Guide to the Thomas J. Gola papers

La Salle University Archives

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Guide to the Thomas J. Gola Papers
UA.02.002
Finding aid prepared by Catherine Carey

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December 03, 2015

La Salle University Archives
October 2015
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<tr>
<th><strong>Repository</strong></th>
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**Preferred Citation**

Tom Gola Papers (UA.02.002), La Salle University Archives, Connelly Library.
Biographical Sketch

Thomas Joseph Gola was born on January 13, 1933 and grew up in Philadelphia’s Olney neighborhood. He was a stand-out basketball player at La Salle College High School, where he helped lead the team to a Philadelphia Catholic League Championship. Upon graduation in 1951, Gola fielded many scholarship offers but decided to attend La Salle College as a business major.

In his freshman year, Gola helped lead the basketball team to the 1952 NIT Championship and was named tournament MVP. The team won the 1954 NCAA basketball championship and lost the championship game in 1955. Gola’s career total of 2,201 rebounds in four years is a still a NCAA record. After graduation, Gola played 11 seasons in the NBA with the Philadelphia/San Francisco Warriors and the New York Knicks. When the Warriors won the 1956 NBA championship, Gola became, at the time, one of only two men in history to have won NIT, NCAA, and NBA titles. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame and became a charter member of both La Salle’s Hall of Athletes and the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame. In 1968, Gola returned to La Salle and coached the basketball team for two seasons, ending his first season with a 23-1 record.

Gola married Caroline Ann Norris in 1955, and they had one son, Thomas Christopher.

Gola’s political career began with his election to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1966; he was re-elected two years later. The next year he was elected as the City Controller of Philadelphia, but lost a re-election bid for this post in 1973. Gola also made an attempt at the Philadelphia mayor’s office in 1983, but lost in the Republican primary.

In 1998, La Salle named its new basketball court, within the renovated Hayman Center, the Tom Gola Arena. A few years later, Gola sustained a serious injury from an accidental fall. Complications stemming from that collapse caused his death on January 26, 2014, at the age of 81. One year later, La Salle paid yet another tribute to him when a statue of his likeness was unveiled and dedicated in Hayman Center.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

La Salle University Archives October 2015
Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- La Salle University--History.
Collection Inventory

### PERSONAL LIFE

**Scope and Content**

This series consists of materials relating to Gola’s personal life. Among the materials are items such as his grade school and high school report cards, his wedding invitation, as well as documentation related to the statue of his likeness which stands in Hayman Hall on the La Salle University campus.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Wedding invitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tom Gola monument</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### POLITICAL CAREER

**Separated Materials note**
Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

**Scope and Content**

This series consists of promotional materials and press releases from Gola’s various political campaigns as well as correspondence from other high profile politicians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>1970-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**BASKETBALL CAREER**

**Scope and Content**

This series is comprised of materials related to Gola's basketball career. Included are some statistics and schedules as well as a script for a documentary which includes some commentary by Gola.

**BASKETBALL PROGRAMS**

**Scope and Content**

This series consists of basketball game and tournament programs. The programs range from 1951, when Gola's La Salle College High School team won the Philadelphia Catholic League Championship, to his time playing at La Salle and in the NBA, and as coach of the La Salle team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Basketball programs, 1951-1955</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Basketball programs, 1956</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## PUBLICATIONS

### Scope and Content

This series is comprised of full issues of magazine publications such as *Sports Illustrated*, *Life*, and *Sport*, among others, ranging from 1953-2004. Each publication contains either an article or an advertisement in which Tom Gola is featured.

### Separated Materials note

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

### Box

<table>
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<td>1954</td>
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<td>1954-1955</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Scope and Content

This series consists of newspaper clippings that were collected by the Gola family between 1950 and 2010. The majority of the clippings document his basketball and political careers. Most are from Philadelphia area local and national newspapers, but there are also some clippings from a local Polish newspaper.

### Box

Clippings, 1950-1955
CORRESPONDENCE

Clippings, 1956-1973

Clippings, 1975-2010

Clippings, undated

Clippings, undated

CORRESPONDENCE

Scope and Content

The bulk of this series consists of get-well cards sent to Gola after he was injured in a fall in 2003. There is also a small amount of other correspondence.

Box

Correspondence, 2000s and undated

Get-well cards

AWARDS

Scope and Content

This series consists of official certificates of award bestowed on Gola by organizations such as the Philadelphia Basketball Writers Association, the NBA, and the Basketball Hall of Fame.

Separated Materials note
**AWARDS**

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<td>&quot;The Greater St. John's&quot; 8th Annual Men of St. John's Father and Son Banquet, May 15, 1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>51st Annual Dinner of the Philadelphia Sports Writers' Association January 31, 1955</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, March 1955</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, February 1955</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, January 1955</td>
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<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, January 1953</td>
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<td>The Men of Clibeden Certificate of Merit, January 1952</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, March 1952</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit, January 1952</td>
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<td>9th Annual Enshrinement Dinner, Basketball Hall of Fame, April 26, 1976</td>
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<td>9th Annual National Basketball Hall of Fame, Honorees</td>
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<td>La Salle College Alumni Basketball Club 2nd Annual Awards Dinner, March 6, 1970</td>
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<td>12 Annual NBA East-West All Star Luncheon, January 16, 1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania Convention Center Dedication, June 26, 1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>52nd Annual Dinner Philadelphia Sports Writers' Association, January 30, 1956</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**Scope and Content**

This series consists of photographs from throughout Tom Gola’s life. The earliest photographs are from the late 1940s, Gola’s middle school years. The bulk of the photos cover his basketball career and range from the early 1950s to the late 1960s. There are also photos of his family and personal life that range from the 1950s to the 2000s.

