatfield after his retirement from the U.S. Senate. Hatfield's papers from his 30 years in the Senate are housed at Willamette University, but won't be opened to the public until July 12, 2022, on what would have been his 100th birthday.



Marion County Historical Society
Mark Hatfield signs papers around 1960 during his first term as governor of Oregon.

describing, down to the folder level, what the records contain, and making them easier to navigate for researchers.

It's not apparent what the collection may reveal.

Hatfield's legacy permeates the Beaver State. He is credited with creating the research powerhouse that is now Oregon Health & Science University, and the 1986 designation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

But he also made well-publicized missteps.

In 1984, Antoinette Hatfield was paid \$55,000 in real estate fees by Basil Tsakos, a Greek businessman who wanted to build an oil pipeline in Africa and sought help on the project from Sen. Hatfield, according to Willamette Week's 2011 obituary of Hatfield. The Hatfields donated the money to charity and in 1987, the Justice Department said it wouldn't investigate Hatfield, according to the New York Times.

In the early 1990s, Hatfield was investigated by a federal grand jury for gifts he'd received but hadn't disclosed from a university president in the 1980s. At the time of the gifts, Hatfield was weighing a \$16.3 million grant to the university, according to the New York Times. He was rebuked by the Senate Ethics Commit-

tee in 1992.

harassment scandal in 1995. The papers of Republican U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith, who served in the Senate from 1997 to 2009, won't be public until 2029 at the earliest.

There's often a delay in making political papers public. Supporters tend to guard the reputations of revered figures such as Hatfield, Moore said.

"When you open up that archive, that kind of becomes secondary, and it's new stuff," Moore said. "And people get nervous about that."

Brent Walth, an Oregon journalist whose authoritative biography of former Gov. Tom McCall was published in 1994, said he was approached on two separate occasions by people close to Hatfield asking whether he'd be interested in writing a book about him.

Walth told the interested parties that he'd need complete access to Hatfield's papers and need interviewees to be open with him about all aspects of Hatfield's life. He heard nothing more about the idea.

Walth doesn't know why they didn't follow up, but noted there could have been a number of reasons why he wasn't contacted again after those discussions.

The Hatfield papers also raise questions about when records created in the course of official business should be public. Not all of the records are under seal: Some correspondence of Hatfield's is scattered among other U.S. institutions and available for public scrutiny there, according to the Biographic Directory of the United States Congress.

And oral history interviews with Hatfield and his staff are kept at the Oregon Historical Society and OHSU, according to the directory.

State papers

Unlike Senate papers, records created by the state's top executives are considered public. Since 1991 — decades after Hatfield was governor — state law has required that records created by the governor, secretary of state, attorney general and treasurer be turned over to the state archivist, says State Archivist Mary Beth Herkert.

Before then, turning over the records to the state archives was the implied rule under the state's public records law, but it wasn't followed, Herkert said.

"It was just getting to the point where you're losing out on these records," Herkert says, "And that's not right because you're alienating a public record, which is not allowed to be done."

Nearly five more years will pass before Oregonians can see the collection for themselves.

Walth, the journalist, noted that memory fades the longer that someone is out of office, and once someone is no longer living. Furthermore, public interest in Hatfield may also fade as time goes by.

"And the longer those papers stay locked up ... it could be harder to find a context for him or his story," Walth said. "I hope not. I think it would be a terrific story, but I don't know."



Clatsop Kinder Ready

Ashley Nimmi, left, and Andy Gonzalez, right, received a Welcome Baby bag filled with resources on early childhood development to help their new daughter, Riley.

Program: 'Parents are the first teachers'

Continued from Page 1A

Robbie Porter is vice principal of Warrenton Grade School and recently took over as coordinator of the P-3 Early Learning Council, more commonly known as Clatsop Kinder Ready, from former Seaside principal Dan Gaffney, who is focusing on a yearlong feasibility study for universal preschool in Clatsop, Tillamook and possibly Columbia counties.

The group focuses on improving developmental outcomes for children from birth through third grade, a key developmental stage by which kids should be transitioning from learning to read to reading to learn.

The group has mostly focused on kids in preschool through third grade and wanted to start a program focusing on prenatal care and infants, Porter said. In an application for their fourth and final year of funding from the Oregon Community Foundation, the group wrote a grant for the Welcome Baby program.

The group assembled 400 of the tote bags.

"Parents are the first teachers," said Diane Dieni, an early childhood educator helping oversee the program.

Each bag includes basic newborn supplies such as hats, burp cloths, teething toys and measuring guides. Much of it is donated by local organizations serving children, from libraries to birth companions called doulas. The Welcome Baby educational and resource booklet was curated for the North Coast and printed on a student-owned press at Jew-

ell School in rural Clatsop County.

"I've never seen anything so comprehensive or county specific," Porter said of the guide.

Bags will be given to new parents throughout next year at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, Providence Seaside Hospital and at benefits, breastfeeding and postpartum appointments. Clatsop County's birth rate has averaged nearly 417 over the past five years.

For parents without a safe place for their child to sleep, Clatsop Kinder Ready has acquired 20 specially designed cardboard boxes with mattresses from The Baby Box Co. The Finnish government has given such sleeping boxes and maternity supplies to new families since the 1930s.

The Welcome Baby program costs \$10,000, half paid for by Clatsop Kinder Ready and half by the non-profit Friends of Columbia Community Health. Each bag and set of materials costs less than \$20 to compile.

Clatsop Kinder Ready is searching for future grant funding, and donations to help provide the Welcome Baby bags, Porter said.

The group thinks the bags would be a perfect project for the Columbia-Pacific Coordinated Care Organization serving regional Oregon Health Plan members, Dieni said.

"The whole focus on prenatal to 3 years old, this is kind of the direction of interest now," Dieni said. "If you want to make an impact, you've got to catch families as early as possible."

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Diane Dieni

an early childhood educator helping oversee the Welcome Baby program

Ludy: Celebrates decision to commit to the beach life

Continued from Page 1A

Ludy got the idea after living and working in Napa Valley, California for the past five years. When she first moved to Sonoma, there was a variety of activity clubs newcomers could join to meet others. The North Coast Newcomers group would focus on connecting mainly retirees, she said, who she envisions would participate in monthly lunches or group activities outdoors.

She hopes to get the word out starting in January through "newcomer packets" she hands out at Titor Title for new homeowners.

"I love to bike ride and to cook and to golf, but I want

to find other women who like to do that, too," she said. "I've heard the same problem from other new people. If I put this out there, I think they will come."

Overall, Ludy still celebrates her decision to commit to beach life. The rain can be tiresome, she said, but also "is also what makes this place so beautiful." Every so often she yearns for the restaurants and wineries that make the Napa Valley famous in the culinary world.

But with ocean views a few blocks away and the elk outside her white picket fence, she's reminded of the tranquility that drew her here.

"It's a perfect fit for me," Ludy said.