



SMITHSONIAN DIRECTIVE 208

June 30, 1983

ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION VOLUNTEERS

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Purpose

The Smithsonian Institution acknowledges the valuable contributions it receives through the interest, time and experience given by volunteers, who serve its various museums and other bureaus and offices. Because of the nature and extent of involvement of volunteers in Smithsonian programs and activities, standards of conduct are set forth for the protection of volunteers and of the Institution.

Policy

Volunteer service shall be undertaken for the betterment of the Smithsonian and not for personal gain, other than the inherent reward and personal satisfaction derived from such participation. A Smithsonian volunteer may not accept compensation for performance of Smithsonian tasks as a volunteer. Personal compensation includes gifts, fees, gratuities or other dispensations to the volunteer or to members of the volunteer's immediate family or household.

Volunteers who have access to museum collections, research, staff activities and associated privileged information must respect the confidentiality of their positions, as well as the significance and integrity of the collections.

Guidelines and Procedures

To eliminate the possibility of a conflict of interest each Smithsonian volunteer who is working in an activity area which

is related to an outside activity in which the volunteer or a member of his/her family or household is personally involved, or who is active in a related employment or other commercial context, must disclose the nature and extent of such involvement to his/her Smithsonian staff supervisor and whether it is carried out personally or by a member of the volunteer's immediate family or household. Failure to make a timely disclosure is grounds for dismissal of a volunteer.

Examples of possible conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest which require disclosure include:

- a volunteer working directly with Smithsonian collections if either the volunteer or member of the immediate family or household is involved with collecting or dealing in those same types of objects or materials
- a volunteer who serves or contracts to serve as a paid tour guide in a Smithsonian museum
- holding a paid position or accepting pay for work which is similar or related to the volunteer's duties at the Smithsonian.

In many situations it will be sufficient for the volunteer to disclose the outside activity that might be a conflict of interest. In certain cases, the volunteer may be asked to serve in other Smithsonian activities where there is not an actual or apparent conflict of interest. In an extreme case, the volunteer may be asked to terminate Smithsonian service so that his/her other activities might be pursued

without any conflict of interest.

Smithsonian staff supervisors must make a written record of disclosures by volunteers assigned to them and, if there might appear to be a conflict of interest, consult with a Smithsonian Ethics Counselor in the Office of the General Counsel.

These standards represent basic principles for ethical conduct by Smithsonian volunteers. The directors of Smithsonian bureaus and offices may adopt more detailed guidelines if consistent with the principles outlined in this office memorandum.

CANCELLATION:

None.

INQUIRIES:

Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center

RETENTION:

Indefinite. Subject to review for currency 24 months from date of issuance.

FILING:

File sequentially with other current directives.

COPIES:

Print file or contact the Office of Planning, Management and Budget (OPMB)