**Arrangement note**

Many of these photographs were accessioned as part of photo albums. These albums were deconstructed and the photographs were foldered in the original order in which they appeared in the albums. It is indicated in the folder title whether the photographs originally appeared in an album.
The other photographs in this series were not accessioned in bound albums and were separated into two categories, basketball career and personal life.

**Separated Materials note**

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Box</th>
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<tr>
<td>Photo album, 1940s-1960s</td>
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<td>Photo album, 1950s-1960s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo album, 1953-1954</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo album, late 1950s-early 1960s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nestlé Quik advertisement, 1965</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball career, 1950s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal life, 1960s-2000s</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PLANNERS**

**Scope and Content**

This series consists of Tom Gola's daily planners for the years 1976-1986.
SCRAPBOOKS

Scope and Content

This series consists of scrapbooks constructed by Tom and Caroline Gola. They contain photos, newspapers clippings and, at times, other ephemera. Some scrapbooks are focused solely on Gola’s basketball career while others document a combination of his basketball and political careers and his personal life.

Separated Materials note

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

Box

Basketball Clippings, 1950s

Scope and Content

Scrapbook contains news clippings regarding Gola's college and professional basketball career from 1952 to early 1960's.

Basketball Clippings, 1958-1961

Scope and Content

Contents refer to Tom Gola's professional basketball career with the Philadelphia Warriors between 1958 and 1961.
Basketball and Personal Clippings, 1955-1956

**Scope and Content**

Contains news clippings regarding Gola's collegiate basketball career as well as clippings from his personal life (engagement announcement etc.) between 1955 and 1956. Also includes Spanish language news clippings.

Basketball Clippings and Photos, 1954-2005

**Scope and Content**

Containing clippings and photos of Tom Gola's collegiate and professional career of the 1950s, it also features an article from 2005 and a print of a painting.

Basketball Clippings and Photos, 1952-1955

**Scope and Content**

Contains clippings of Tom Gola's collegiate basketball career from 1952-1955. Also contains a photo of Eddy Arnold and a few photographs comparing Tom Gola to St. Louis Cardinals baseball player Stan Musial.

Basketball, Political, and Personal Clippings, 1952-1967

**Scope and Content**

Contains photos and news clippings of Gola's collegiate and professional basketball career. Also contains clippings of personal events (wedding) and political events (first election).

Basketball and Personal Clippings, 1952-1965
### Scope and Content

Contains photos and news clippings of Tom Gola's collegiate and professional basketball career, as well as clippings about his personal life (birth of first child, photos of Tom and son).

---

La Salle College Nominates Thomas J. Gola for the 1980 NCAA Silver Anniversary Award

### Scope and Content

Contains La Salle's Nomination of Tom Gola for the 1980 NCAA Silver Anniversary Award. Contains lists of political, athletic and professional achievements.

---

Basketball Coach Clippings and Photos, 1968

### Scope and Content

Contains photos and clippings about Gola being hired as La Salle Basketball head coach in 1968.

---

Personal and Political Photos and Correspondence, 1955-2005

### Scope and Content

Contains personal photographs of Tom Gola's wedding as well as photos of Gola during his political career. Also contains a letter congratulating Gola on membership to Shula's 48 Oz Club.

---

Basketball Clippings, 1955

### Scope and Content
Contains clippings from the 1955 College All-Stars vs. Harlem Globetrotters tour of which Tom Gola was a part.

Basketball Photos (scans), 1950

Scope and Content

Contains photos of Gola's 1950 La Salle High School Basketball Team. Also contains a letter of congratulations from the members of that team to Tom.

Personal and Basketball Photos, 1930s-1970s

Scope and Content

Personal photos of Tom and Caroline, including childhood photos and basketball photos.

Basketball Clippings, 1955

Scope and Content

Contains clippings pertaining to Gola's collegiate basketball career, 1954-1955.

Basketball, Politics, and Coaching Clippings, 1954-1968

Scope and Content

Contains clippings from Gola's collegiate, professional and coaching basketball careers, as well as some clippings from Gola's political career. Also contains personal photos and correspondence.

Basketball Clippings, 1952-1955
Scope and Content

Contains clippings from Gola's collegiate basketball career between 1952 and 1955.

Basketball Clippings, 1950-1955

Scope and Content

Contains clippings from Gola's high school and collegiate basketball career between 1950 and 1955.

Basketball Clippings, 1953-1954

Scope and Content

Contains clippings from Gola's collegiate (with some professional) basketball career between 1953 and 1954. Also contains a few personal photos and correspondence.

Political and Basketball Clippings, 1966-1970

Scope and Content

Contains clippings from Gola's political career between 1966-1970 as well as some clippings about his career coaching at La Salle.

BOOKS

Scope and Content

This series is made up of textbooks used by Tom Gola in his middle school, high school, and college years. These books contain notes and doodles by Tom. Also included in this series are books on various topics which include either personal inscriptions or mention Gola within the text.
### Separated Materials note

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

### OVERSIZED MATERIALS

#### Scope and Content

The Oversized Materials series contains items that pertain to other series but were separated because of their size. Included are political memorabilia, oversized photographs, and oversized scrapbooks, apparel, and objects.

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
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