

**Title:** Milwaukee County War Memorial Center Collection

**Reference Code:** Mss-0801

**Inclusive Dates:** 1944 – ongoing

**Location:** BV, Sh. 001

**Abstract:** After World War II, various community groups wanted to honor Milwaukee servicemen who perished in the conflict by establishing a memorial that would also serve the living. A non-profit organization was formed to direct the effort. It was proposed to build three facilities: a visual arts center, performing arts center and a community center. Fundraising commenced in 1947 but raised \$2.2 million of a \$5 million goal. As a result, the decision was made to delay the performing arts center and build a veterans and visual arts center.

A heated debate over the location of the facility delayed construction until 1953 when the Milwaukee County Board approved the use of the lakefront park for the memorial. Renowned architect Eero Saarinen designed the structure, which was dedicated on Veterans Day in 1957. Since then, the Center has not only honored Milwaukee's war dead but also served as the home of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**Scope and Content:** The collection consists of material related to the construction of the War Memorial, including fund raising brochures, dedication ceremony programs and articles of incorporation. In addition, there are reports, event brochures and other ephemera. Box 1 consists of documents on the proposed sites for the War Memorial. The collection also has documents on the MacArthur Statue in Veterans Park, seven binders of personal scrapbooks created by Joe Oetz, and specifics of the building of the War Memorial Center.

**Notes:** The collection was processed by Josephine Newcomb on 5/18/22.

**Access and Use:** No restrictions

**Language:** English

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