A Message from the President

With the opening of the Fondren Library Center described in this newsletter, SMU begins an exciting new era for its libraries. This is a time to reaffirm the central role of the libraries in the life of the University. For this reason, it is especially fitting that the Fondren Library Center is the first project to result from The Campaign for SMU: A Time to Lead.

Today’s library is a place of both innovation and inspiration. Advancing information technology continues to broaden access to information in new ways. One of our major priorities is to continue providing the latest technological tools for our libraries. At the same time, the beauty of the Fondren Library Center reminds us that libraries traditionally are places of reflection and serenity.

Comprehensive and well-preserved collections provide the resources for students, faculty, and others to find answers to their research questions. By keeping our collections up to date with new scholarly contributions, we broaden the base of knowledge for future seekers of information. And as we find new ways to use emerging technologies to share this information, we combine the traditional with the new to serve scholars of all ages.

The excellence of the SMU Libraries has been achieved through the dedication and generosity of donors, faculty, and staff since the University’s founding. It is most encouraging to know that there are many who will work with us to carry on that legacy with renewed commitment. Thank you.

R. Gerald Turner
SMU President

Fondren Library Center expands services and capabilities

Students and faculty alike have responded enthusiastically to the benefits of the new Fondren Library Center that opened November 13, 1998.

As the first completed construction project resulting from gifts made to the Campaign for SMU, the Fondren Library Center entrance joins and expands SMU’s two largest libraries, Fondren Library and the Science and Engineering Library.

The 7,100-square foot building features a centralized book check-out and reserve area on the first floor. In the large study area on the second floor, students can plug in their laptops and gather in the study rooms to complete group projects. Movement between the libraries and collections is easier, and the Science and Engineering Library enjoys the same long operating hours as Fondren Library.

The building is topped by the Selecman Tower, a cupola providing the entrance with natural light. Engraved below the tower are the words spoken by Charles C. Selecman, the third president of SMU, when the original Fondren Library opened in 1940: “The library is the heart of a university.”

Selecman’s grandson, Charles E. Selecman (’51), echoed his grandfather’s sentiments at the November dedication. Sue Trammell Whitfield (’54) also spoke about her family’s continuous support for the libraries over three generations.

“The relationship between SMU and the Fondren, Trammell, and Whitfield families extends nearly 80 years,” said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. “Today their generosity allows the realization of an idea that has been discussed on campus for 30 years and provides more efficient service to our students and faculty.”

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The project was made possible by a 1997 gift of $1.5 million from the Fondren Foundation of Houston. Additional gifts were received from Charles E. and Barbara A. Selecm an, the Hoblitzelle Foundation of Dallas, Jackie ('62, '82) and John ('56, '58) McElhaney, Taverner C. Lupton III ('79), Henry S. Miller, Jr. ('34) and Carmen Miller Michael ('45), Vernell ('79) and Ronald ('79) Guest, Helen B. and Jimmy C. ('54) Payton, Carole S. and James F. ('56) Young, Eugene Straus Charitable Trust, Martha Hess Whitehead ('62) and Anna Katherine Whitehead ('98), Nancy and Bob Gibson and the families of Kathleen and Robert ('81, '82) Gibson, Linda ('78) and Kenneth ('72, '75) Stephens, the SMU Senior Class of 1999, and Friends of the SMU Libraries.

Then the grandchildren were asked to line up, the girls by MoMo’s picture and the boys by Granddad’s. And as I recall, at the right time, we dutifully pulled the cords and the portraits were revealed. There was a pause and the brief program ended. This began our long history at SMU, which I am very proud to celebrate today. And thank you for celebrating with us.

And now it is my pleasure to present to Taylor Martin this CD symbolizing the information technology that makes Fondren Library resources more accessible to students and alumni. My hope is that the center not only advances your studies today, but that through the traditional and technological resources housed here, it will beckon you and others to come back here. Thank you so much.”

