



*Preserving the History  
and Heritage  
of our Community*

## **Marco Island Historical Society, Inc.**

### **Code of Ethics**

#### **Introduction and Guiding Principles**

The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS), founded in 1994, is dedicated to discovery, research, acquisition, and preservation of the multi-faceted history of the Marco Island-Goodland region to share with future generations.

The Code of Ethics affirms our policies of ethical conduct for the directors, staff, and volunteers of the Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS). The foundation of our Code of Ethics supports the core values of the MIHS and addresses the basic standards of our business as well as our personal conduct.

The following principles guide us:

- Honesty and candor in all our activities;
- Avoidance of conflicts of interests between personal interests of the Board and Staff, and the interests of the MIHS;
- Understanding and acknowledging that information obtained in the course of business at the MIHS is confidential;
- Acting with integrity in all that is done at the MIHS; and
- Maintaining the high reputation of the MIHS in all that is done by the Board and Staff.

#### **Section I. Governance**

The Board of Directors of the MIHS holds the ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the MIHS. As such, it serves the public interest as it relates to the MIHS and is accountable to the public as well as to the institution. In most cases, the Board acts as the ultimate legal entity for the MIHS and is responsible for making and maintaining its general policies, standards, condition, and operational continuity. MIHS Directors must



be loyal to the purpose of the MIHS and must understand and respect the basic documents that provide for its establishment, character, and governance.

Each Director should devote time and attention to the affairs of the MIHS and ensure that the MIHS and its governing board act in accordance with the basic documents and with applicable state and federal laws. Directors must ensure that no policies or activities jeopardize the basic nonprofit status of the MIHS or reflect unfavorably upon it as an institution devoted to public service.

Directors should not attempt to act in their individual capacities. All actions should be taken as a board, committee, or subcommittee, or otherwise in conformance with the bylaws or applicable resolutions. Directors with special areas of interest within the MIHS should understand that advocacy for those interests should be advanced only within the framework of the MIHS' interests as a whole.

Directors should maintain MIHS information in confidence when it concerns the administration or activities of the MIHS and when it is not generally available to the public. This does not preclude public disclosure of information that is properly in the public domain, or information that should be released in fulfilling the MIHS accountability to the public.

A vital responsibility of the Board concerns the MIHS' chief executive officer. The selection of that executive and the continuing monitoring of his or her activities are primary Board responsibilities that cannot be delegated and must be diligently and thoughtfully fulfilled.

## **Section II. Management Policy**

### *A. Fundraising*

- The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) seeks and relies on donations, grants, and other forms of outside financial support to achieve its mission.
- The MIHS adheres to professional standards and best practices in seeking and accepting support from these sources.
- The MIHS seeks to protect its reputation and integrity, while regarding donors and sponsors with the highest level of respect and establishing relationships characterized by forthrightness and honesty.
- The MIHS provides truthful and relevant information in soliciting outside financial support.



- The MIHS respects the interests and privacy concerns of donors and sponsors and maintains confidentiality as appropriate and legally permissible.
- The MIHS provides responsible stewardship and recognition of contributions and ensures that they are used in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

#### *B. Revenue Generating Activity*

- The MIHS engages in revenue-generating activities that create unrestricted financial resources to support its mission.
- The MIHS adheres to professional standards and best practices in conducting its revenue-generating activities.
- The MIHS revenue-generating activities must be consistent with the organization's mission, culture, and governance.
- The MIHS Gift Store shall function in a manner that advances the MIHS mission with all ethical principles that govern it.
- MIHS business partners must be selected solely on their merits, in the best interest of the MIHS, and without regard to non-business-related considerations.

#### *C. Programs*

- Programs support the mission and public trust responsibilities of the MIHS.
- Programs are accessible and encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with the MIHS mission and resources.
- Programs respect pluralistic values, traditions, and concerns.
- Programs promote the public good.

#### *D. Personnel Practices, Professionalism, and Equal Opportunity*

- It is the MIHS policy to provide equal employment opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability unrelated to the ability to perform a job with or without reasonable accommodation.



- All materials or items developed, written, designed, drawn, painted, constructed, or installed by MIHS employees or volunteers while carrying out their responsibilities to the MIHS are the property of the MIHS, with the MIHS having all the rights to the property.
- The MIHS staff must always be dedicated to the high standards and discipline of their profession and respect the expertise of their colleagues. While they are experts in their fields, they are part of a team effort and must cooperate supportively.
- While the MIHS requires members of its staff to devote their working day to performing their job responsibilities, it recognizes that it may be in the best interests for staff to participate in certain outside activities. However, it is the MIHS policy that, during normal working hours, staff shall not engage in “outside employment.”
- Approval of outside employment or activity is effective only until revoked and may be revoked by the MIHS at any time.

