A positive working relationship between archivist and donor helps ensure the smooth transition of materials from public office to archives. Modern Political Collections recently worked with the Washington, D.C., offices of South Carolina Congressman Mark Sanford and Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley to coordinate the transfers of their materials to the Library.

Mark Sanford was elected to South Carolina’s First District seat in the United States House of Representatives as part of the historic “class of 1994.” Central to his campaign was a commitment to limit his time in Congress and serve no more than three terms; keeping his promise, he retired at the expiration of his third term in January 2001.

In 1999 Sanford pledged his papers to Modern Political Collections and since then Library staff members have made several trips to Washington to meet with Sanford and key members of his staff to discuss the kinds of records the Library hoped to acquire at his term’s end. The Library also provided Sanford’s staff with a brochure, “Closing a Congressional Office: A Guide to the Disposition of Official Papers and Records,” as an aid to determining which records have long-term historical value. As a result of this partnership, the Congressman’s staff sent periodic shipments of material to the Library during the year 2000 and in January of 2001. The staff of Modern Political Collections inventoried the material as it was received, and this inventory now forms the basis of the collection’s finding aid. The Sanford Collection stands at more than 110 linear feet and comprises legislative topical files, constituent mail, travel and scheduling files, clippings, campaign materials, and personal records. Formats include textual files, audio and videotapes, and photographs.

A similar procedure was followed regarding the papers of Richard W. Riley as he closed out his distinguished eight-year tenure as Secretary of Education in January 2001. In this case, the materials received were additions to an established Library collection that includes records from Riley’s service in the South Carolina General Assembly and as governor of South Carolina, as well as campaign and other personal papers.

The Riley and Sanford Collections are a key part of the holdings of Modern Political Collections. When processed, they certainly will prove to be important resources for researchers in years to come.