

Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections  
University of South Carolina Libraries

**Mary Willingham Archive, 2002-2015**  
**Collection: Mss. 2017:8**

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## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Mary Willingham Archive, 2002-2015

**Collection Number:** Mss. 2017:8

**Creator:** Mary Willingham

**Extent:** 5 boxes

## Administrative Information

**Provenance:** Gift, 2017

**Processed by:** Adam Crosby

**Access Restrictions:** Open to research

**Preferred Citation:** [Item], Mary Willingham Archive, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina Libraries

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## Scope and Contents Note

Mary Willingham was a Learning Specialist and Academic Advisor who worked for the Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). In her work with student athletes, she became aware that some of these students were receiving credit for classes in certain departments that did not require attendance or follow any academic structure. These classes were termed “paper classes” because the student was only required to submit one paper for credit. Many coaches and faculty were aware of the existence of these “paper classes” and would steer struggling student athletes into these courses to help them maintain academic eligibility.

After testifying in an investigation that ultimately led to no action on the part of UNC, Willingham took her discoveries to the media, becoming the catalyst that launched a large-scale investigation into UNC-CH’s academic practices in regard to

student athletes. Willingham experienced criticism and retaliation from university employees and ultimately left the university.

Together with Jay Smith, Willingham wrote *Cheated: the UNC Scandal, the Education of Athletes, and the Future of Big-Time College Sports*, a book about the development of “paper classes” as well as her experiences with the university.

The collection contains correspondence (primarily email), student grade reports and academic work from Willingham’s time at UNC. These documents were used in her research when writing *Cheated*. The collection also contains documents related to Willingham’s appointment at UNC and the retaliation she experienced in both her professional and educational pursuits at the university.

Willingham’s documents contain much information that is sensitive in nature, dealing with students’ grades, classes, and their time in the university. In compliance with FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) some of the documents have been redacted by covering personally identifiable information and making a photocopy of the document. These redacted photocopies are available in the publicly accessible collection.

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## Related Materials

This collection is part of the College Sport Collection in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

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## Contents

## Box

Series I: Biographical	1
Series II: <i>Cheated</i>	2
Series III: Research Material	3-5

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## Container List

### Series I: Biographical

#### Box Folder

1	1	Business cards given to Mary Willingham, no date
1	2	Card expressing gratitude for donation to College of Arts and Sciences, no date

**Box    Folder**

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 3  | Card from Lois and T. J. Anderson, November 1, 2014  |
| 1 | 4  | Contract to retain counsel, January 10, 2014   |
| 1 | 5  | Giraffe Heroes Project certificate, letter, and business card, September 22, 2014                              |
| 1 | 6  | Information regarding deposit of materials to the archive, October 26, 2016 - February 15, 2017                |
| 1 | 7  | Information regarding grievance filed by Mary Willingham, November 1, 2013 - August 11, 2014, no date          |
| 1 | 8  | Information regarding study to screen for ADD/LD in student athletes, May 14, 2008 - January 16, 2014, no date |
| 1 | 9  | Notes for speech, no date  |
| 1 | 10 | Plagiarism allegation letters and inquiry draft, September 8, 2014 - October 22, 2014, no date                 |
| 1 | 11 | Robert Maynard Hutchins Award luncheon programs, April 18, 2013  |
| 1 | 12 | Robert Maynard Hutchins Award plaque, April 18, 2013   |
| 1 | 13 | Ticket to Grassroots Event with First Lady Michelle Obama, October 16, 2012                                    |
| 1 | 14 | William C. Friday memorial program and ticket, October 17, 2012  |

## **Series II: *Cheated***

*Cheated* is a book written by Mary Willingham and Jay M. Smith, a professor of history at the University of North Carolina. This series includes a copy of the book and material related to its creation.

### **Box   Folder**

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 2 | 15 | Autographed, 2015   |
| 2 | 16 | Introduction typescript draft with edits and revisions, no date |
| 2 | 17 | Outline with typescript draft of chapter three, no date         |
| 2 | 18 | Typescript with suggested edits, September 12, 2014             |

## **Series III: Research Material**

This series is comprised of material used by Mary Willingham in her search to learn more about the “paper classes” at the University of North Carolina that were being offered to student athletes in order to help them maintain eligibility. These materials were originally kept in binders organized by Willingham and the original order of these materials has been maintained. Also included is material related to the fallout of Willingham’s research.

In compliance with FERPA(the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), any information that would identify a student has been redacted.

### **Box   Folder**

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 3 | 19    | ACT, SAT, GPA, and Academic Standing data (photocopy to redact information), no date  |
| 3 | 20    | Bailey & Dixon, L.L.P. instructions for witnesses, no date  |
| 3 | 21-22 | Cadwalader investigation into Afro-American Studies courses at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (photocopy), October 16, 2014 (2 folders) |

**Box Folder**

**Box Folder**

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 3 | 23 | Card from Jane Schlegel inviting Willingham to participate in forum,<br>July 21, 2014                            |
| 3 | 24 | CD-R with photos of panel after viewing of <i>Schooled: the Price of<br/>College Sports</i> documentary, no date |
| 3 | 25 | CD-R with video of a presentation by Mary Willingham, no date  |
| 3 | 26 | Copy of thank you note to Steve from Mary Willingham, January 1,<br>2013   |
| 3 | 27 | “Current Trends in Admissions, Recruitment and Retention,” no date   |
| 3 | 28 | Expressions of support for Mary Willingham, May 6, 2014 - July 17,<br>2014                                       |
| 3 | 29 | Letter from Benjamin E. Shiftan, May 6, 2016   |
| 3 | 30 | Letter from Joseph Hebb, July 12, 2016   |
| 3 | 31 | Minutes from Faculty Athletics Committee meeting (photocopy to redact<br>information), October 8, 2013           |
| 3 | 32 | News articles regarding academic scandal, November 17, 2012 - April<br>30, 2014, no date                         |
| 4 | 33 | Print-out of email exchange between Mary Willingham and Bubba<br>Cunningham, April 23-24, 2013                   |

4	34	Print-out of email exchange between Mary Willingham and Stephen Botsford, February 20-21, 2014
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**Box Folder**

4	35-36	Printed copies of emails regarding student athlete classes (student identifying information redacted), February 15, 2002 - November 9, 2009 (2 folders)
5	37	Research and notes on the Black Student Movement at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, June 26, 2013, no date
5	38	SAT and ACT scores with UNC GPA (no names), no date
5	39	“A Tale of Two Scandals (updated May 2014)” by Bob Kennel, April 2011 - May 2014
5	40	Written response regarding academic needs of student athletes, no date
5	41	Written testimony court record print-out, February 20, 2014
5	42	Written testimony drafts with notes and revisions, July 9, 2014, no date

**Sub-Series A: Academic Records**

These are records that Willingham pulled of students’ grades in regular classes vs the paper classes. In compliance with FERPA(the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), any information that could identify the student has been redacted.

**Box Folder**

5	43	Single student record (photocopy to redact information), no date
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5      44-45 Student academic records (photocopies to redact identifying information), January 9, 2013 - September 10, 2013, no date (2 folders)