

Anonymity Protocol
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Donors, and mostly development officers!, do not understand or appreciate what requesting complete anonymity really means. No thank you letters, no giving societies, no annual endowment reports, no recognition – *ever*. Therefore, I recommend development of a tiered approach to anonymity that can be shared with donors so that they can fully understand the ramifications of various levels of anonymity.

I suggest three levels of anonymity that can only be granted by the office responsible for record creation and gift entry. Of course, all development officers and staff members may work with the donor in determining which option should be assigned. Care should be taken when speaking with the donor to make sure that the correct coding, if any, is selected. We also need to make sure that donors understand the possible permanent implication of selecting any of these options.

In order of the least to most commonly used anonymity codes, available options should be:

1. Completely Anonymous. This should be rarely used – if used at all. The gift is not entered on a person’s record but, instead, on a generic record. Only the donor, the records office, and perhaps the development officer working directly with the donor know who actually made the gift. The only indications of the gift on any report generated using development data is that a gift was made by an “Anonymous Alumni,” “Anonymous Faculty/Staff,” etc.
2. Code the actual donor record as an “Anonymous Record.” With this option gifts and pledges continue to be entered on the record of an individual; however, their record is flagged as anonymous. These donors do not want **any** publicity regarding their donations, or any mention of their gifts outside the community. They usually do not want personal thank you letters, other than the standard gift acknowledgement sent by the records office. They do not want to see their names on honor rolls, wall plaques, etc. This coding remains permanent until otherwise requested by the donor. With such a request, the donor is informed that removing the code will result in all prior, and future, gifts being made available for publicity (unless individual gifts are coded as anonymous – see below). When accessing the record via the development system, you should be alerted of the anonymous status. Standard gift reports generated by the records office do not show the donor’s name or address – just the fact that a gift was made by someone requesting anonymity. Individuals performing their own “drops” or data extracts **must** be aware of, and understand, the significance of this record status.
3. Anonymous Gift. Occasionally a donor will make a single gift that they do not want acknowledged outside the community. We have found that this typically happens when someone does not want their spouse, or someone being honored, to know they made the gift. On standard gift reports generated through the record office, you will be able to identify who made the gift but the report will also indicate that the gift was made anonymously. If considering some type of publicity for the gift, the staff member should communicate with the donor to determine what might be appropriate.