



# News Release

Contact:  
**Jason Parent**  
Development and  
College Relations Office  
33 Edgemont Drive  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
Phone: (207) 768-2808  
Fax: (207) 760-1101  
jparent@nmcc.edu

August 14, 2009  
NR09089

## NMCC retiree donates collection of newspapers chronicling major moments in U.S. history to College

*Aroostook County* - A few weeks ago, 93-year-old Harold Quass of Presque Isle was cleaning out a closet in his Maple Street home when he came across a cardboard box with a typewritten index card neatly labeled “keepsake newspapers.” It was a box packaged by his late wife Dorothy before her death in January 2002, and enclosed was a collection of two dozen well-preserved newspapers from key moments in U.S. history dating back to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

“I didn’t know she (Dorothy) was collecting these newspapers and certainly didn’t know the box was in the back corner of the closet all these years. When I first came across it, I thought ‘there is some junk that should go to the dump’, but when I looked at the label and realized there was something of value inside, I knew I couldn’t throw it away,” said Quass.

Instead, Quass knew immediately where the papers belonged – Northern Maine Community College – a place where they would be preserved and available for future generations to appreciate, and a place he knew well and thought highly of from his more than two decades as a faculty member in the automotive technology program. In fact, Quass was the second-ever instructor hired by then Northeastern Maine Vocational Institute when the college first opened its doors to students in 1963.

“I’ve got a great love for this place and it was the first place I thought of when I realized what I had found,” said Quass in presenting the collection to Gail Roy, who serves as NMCC’s assistant dean of learning resources. “The events chronicled in these newspapers in my lifetime unfolded while I was here at the college. I remember a student coming into my classroom to tell me that the President (Kennedy) had been shot.”

Indeed the collection of papers, which extend from November 23, 1963 through November 7, 1984, begin with *Bangor Daily News* editions covering the assassination of Kennedy and the immediate aftermath, including the BDN edition featuring the famous photo of Jack Ruby shooting Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald on the cover.

In addition to the original and full editions of the *Bangor Daily News*, some of the other papers in the collection chronicling the major news events are the *Maine Sunday Telegram* and the *Boston Sunday Globe*. Included are the June 6, 7, 8 and 9, 1968 editions which detail the shooting death of Robert F. Kennedy and the events that followed; the June 21, 1969 special edition of the *BDN* previewing the Apollo Moon Landing, which was remembered this summer on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event; July, August and September 1974 papers reporting the impeachment and resignation of President Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford becoming the nation's 38<sup>th</sup> President, as well as his pardon of Nixon; and the January 21, 1981 edition with the front-page headline "Hostages Freed", at the end of the Iran Hostage crisis, which culminated at the same time President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated.

"NMCC is delighted to receive this donation for our library's archives. The newspapers will be used by students conducting research, put on display in the library for special events throughout the year, and will be available for use by anyone in the community wishing to review them," said Roy. "The historical information and photos in these newspapers are valuable research resources. We are very grateful that Mr. Quass thought of contacting the college and appreciate his generous donation."

Quass, who served on the faculty at NMCC between 1963 and 1985, is a native of Independence, Iowa and first came to Presque Isle in January of 1942, when he joined the military and was assigned to the Presque Isle Army Air Base. At that time, Quass recalls, the base was being built and other than the runways and a few buildings there wasn't much to the site.

"I was assigned to snowplowing duty to keep the runways clear of snow," said Quass. "It wasn't long before I let folks know about my work as a mechanic in Iowa, and I was reassigned to the vehicle maintenance shop."

Quass spent three years at the PIAAB and during that time met and married the former Dorothy King of Presque Isle. After brief stints in Gander, Newfoundland, where he was assigned prior to being discharged from the military, and a short period with Dorothy back in his home state of Iowa, the couple permanently located in Presque Isle.

After working as a mechanic for just over 15 years, Quass was hired by Keith Thompson, the very first principal (now president) of NMCC to teach as an auto mechanics instructor. It was during his 22 years at the college that his wife Dorothy, unbeknownst to him, was collecting the keepsake newspapers.

"She was the kind of person who would hold on to things. She never threw anything away," said Quass of his late wife, who served as Presque Isle's city clerk for a number of years. "I am pleased that the students at NMCC and the local community will benefit from her foresight."

#####



*Harold Quass (left) of Presque Isle, a retiree of Northern Maine Community College, presents a collection of two dozen keepsake newspapers dating back to 1963 to Gail Roy, NMCC assistant dean of learning resources. The newspapers were saved by Quass' late wife Dorothy and recently discovered in a closet in Mr. Quass' home.*