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## Thomas L. Turk Papers

1972-2003

1 box (1.75 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 831



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Tom Turk played a significant role in the growth of state and community arts agencies across five decades. Beginning his career as an organizer of community arts agencies in Michigan in the mid-1960s, Turk went on to hold leadership positions with community arts agencies in Texas and Tennessee. Active on the national level, he served as a founding member of the Executive Board of the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, later the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (1977-1985), and as president of the United States Urban Arts Federation (1999-2000), the association of local arts council and commission directors in the nation's fifty largest cities.

Reflecting a long career in community arts, the Turk collection includes rich documentation of three important organizations involved in the development of the field during the late-1970s and early 2000s: the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, and the U.S. Urban Arts Federation. The records include a nearly

complete run of minutes of the Board and Executive Committee for NACAA and NALAA, along with newsletters and some financial reports, as well as materials relating to the organization and name change.

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## Arts management

### Background on Tom Turk

A native of Indiana, Tom Turk played a significant role in the growth of state and community arts agencies across five decades. After receiving his AB in Creative Writing from De Pauw (1958) and MA in radio, television and film from Michigan State (1960), Turk was hired as Fine Arts Producer at WKAR-TV (1963-1981), the public television station in East Lansing. At a time when the field of arts management was in its infancy, he quickly established a reputation as an effective organizer and advocate for the arts and he became a pioneer in the development of community arts agencies.

A tireless worker, Turk took a leading, and sometimes formative role in developing community arts agencies, often serving several organizations at once. During his years in Michigan, he served as the President of the Metropolitan Lansing Fine Arts Council (1975-1977) and as the founding chair (later president) of the Michigan Association of Community Arts Agencies (1977), a statewide arts service and advocacy organization. In 1980, he was appointed by the Governor to become a member of the Michigan Council for the Arts. After relocating to Texas in 1981, he served as Executive Director of the Cultural Activities Center, in Temple, Texas, a creative and performing arts venue (1981-1991) and then as Director of the Texarkana Regional Arts and Humanities Council (1991-1993).

Beyond these primary appointments, however, Turk became well known as an active figure in state and national arts organizations. As consultant, board member, and speaker, he assisted over a dozen state arts agencies and service groups and he served on the Executive Board of the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies (later the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies), and in 1999-2000, as president of the United States Urban Arts Federation, the association of local arts council and commission directors in the nation's fifty largest cities.

Turk accepted a position as Executive Director of the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission in 1993, and was instrumental in building an effective public art program for the city and an organizational structure that allowed the Commission to flourish. During his time at the helm, he helped quadruple the organization's appropriations and through its granting programs and assistance in obtaining local, state and federal funding, helped to spur the expansion of local arts organizations in the region. Since retiring in 2003, Turk has worked as a consultant to non-profit arts agencies in management, advocacy, programming, and grants writing.

### Scope of collection

Reflecting a long career in community arts, the Turk collection includes rich documentation of three important organizations involved in the development of the field during the late-1970s and early 2000s: the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, and the U.S. Urban Arts Federation. The records include a nearly complete run of minutes of the Board and Executive Committee for NACAA and NALAA, along with newsletters and some financial reports, as well as materials relating to the organization and name change, the hiring of officers such as Charles F. Dambach, Gretchen Wiest, and Bob Lynch, and (for USUAF) reports on surveys of the arts in fifty of the nation's cities.

Beyond documenting the trio of community arts organizations, the collection also includes two clutches of noteworthy material. First is a focused suite of material on the seminal Summer Institute in Arts Administration that Turk attended at Harvard in 1973, including syllabi, handouts, lecture notes, exercises, and perhaps most importantly, case studies used in the year in which Harvard shifted focus for institute to mid-career arts administrators. Second, the collection contains a suite of material relating to the visioning exercise at the Winston-Salem Arts Convocation (October 1999), in which participants worked to develop "a vision for the arts in our communities in the next quarter century."