Charles E. Selecm an

“Sixty years ago I was standing on this spot, only then it was a field of black dirt. My grandfather and grandmother cleaned me up and brought me up here to be part of the groundbreaking for Fondren Library. My, how proud my grandfather was to see the start of a great library building for Southern Methodist University. As he said, ’The library is the heart of a university.’

“I wish I had a couple of hours to share with you all of my recollections of literally growing up with SMU.

“Some of my first recollections of SMU are going to the football games with my grandfather, sitting in the president’s box, which was the first row, 50-yard line of Ow nby Stadium. I could barely see over the team benches, but I can clearly remember seeing the action of those really ’big boys’ banging into each other, which usually ended up with a mountain of players stacked up in front of me.

“Also, I recall so well spending the night with my grandparents in the President’s house across Hillcrest listening to the clanging of the streetcars and my grandfather’s stories of growing up on the farm outside of St. Joseph, Missouri.

“I guess my grandfather, Charles C. Selecm an, the third president of SMU, was known as a strict disciplinarian and administrator. To me, he was a loving and humorous man, who tried to teach me Christian values, integrity, honesty, and hard work.

“My father, Frank Selecm an, was a devoted doctor and surgeon, who loved SMU as much as his father did. We all considered SMU to be ’our University’

“I sincerely hope that they are looking down on us today with great pride. As for looking down on me, I am absolutely sure they are surprised!

“So here we are 60 years later ’where it never rains till after midnight, by 8 a.m. the morning fog has flown, don’t let it be forgot,’ that there is a spot for happy ever aftering that is known as Southern Methodist University.”
Friends of the SMU Libraries programs range from literary travel to taxes

The 1998-99 activities of the Friends of the SMU Libraries ranged from a literary tour of New England to a program and discussion on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Fall activities began with an introduction to the new Central University Librarian, Gillian M. McCombs. In October, a group of SMU Friends traveled to New England for a literary tour visiting the homes of authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott, Edith Wharton, and Herman Melville. Because of the success of this tour, another literary tour to New York and Connecticut is scheduled for October 1999.

Other fall highlights included a discussion led by Jeff West, executive director of the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealy Plaza, on the ownership of history and how it relates to the Kennedy assassination.

The Friends celebrated the holiday season with music by the Merrie Ole Players and a discussion by Glenn Mitchell, reporter for National Public Radio and KERA 90.1 radio. Mitchell is known for his annual radio program, "Tune In to Christmas," which highlights little known details on the history, traditions, and music of the holiday.

A favorite February program was the Book Road Show at which rare or unique books were appraised by local experts. Rare books also provided the theme for the opening reception of the Meadows Museum exhibit, "Faith in Conflict: Devotional Images and Forbidden Books from Spain’s Counter Reformation," co-sponsored by the Friends of the SMU Libraries and the Meadows Museum. The month's events concluded with a tax workshop presented by an IRS agent who gave tips on taxes and how to find tax information on the Internet.

Texas Independence Day was celebrated when Ron Tyler, director of the Texas State Historical Association, spoke on "The Art of the War with Mexico" at the March program.

The year's activities concluded with the annual dinner meeting on April 14. Richard Halsey, national coordinator for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Task Force, discussed lobbying for libraries. Halsey is the husband of Central University Librarian Gillian McCombs.

The Friends of the SMU Libraries, originally founded in 1970 as Colophon, is an organization dedicated to promoting the resources, services, and operations of the ten University libraries. The Friends provide opportunities for book lovers to become acquainted with the many resources of the SMU libraries through a series of programs each year. During its history, the organization has provided more than $300,000 for the libraries to fund materials, library services, and special projects. It also has built a substantial endowment. Members at the associate ($60 per year) and higher levels may have borrowing privileges at the Central University and Bridwell Libraries. For more information or to join the Friends of the SMU Libraries, call 214-768-3225.

New collection highlights women composers

Scholars and performers will be interested in the collection of music by women composers recently purchased for the Hamon Arts Library. The purchase was made possible thanks to a grant from the Friends of the SMU Libraries.


