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^JFK Researcher Wills 300,000 Papers To Hood College<

^AP Photo moving Thursday, July 30<

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FREDERICK, Md. (AP) _ Harold Weisberg moves slowly these days down the wooden stairs of his cellar where more than 50 file cabinets are stuffed with government documents on President Kennedy's assassination.

Like a proud father, Weisberg, 79, shuffles around the rows of tan, black and Army green file cabinets titled with names from the past: Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Inside each drawer, Weisberg has neatly catalogued more than 300,000 pages of information on the assassinations of Kennedy and King that he has managed to wrest from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, the Warren Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency and other government agencies.

Weisberg used the documents to write seven books _ six on the 1963 assassination of Kennedy and the other on the 1968 slaying of King, a charismatic civil rights leader. But with health problems and advancing age, Weisberg recently decided to will his life's work to Hood College where his papers are to be computerized and accessible to future generations.

"This is one subject that is never going to die," Weisberg said, sitting in a living room chair with his legs, weakened by phlebitis, propped up on an ottoman. "People have collections of the nutty stuff _ the conspiracy theories _ but not the facts."

Unlike other researchers, Weisberg did not focus on who killed Kennedy. He concentrated instead on the facts and evidence in the slaying and what the government did and did not do to investigate the murder. Four of his books are titled "Whitewash," and have a series of subtitles to distinguish them.

Obtaining documentation on the government's investigation into the Kennedy assassination did not come easily. Weisberg took the U.S. government to court about a dozen times between 1970 and 1980, using the Freedom of Information Act to amass the documents. A 1975 lawsuit lasted about 10 years.

The paper trail he retrieved includes hundreds of pages of verbatim transcripts from executive sessions of the Warren Commission, which concluded that Oswald acted alone in killing the president from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository building in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

"I think Esquire magazine had it right when they said Weisberg was the 'dean of assassination researchers,'" said Jerry Ginocchio, an associate professor of sociology at Wofford College in Spartansburg, S.C. who has delved into the Kennedy assassination for 10 years.

"I think he is the most credible and the most logical of all the researchers. I have read a lot of the conspiracy theories ... and they play fast and loose with the evidence."

Weisberg was born in Philadelphia and raised in Wilmington, Del. After attending the University of Delaware, he worked for the Wilmington (Del.) Morning News and later wrote feature stories for the Sunday supplement of the Philadelphia Ledger.

Weisberg, who also worked as a Senate committee investigator, served in the Army during World War II, first in the military police and later as an

analyst for the Office of Strategic Services, a forerunner to the CIA.

He became embroiled in the Kennedy assassination investigation soon after the president's death, and later was an investigator for James Earl Ray, who was accused of killing King.

Weisberg is still receiving boxes of information at his home, situated on about five acres of quiet, wooded land in Frederick County. In May, he received a box full of FBI and CIA files _ 16 inches thick _ that include information about Oswald.

The postal carrier also brings him book orders. He and his 80-year-old wife, Lillian, retrieve the books stacked in boxes in the basement and Weisberg packages them for shipment while watching the evening television news.

He still gets calls from reporters around the world and receives as many as a dozen letters a day. He personally answers the letters that pose serious questions, but has given up responding to those asking him about various conspiracy theories.

While he doesn't propose to know who killed Kennedy and shuns discussion of the conspiracies, Weisberg did say: "I'm certain he (Oswald) didn't do it alone, and the evidence is not all that persuasive that Oswald killed anybody."

He refuses to watch the current TV shows about the assassination, and says Oliver Stone's recent movie misleads the public more than anything since the Warren Commission report. He spends his time working on another book about the doctors who performed the autopsy on Kennedy.

Meanwhile, some of Weisberg's Warren Commission documents and various other files have been moved to the Hood library. The rest of the Weisberg collection will follow when he dies.

Charles Kuhn, library director, said the plan is to computerize the documents on compact discs that could be easily accessed by the public. The library plans to store the original documents in safekeeping.

"It's his life's work. It's a large amount of data that doesn't exist in this form anywhere else," Kuhn said. "It's an entire life of going after FBI files _ against the odds. It took a lot of lawsuits and a lot of turmoil to get this together. It's really a historical record."

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