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WRCA Announces Creation of Dennis Underwood Colorado River Collection

An historic collection of reports, letters and significant documents detailing and honoring nearly 20 years of work along the Colorado River by the late Dennis B. Underwood, esteemed Western water expert and former commissioner of the federal Bureau of Reclamation, will be collected and maintained under a new partnership announced today by the Water Resources Center Archives (WRCA).

WRCA will join the Bureau, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the California Department of Water Resources to assemble, preserve, catalog and provide public access to the "Dennis Underwood Colorado River Collection." Underwood, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation from 1989 to 1993 and WRCA Advisory Board member, passed away in November 2005, just months after being named Metropolitan's chief executive officer and general manager.

WRCA Director Linda Vida said the archives center will strive for comprehensive coverage of relevant Colorado River documents published since 1996, particularly those pertaining to the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). WRCA also will collect selected documents that record Underwood's work on the Colorado River since 1988.

Underwood, who served as a member of WRCA's Advisory Board from 2000 to 2005, worked extensively on Colorado River issues throughout his storied career and grew to be an innovative, respected leader in the water community. As a WRCA Board member, his priority was to preserve materials related to the Colorado River and to ensure the accessibility of those materials.

In spring 2005, Underwood spearheaded an effort to expand WRCA's collection of such materials and increase funding for cataloging. Specifically, he facilitated a grant of \$20,000 from two regional offices of the Bureau of Reclamation to fund the hiring of a part-time cataloger to focus on cataloging Colorado River documents.

"Dennis wanted to ensure that copies of key Bureau documents related to the Colorado River and other significant California water projects would be sent to WRCA to create a permanent repository that would be available to the public. With this partnership, they will be," Vida said.

The Collection will be housed at WRCA, located on the UC Berkeley campus, and available to the general public. To build the Collection, WRCA will solicit materials for the Collection from state and federal agencies, water districts, and other entities involved in the history of the Colorado River. This will create a comprehensive collection of material.

About the Water Resources Center Archive

The Water Resources Center Archives collects, preserves and provides access to historical and contemporary water-related materials that support the instructional and research programs of the University of California and the needs of the people of the State. WRCA serves students, faculty, and staff of the University of California as well as hydrologists, engineers, historians, lawyers, scientists, and the general public--anyone with an interest or stake in water issues.