



## NMSU Library News Release

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### **NMSU Library Reception Honors Gift of Tombaugh Papers**

The family of the late astronomer Clyde W. Tombaugh recently donated Dr. Tombaugh's papers to the Rio Grande Historical Collections of the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Library. The Tombaugh family will be honored at a reception on Tuesday, March 13, 2001, at 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. on the fourth floor east of NMSU's Branson Library. The public is invited. The date of the reception reflects the date, March 13, 1930, when the official announcement of Dr. Tombaugh's discovery of the planet Pluto was made.

Patricia Tombaugh, Dr. Tombaugh's widow, and their children Annette and Alden Tombaugh, endorsed the gift. Mrs. Tombaugh stated that she and Dr. Tombaugh's family are "pleased to have the papers with the Rio Grande Historical Collections. We feel that this is the appropriate place for Clyde's papers. He had a very close association with NMSU lasting over forty years."

The gift ensures that Tombaugh's papers will be preserved and made available for research use. Former NMSU astronomer Herb Beebe has recognized for many years the importance of Tombaugh's papers, and he played a vital role in facilitating the donation. Said Dr. Beebe, "It is of profound importance that these documents join those of other scientists available in other repositories throughout the country."

Clyde Tombaugh's lengthy and distinguished career included research on natural earth satellites and on Mars, as well as his discovery of Pluto. Included among his papers are materials concerning Tombaugh's early career at Lowell Observatory and White Sands Missile Range. The papers are significant not only for their documentation of Tombaugh himself, but also for evidence of the history of astronomy, physics and related sciences. Of special interest is Tombaugh's correspondence with prominent astronomers and space scientists, including Wernher von Braun and Carl Sagan, and with the directors of observatories, including Lick and Lowell.

For more information, please contact Molly Molloy at 505-646-6931.

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