

MICHIGAN TRADITIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

Professional Ethics in Folklife Research

In keeping with Michigan State University's concern for the rights of human subjects in university-related research, all persons working on projects associated with the Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MTAP), Michigan State University Museum, will abide by the following principles (drawn from the American Folklore Society "Statement of Ethics"):

1. The researchers' primary responsibility is to those they study. When there is a conflict of interest, these individuals must come first. Researchers must strive to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare of their informants and to honor the dignity and privacy of those studied.
2. The aims of the MTAP project should be communicated as well as possible to the informant.
3. Participation in all MTAP projects must be voluntary. Interviewees must be told in advance of any interviewing or information collection that their participation is voluntary and that they may choose not to participate or not to provide certain information without penalty.
4. Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studied must be safeguarded. A MTAP consent form must be used for all photographic documentation and tape recording.
5. Informants have the right to remain anonymous (see relevant clause in MTAP consent form).
6. There shall be no exploitation of individual informants for personal gain.
7. The anticipated consequences of the research should be communicated as fully as possible to the individuals and groups likely to be affected. This is particularly the case where informants might be in this country illegally or where they engage in traditions which involve illegal materials or practices.

TO BE SIGNED BY RESEARCHER:

I have read the above statement and agree to abide by it to the best of my ability.

Signature

Date

