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Guide to the Thomas J. Gola Papers UA.02.002

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La Salle University Archives

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Philadelphia, PA, 19141

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Summary Information

Repository: La Salle University Archives

Title: Thomas J. Gola Papers

Identifier: UA.02.002

Date: 1947-2014

Physical Description: 19.8 Linear feet

Language of English

Materials:

Container Information: Box 7 (mixed materials), Box 6 (mixed materials), Box 9 (mixed materials), Box 8 (mixed materials), Box 12 (mixed materials), Box 10 (mixed materials), Box 14 (mixed materials), Box 13 (mixed materials), Box 1 (mixed materials), Box 11 (mixed materials), Box 3 (mixed materials), Box 2 (mixed materials), Box 5 (mixed materials), Box 4 (mixed materials)

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 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.

Preferred Citation

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

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

La Salle University Archives

1900 West Olney Avenue
Philadelphia, PA, 19141

archives@lasalle.edu

<https://library.lasalle.edu/university-archives/>

Controlled Access Headings

- 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.

Grade school

Box 1 (mixed materials)

High school

Box 1 (mixed materials)

La Salle College

Box 1 (mixed materials)

Wedding invitation

Box 1 (mixed materials)

Tom Gola monument

Box 1 (mixed materials)

Event programs

Box 1 (mixed materials)

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.

POLITICAL CAREER, 1970-2004

Box 1 (mixed materials)

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.

Basketball programs,, 1951-1955

Box 2 (mixed materials)

Basketball programs,, 1956

Box 2 (mixed materials)

Basketball programs,, 1957-1962

Box 2 (mixed materials)

Basketball programs,, 1963-1966

Box 2 (mixed materials)

Basketball programs,, 1998

Box 2 (mixed materials)

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.

PUBLICATIONS, 1953

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1953-1954

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1954

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1954-1955

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1955

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1955

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1955-1956

Box 3 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1956-1957

Box 4 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1957-1960

Box 4 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1960-1963

Box 4 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1966-1968

Box 4 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1969

Box 4 (mixed materials)

PUBLICATIONS, 1984-2004

Box 4 (mixed materials)

CLIPPINGS**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.

Clippings,, 1950-1955

Box 5 (mixed materials)

Clippings,, 1956-1973

Box 5 (mixed materials)

Clippings,, 1975-2010

Box 5 (mixed materials)

Clippings,, undated

Box 5 (mixed materials)

Clippings,, undated

Box 5 (mixed materials)

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.

Correspondence,, 2000s and undated

Box 6 (mixed materials)

Get-well cards

Box 6-7 (mixed materials)

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

Please also see the Oversized Materials series.

"The Greater St. John's" 8th Annual Men of St. John's Father and Son Banquet,, May 15, 1954

Box 8 (mixed materials)

51st Annual Dinner of the Philadelphia Sports Writers' Association, January 31, 1955

Box 8 (mixed materials)

Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, March 1955

Box 8 (mixed materials)

Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, February 1955

Box 8 (mixed materials)

Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, January 1955

Box 8 (mixed materials)

Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, March 1954	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, February 1954	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, January 1954	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, March 1953	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, February 1953	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, January 1953	Box 8 (mixed materials)
The Men of Clibeden Certificate of Merit,, January 1952	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, March 1952	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Philadelphia Basketball Writers Award Certificate of Merit,, January 1952	Box 8 (mixed materials)
9th Annual Enshrinement Dinner, Basketball Hall of Fame,, April 26, 1976	Box 8 (mixed materials)
9th Annual National Basketball Hall of Fame, Honorees	Box 8 (mixed materials)
La Salle College Alumni Basketball Club 2nd Annual Awards Dinner,, March 6, 1970	Box 8 (mixed materials)
12 Annual NBA East-West All Star Luncheon,, January 16, 1962	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Pennsylvania Convention Center Dedication,, June 26, 1993	Box 8 (mixed materials)
52nd Annual Dinner Philadelphia Sports Writers' Association,, January 30, 1956	Box 8 (mixed materials)

Senate of Pennsylvania Congratulations, 1976	Box 8 (mixed materials)
George Bush Presidential Library Certificate of Service, 2003	Box 8 (mixed materials)
NBA Retired Players Association All Star Sunday Brunch, 2002	Box 8 (mixed materials)
House of Representatives Citation, 2005	Box 8 (mixed materials)
Senate Northeast Philadelphia Hall of Fame Congratulations, 2009	Box 8 (mixed materials)

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.

Photo album,, 1940s-1960s	Box 9 (mixed materials)
Photo album,, 1950s-1960s	Box 9 (mixed materials)
Photo album,, 1953-1954	Box 9 (mixed materials)
Photo album,, late 1950s-early 1960s	Box 9 (mixed materials)
Nestlé Quik advertisement,, 1965	Box 9 (mixed materials)

Basketball career,, 1950s-1990s

Box 9 (mixed materials)

Personal life,, 1960s-2000s

Box 9 (mixed materials)

PLANNERS

Scope and Content

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

1976-1979

Box 10 (mixed materials)

1981-1986

Box 11 (mixed materials)

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.

Basketball Clippings,, 1950s

Box 12 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

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

Language of Materials: English

Basketball Clippings,, 1958-1961

Box 12 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

Contents refer to Tom Gola's professional basketball career with the Philadelphia Warriors between 1958 and 1961.

Language of Materials: English

Basketball and Personal Clippings,, 1955-1956

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 12 (mixed materials)

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

Box 13 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

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

Basketball Clippings,, 1955

Box 13 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

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

Basketball, Politics, and Coaching Clippings,, 1954-1968

Box 13 (mixed materials)

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

Box 13 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

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

Basketball Clippings,, 1950-1955

Box 13 (mixed materials)

Scope and Content

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

Basketball Clippings,, 1953-1954

Box 13 (mixed materials)

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

Box 13 (mixed materials)

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

Box 14 (mixed materials)

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.

Awards and photographs

Box Oversized 1 (mixed materials)

Scrapbooks

Box Oversized 2-3 (mixed materials)

Apparel

Box Oversized 4-5 (mixed materials)

Blanket

Box Oversized 6 (mixed materials)

Books and objects

Box Oversized 8 (mixed materials)

Publications

Box Oversized 9 (mixed materials)