

Guide to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology September 11, 2001, Memorial Records AC.0531

Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Andrews

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

December 04, 2014

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections
Copyright 2014
MIT Libraries
Building 14N-118
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139-4307
617.253.5690
mithistory@mit.edu

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Historical note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents of the Collection</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	6
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	7

Summary Information

Repository	Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections
Title	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, September 11, 2001, memorial records
Date [inclusive]	2001-2002
Extent	4.0 cubic feet (2 tubes, 1 record carton, 1 card box)
Location	Materials are stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use.
Language	English

Citation

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, September 11, 2001, Memorial Records, AC 531, box X.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, Cambridge,
Massachusetts.

Historical note

Within two hours on the morning of September 11, 2001, four planes on scheduled passenger flights crashed—two into the World Trade Center towers in New York City, the third into the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., and the fourth into a field in Pennsylvania—in a terrorist attack on the United States.

MIT President Charles Vest addressed this statement to the students, faculty, and staff of MIT:

We have been witness to a series of events of unprecedented tragedy and horror in this nation's history. Every one of us has been affected in many ways. Even as we pray and meditate about the many victims of these unspeakable acts, we must also care for each other and assist each other's families and friends throughout this troubled time.

I want to thank all those who serve the needs of the MIT community and salute those who must deal directly with the death, injury and pain of those in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

Again, my prayers are with all those who are touched by this tragedy, and I am confident that we will be able to sustain each other through this heart-wrenching time.¹

The next day, September 12, 2001, students, faculty and staff were invited to gather outside in Killian Court for a community meeting. Throughout the year students, staff, and faculty sponsored many programs, seminars, and events to help people consider the tragic events and their impact on the MIT community. Out of the first gathering on September 12th came a request for a temporary reflecting space for individual meditation. A committee of faculty and students appointed by the President's Office worked with Professor John Fernandez of the Department of Architecture and H el ene Lipstadt, a visiting professor in architecture. The space was designed as a replica of a piece of the World Trade Center wall. The wooden replica (12 feet by 25 feet) was built by staff of the MIT Facilities Department and installed next to the MIT Chapel on Friday afternoon, September 14, 2001. It contained shelves to hold messages and flowers left by visitors.

During the same week, at the initiative of an MIT student, blank paper banners were put on the wall of Lobby 10 in the main corridor of MIT to encourage members of the MIT community to express their thoughts and feelings. At the end of September 2001, coordinated by the Dean for Student Life, the banners were taken down by Bradley Ito, the student who installed them, and staff of the MIT Institute Archives. The reflecting wall remained in place for a year, until September 11, 2002. After a memorial service, it was dismantled and note cards left by visitors were gathered and transferred to the Institute Archives.

¹ <http://newsoffice.mit.edu/2001/letters-0919>

Scope and Contents of the Collection

The items in the collection, primarily in written form, but also in visual form, express the sentiments of those at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who were moved to record their thoughts about the events of September 11, 2001. The community as a whole represents a diversity of backgrounds from across the United States and from around the world. It is also a campus geographically near New York City and close to Boston's Logan Airport, from which two of the flights originated. The banners were in a public space on the walls of the lobby of Building 10. Messages were written in the first month, so they capture the immediacy of the event. Messages on the banners are primarily individual comments, but since they were available for all to read some are dialogues and comments on comments, encompassing a range of emotions, remembrances, and political and spiritual thoughts. Objects were also attached to banners by individuals, and when the banners were taken down, objects were stored in a separate container.

Writings on note cards from the reflecting wall follow from the intention of the space, as both a place for individual thought and the location of several formal memorial gatherings.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Institute Archives and Special Collections Copyright 2014

Access note

The collection is open for research.

Intellectual Property Rights

Access to collections in the Institute Archives and Special Collections is not authorization to publish. Separate written application for permission to publish must be made to the Institute Archives. Copyright of some items in this collection may be held by respective creators.

Source of Acquisition

The records were transferred to the Institute Archives and Special Collections in September 2001 from the Office of the Dean for Student Life and in September 2002 from the Office of the President.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology--History
- September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

Collection Inventory

	Box
Banner 2001	1
Banner 2001	2
Objects 2001	3
Note cards 2001-2002	4