### Inventory

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American Council for the Arts: Wichita Community Development Conference

1978

Box 1: 1

Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration

1973

Box 1: 2

Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: *Cases in arts administration*, by Thomas C. Raymond, Stephen A. Greysen, and Douglas Schwalbe

1972 July

Box 2: 1

Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: Field problems  
1973  
Box 1: 3  
Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: Field problems  
1973  
Box 1: 4  
Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: Case studies  
1973  
Box 1: 5  
Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: Case studies  
1973  
Box 1: 6  
Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: King Charles County exercise  
1973  
Box 1: 7  
Harvard University Summer School, Institute in Arts Administration: "Assignment on financial report," by Thomas L. Turk  
1973  
Box 1: 8  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1978-1979 June  
Box 1: 9  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1978 Aug.-Nov.  
Box 1: 10  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1980 Jan.-Apr.  
Box 1: 11  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1980 May-Nov.  
Box 1: 12  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
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Box 1: 13  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
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National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
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Box 1: 15  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1982 Jan.-Mar.  
Box 1: 16  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1982 Apr.-June  
Box 1: 17  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: By-laws  
1982  
Box 1: 18  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: *Connection* [newsletter]  
1981-1982  
Box 1: 19  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: Early history  
1977-1978  
Box 1: 20  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: Financial  
1980-1981  
Box 1: 21  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: *NACAA Newsletter*  
1979

Box 1: 22  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: *NACAA Newsletter*  
1980

Box 1: 23  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: *NACAA Newsletter*  
1981

Box 1: 24  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: Personnel  
ca.1980

Box 1: 25  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies: Two-year report  
1981

Box 1: 26  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1982 July-Sept.

Box 1: 27  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1982 Oct.-Dec.

Box 1: 28  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1983 Jan.-Apr.

Box 1: 29  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1983 May-Aug.

Box 1: 30  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1983 Sept.-Dec.

Box 1: 31  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1984 Jan.-May

Box 1: 32  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1984 June-Aug.

Box 1: 33  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1984 Sept.-Dec.

Box 1: 34  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, Board of Directors  
1985 Jan.-May

Box 1: 35  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies: By-laws  
1982

Box 1: 36  
United States Urban Arts Federation  
1998

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United States Urban Arts Federation  
1999

Box 1: 38  
United States Urban Arts Federation  
2000

Box 1: 39  
United States Urban Arts Federation  
2001

Box 1: 40  
United States Urban Arts Federation  
2002

Box 1: 41  
United States Urban Arts Federation

2003  
Box 1: 42  
United States Urban Arts Federation: Description of Model Arts Program  
ca.2002  
Box 1: 43  
United States Urban Arts Federation: Report on Arts Councils in the 50 largest U.S. cities  
1996  
Box 1: 44  
United States Urban Arts Federation: Statistical report about the budgets and programming of Arts Councils in the 50 largest U.S. cities  
1997, 1998  
Box 1: 45  
United States Urban Arts Federation: Statistical report about the budgets and programming of Arts Councils in the 50 largest U.S. cities  
2000, 2001  
Box 1: 46  
Winston-Salem Arts Convocation packet, parts 1-3  
1999  
Box 1: 47  
Winston-Salem Arts Convocation packet, parts 4-5  
1999  
Box 1: 48  
Winston-Salem Arts Convocation packet, visioning workshop handouts  
1999  
Box 1: 49

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Thomas L. Turk, Sept. 2015.

### Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Sept. 2015.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* Thomas L. Turk Papers (MS 831). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

Arts management--United States  
Community arts projects  
Dambach, Charles F.  
Lynch, Robert L.

### Contributors

Turk, Thomas L. **[main entry]**  
Harvard University. Summer School of Arts and Sciences and of Education. Institute in Arts Administration  
National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies  
National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies  
United States Urban Arts Federation  
Winston-Salem Arts Convocation

### Genres and formats

Minutes (Administrative records)

### Link to similar SCUA collections

Arts management



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