### **Section III. Staff Members & Volunteers**

- A. Staff members and Volunteers (which includes committee members and board members) play an active and vital role in the success of the MIHS. It is important that they be supportive of each other and committed to the vision, mission, and values of MIHS.
- B. Staff members and Volunteers should not take any action that may compromise the reputation, relationships, and/or integrity of the MIHS.
- C. Staff members and Volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard the MIHS collections, funds, programs, reputation, and privileged information.
- D. Access to the MIHS’s information and activities is a privilege.
- E. Staff members should strive to perform at the highest professional standards.
- F. Volunteers must work toward the betterment of the institution and not for personal gain, other than the gratification and enrichment inherent in MIHS participation.
- G. Staff members and Volunteers should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, loans, or other things of value that accrue to them from other parties in connection



with carrying out duties for the MIHS. Exceptions to this practice may be authorized in writing by the chief executive officer and/or board of directors only when deemed appropriate to do so.

H. MIHS is committed to the highest ethical principles in all relationships with members, guests, the community, strategic business partners and suppliers.

I. Staff members and Volunteers who are authorized to invest/spend MIHS funds should do so with impartiality, honesty, and with regard only to the best interests of the MIHS.

J. No Staff member or Volunteer may disclose or use information not otherwise available to the public gained by reason of MIHS activities, for any personal benefit.

K. Should a Staff member or Volunteer choose to volunteer for an outside community group, public service organization, or museum and she/he could appear to be acting in an official capacity as a member of the MIHS, disclosure is required to avoid possible misrepresentation.

## **Section IV. The Collections**

### *A. Collections Management Policy*

MIHS adopted a Collections Management Policy on November 21, 2017. The Collections Management Policy was revised and approved by MIHS on March 19, 2019. The current and applicable Collections Management Policy is incorporated herein in its entirety and must guide the management and physical care of the MIHS collections.

### *B. Acquisition, Accession, Deaccession, and Disposal*

Acquisition, accession, deaccession, and disposal activities must conform to the MIHS mission and public trust responsibilities. Objects for possible acquisition, accession, deaccession, or disposal will be proposed to the relevant authority for approval. The advice and recommendation of collections professionals regarding these objects, including practical aspects such as storage, physical needs, transportation logistics, object stability, and legal aspects must play an important role in decision making.

Archaeological, ethnographic, or biological (including plants, animals, soils, etc.) objects will be acquired only when they have been collected, exported, possessed, and imported in full compliance with applicable international treaties, the laws and regulations of the country or countries of origin, of the Federal Government of the United



States, and of the individual states within the United States. Reference is made to Acquisitions section of the Collections Management Policy.

Prior to accessioning an object, staff are responsible for compiling documentation of the decision to acquire the object, the document transferring title of an object to the MIHS, and the receipt of delivery.

Before disposing of an object, the MIHS' legal right to dispose of the object should be verified in accordance with the Collections Management Policy and appropriate staff informed of any restrictions on its disposition. Once proper approval of a deaccession has been granted, staff must facilitate transparency by updating the object records to document the date of deaccession, the authority for it, and the method of disposal. Disposal of collections through sale or trade is solely for the advancement of the historical society's mission. Any funds collected from disposal through sale of the object will be restricted in accordance with the Collections Management Policy, and in no event will they be used for anything other than the acquisition or direct care of collections. All object records, including deaccession information, must be retained in perpetuity after the disposal of the physical objects.

### *C. Appraisals*

Donations are tax deductible to the extent of the law; however, the Museum cannot appraise items for a private owner. Donors, therefore, are expected to get independent appraisals for the objects they are donating. MIHS will provide a letter of acknowledgement indicating the appraised value for tax purposes.

### *D. Accessibility*

The public, in whose trust the collections are maintained, must have safe and reasonable access to the collections on a nondiscriminatory basis. A primary responsibility of the MIHS is to safeguard its collections; therefore, it may regulate access to them as set forth in the Collections Management Policy and laws guiding privacy and the freedom of information.

The judgment and recommendation of staff members, as well as the Collections Management Policy, regarding the use of the collections must be given utmost consideration. In formulating their recommendations, staff must let their judgment be guided by two important objectives: (1) the continued physical integrity and safety of the specimen or collection, and (2) scholarly or educational purposes. Cultural considerations should also be acknowledged and accommodated (e.g., those related to

Indigenous peoples, traditional knowledge, and objects of religious or cultural significance that are different from the staff member's own personal culture).

For loan requests, staff members must ascertain that the borrowing institution's facilities are acceptable for caring for the loan.

#### *E. Truth in Presentation*

It is the responsibility of staff, volunteers, and visitors to use collections for the capture and dissemination of knowledge. Every professional is obligated to exercise intellectual honesty and objectivity in the presentation of objects or specimens and related data. At different times, the MIHS may address a variety of social, political, artistic, or scientific issues. Any of these can be appropriate if approached objectively and without prejudice. Museum professionals must strive to ensure that exhibits and collections records are historically and scientifically honest and objective and make every effort to avoid perpetuating myths or stereotypes. Given that historical understanding, scientific research, and cultural attitudes are constantly evolving, staff are also responsible for updating exhibits and collections records as available information changes over time. Records of past understanding, however, should be kept as part of the history of the object and its evolving place in the institution's collection.