Lavishly illustrated sheet music included in the collection will also provide a rich resource for those interested in sociology and gender studies.
Interview with Gillian McCombs

Central University Librarian Gillian M. McCombs joined SMU in June of 1998. Following is an interview by Curt Holleman, deputy director of the Central University Libraries, which highlights McCombs’ background as well as her goals and vision for the future.

What attracted you to your position at SMU?

I wanted to be the director of libraries at an institution that valued the traditional and special collections of a liberal arts curriculum, yet at the same time maintained a commitment to technological advancement. Many institutions that I had looked at as possible choices were either very much behind the technology eight ball, or were so far ahead that they were actively questioning why they needed to buy any books at all. It seemed to me that SMU might be the institution with the blend of technology and tradition that I was looking for.

Tell us a little about your background:

Why did you become a librarian?

I always think of myself as being born – not with a silver spoon in my mouth, but a silver book. I knew I was going to be a librarian from my earliest days. My grandfather was the chief librarian at the Dewsbury Public Library in Yorkshire, England, where I grew up. I spent my earliest years walking to the library every Saturday morning with my father. I did not play house when I was a little girl, but library instead. My only modification to this long-range goal was that around the age of 16, I decided that I would be a university librarian. I went straight from getting my Bachelor of Arts in French and European Literature at the University of Warwick, to library school in Leeds and then on to my professional career.

What were the most significant events in your career before coming to SMU?

The first would have to be receiving the grant from the New York State Council on the Arts to put on an exhibition and series of programs using the materials from the Historical Children’s Collection at the University of Albany, State University of New York. This was the first grant I had applied for, and getting it funded was a wonderful emotional and professional boost. The collection itself is now fully endowed in its own special collections room.

My second significant incident has to be earning my Master’s in public administration at the University at Albany. I learned so much in the areas of human relations, management, statistics, economics, American politics, labor/management relations, and just plain old humility. In fact, I credit that degree with giving me many of the skills that I use today in SMU’s Central University Libraries.

What is your sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the Central University Libraries?

I believe that one of Central University Libraries’ greatest assets has to be the staff, who, for not very much money, work long and hard to serve their users. This is one of the first things that faculty tell me, before going on at great length to tell me how much more money we need to spend on library materials. Which brings me to the main weakness in the Central University Libraries - our level of acquisitions funding. The SMU Libraries as a whole represent the third largest library system in the state behind the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M. There are some wonderful and unique collections here. But our current collection has lost ground steadily since the middle 1980s. The high rate of inflation in serial subscriptions, particularly in the sciences, heavily impacts our ability to support the teaching and research goals of our faculty and students. Overcoming this handicap and regaining our lost momentum while still breaking new ground – particularly in the area of electronic information and services – will be a real challenge.

Do you see significant changes in higher education in the next 10 to 15 years? Do you think that there will be less emphasis on the college campus and more on distance education?

All of the above, which is why it will be difficult to acquire the resources to do it all. Teaching and learning have become more collaborative. There are many cognitive learning styles, and the library needs to provide for all of these. Learning and teaching need to be free of artificial space constraints.

“THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING AND CHALLENGING TIMES TO BE A LIBRARIAN.”

Gillian M. McCombs
Everyone wants to be connected. This is evidenced by the need for students and faculty to access information from their homes, residence halls, and sabbatical locations. We need to ensure that the information resources they use are available at all of these locations. Distance learning has been around a long time—current technology just allows us to do it better.

**What advice would you give a young person seeking a career in librarianship today?**

Go for it! This is one of the most exciting and challenging times to be a librarian. This is the Information Age. Information is our commodity; it is our business. Technology allows us to do a lot more and to add a lot of value to the services we have been accustomed to offering. I feel very lucky to be in the profession at this time and hope that I will have the opportunity to work with the library schools at the University of North Texas and Texas Woman’s University to convey this message.

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**Staff profile: Beth Walker, user education librarian**

Beth Walker’s goal as user education librarian at Fondren Library is to help her clients become comfortable with information. This includes preparing handouts on how to research a particular assignment, and answering myriad questions that library users ask her when they take her turn at the reference desk.