#### *F. Records Management*

Collections professionals must maintain records that are complete, accurate, orderly, and accessible. Records must be stored physically and electronically in an archival, secure, and technologically sound manner to ensure their preservation and regulate their access. Collections professionals, through the records they manage, are accountable for the objects in the custody of their institutions (e.g., objects in temporary custody, on loan, and in MIHS collections) and must be able to provide current information on each object, its location, and status. In the case of objects collected prior to the hiring of MIHS professional museum staff, staff should actively work towards generating this information.

It is the responsibility of staff to protect the institution and the objects in its custody against risks by using valid documents such as deed of gift, loan, sale, and custody forms and receipts; and by complying with applicable laws and regulations governing such activities as the rights and reproduction of objects.



### *G. Restitution and Repatriation*

Restitution and repatriation both refer to the return of objects or human remains to the proper owner(s). Restitution is the broader term for any object wrongfully or illicitly taken from its country of origin that may include antiquities, colonial appropriations, or works transferred during the Nazi era. Repatriation is used to refer to human remains and objects that are determined to be sacred, ceremonial, or cultural patrimony; objects culturally affiliated with an Indigenous community outside the United States that are not subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA); and objects that were otherwise illegally exported from their country of origin.

Restitution and repatriation may be driven by legal action or initiated voluntarily by an institution to uphold ethical standards. The MIHS will not knowingly collect or receive on loan an object that is unethically or illegally obtained. Upon becoming aware of an object in MIHS custody for which restitution, repatriation, or any other competing claims of ownership may apply, appropriate staff will be notified, and further action will be pursued openly, seriously, responsively, and with respect for the dignity of all parties involved.

### *H. Human Remains and Culturally Sensitive Objects*

While MIHS does not actively or intentionally collect or possess human remains, MIHS recognizes the unique and special nature of human remains and sacred or culturally significant objects should be recognized in all decisions concerning such objects, as detailed in the Collections Management Policy. Ongoing acquisitions of individually or culturally sensitive materials shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Curatorial Staff according to issues of ownership, intellectual property rights, access, privacy, and cultural restraints. The results of this consideration shall be shared with the Chief Executive Officer and ultimately, with the Board of Directors. The exhibition, interpretation, publication, access, and care of such materials shall be done with tact, sensitivity, and respect for human dignity and, when possible, in consultation with the communities from which the materials originated.

### *I. Personal Collecting*

A MIHS board member, committee member, employee, or volunteer may not compete with the historical society in the acquisition of collections objects within the MIHS' collecting scope or in any personal collecting activity. This policy excludes inherited objects and the purchase of books and materials relating to the history of Marco





Island and its surrounding communities that are readily available on the open market. In addition, no one affiliated with the MIHS may use this affiliation to promote his/her own collecting activities.

A MIHS board member, committee member, employee, or volunteer and their immediate family may not purchase materials deaccessioned from the institution's collections, even at public auctions, or trade materials from their personal collection for materials from the historical society's collections.

A MIHS board member, committee member, employee, or volunteer may not store personal collections on MIHS or Marco Island Historical Museum (MIHM) property or cause research on personal collections to be done on historical society time, unless the research is in conjunction with a MIHS-sponsored project.

#### *J. Ownership of Scholarly Materials*

Publications, lectures, manuscripts, and all other materials prepared by an employee within the scope of employment at the MIHS and/or any scholarly works produced as a result of financial support from the MIHS are the sole property of the historical society except as authorized in writing by the Chief Executive Officer. Employees must also first confer with the Chief Executive Officer before agreeing to author, as a private individual, any publication that substantially draws upon materials prepared in the scope of employment with the historical society.

### **Section IV. Conflict of Interest**

The standard of behavior at the Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) is that all staff, volunteers, committee members and board members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the MIHS on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of the MIHS's decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers, staff, committee members and board members. Upon or before election, hiring, or appointment, the applicant will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and will be updated as appropriate.



During meetings or activities of the MIHS, the staff, volunteer, committee member or board member will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where they (including their personal business or other nonprofit affiliations), their family, and/or their significant other, employer, or close associates will receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, they understand that they will be asked to leave the meeting for the discussion and will not be permitted to vote on the question.

MIHS staff, volunteers, committee members and board members understand that this policy is meant to supplement good judgment and will respect its spirit as well as its wording.



FORM OF  
INITIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Marco Island Historical Society, Inc. Code of Ethics (the “Code”) and that I understand it. I further acknowledge that I am responsible for understanding and complying with the policies set forth in the Code during my tenure as defined in the Code.

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name and Title*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed form to the Chief Executive Officer, Patricia Rutledge, within one week from the date of your receipt of a request to review these documents. Thank you!



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I also acknowledge that I have fully complied with the terms and provisions of the Code during the period of time since the most recent Initial or Annual Acknowledgement provided by me.

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name and Title*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed form to the Chief Executive Officer, Patricia Rutledge, within one week from the date of your receipt of a request to review these documents. Thank you!