Walker is one of ten Central University librarians who design and teach library research classes. The process begins with consultation with a faculty member to understand the details and expectations of a particular student research assignment. The librarian then creates a bibliography of books and online resources, selects appropriate databases, and schedules a time for the class to meet in one of the library classrooms. “From how to use a database to evaluating the Internet, we tailor the class to whatever a professor wants and students need,” she says.

When English Department faculty member Kathi Watts brought her first-year science fiction Rhetoric class to Fondren Library Center to begin research for an assignment, Walker prepared a bibliography of books that would help them get started. She showed them how to search databases for articles and which databases would be the most helpful. She then showed them how to use this information to select a topic and focus their paper. After students began researching their papers, Walker remained available to assist the class.

“We prefer to see students during their first year at SMU so they are familiar with the library throughout their University experience,” she says. “We teach them concepts that they will use in their other classes. By the time they graduate, we want them to be comfortable finding, interpreting, and using information.”

A native of Indianapolis, Walker’s library career began at age 16 when she started working in the public library. She continued library work at Indiana University as a student assistant at a residence hall library. As a graduate student, she was manager of a residence hall library. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Library Science from Indiana University, Bloomington.

As a librarian, Walker prefers the university setting. “I like the clientele, I like the questions, I like the challenges the SMU community brings to us,” she says.

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**A joining: Librarians wed in Fondren Library Center**

The new Fondren Library Center entrance, which joins the Fondren Library and the Science and Engineering Library, was the location where two librarians were joined in holy matrimony.

The bride, former SMU Business Information Center Librarian Margaret Warner, and the groom, Steve Smith, a librarian with AMIGOS, a library network service company, were married December 17 by SMU Chaplain Will Finnin, who recommended the site.

“When I first saw the space in the new building and listened to the music wafting from the domed cupola, I thought it would be a fine setting for many different events,” Finnin said. “When Margaret asked about my performing the service, it immediately came to mind that it would be appropriate due to the couple’s backgrounds.”

The bride and groom thought the location was most appropriate because they met in a library. “When the chaplain suggested it, we thought it was a wonderful place, and it would be especially meaningful to us,” said Smith.

The couple now resides in Germany.

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*Pictured at right: User Education Librarian Beth Walker*
World War II Memorial Plaza dedicated

Whether on their way to classes or to a library study session, those who pass the SMU World War II Memorial Plaza can pause for a moment of thought.

Located just west of the Fondren Library Center, the memorial plaza was dedicated March 22 to honor the 134 SMU students who died during World War II. The plaza was a gift to the University from Henry S. Miller Jr. ('34) and Carmen Miller Michael ('45) in memory of their brother, Lt. Jack Miller, a 1941 graduate of SMU who was killed in action at Guadalcanal in 1942.

Poetry collection honors favorite instructor


A faculty member for seven years, McNally graduated from SMU in 1985 with an English degree. He received the Juniper Prize in 1992 for his first book, Child in Amber. The collection includes his work and much of his personal library, as well as contemporary poetry and poetry journals.

"His poetry is softly surreal and allegorical," says English Professor Jack Myers. "It is as if he were painting with pastel words."

McNally’s brilliance was complemented by his poetic arrangement. "He was in love with language. There are very few people who enjoy the play of language the way Stephen did," says Dennis Foster, chair of the English Department. Former students praise McNally for his subtle wit and nurturing classroom manner.

A number of books of poetry have been purchased by the library fund established in his memory. Donors include Richard and Terri McNally, John McNally, Annie-Laurie Cooper ('82), Dianna Totten, Carolyn Channell, Ada Cooper, Mary Ann Shattles ('88), John T. Wheeler, Dennis Foster, Lee Gibson, Jo Goyne ('87), Rebecca Innocent, Bruce Levy, Beth Newman, Nina Schwartz, Jill Bagwell, Diana Grumbles ('93), Pam Lange ('71), Beth LaRocca, and Bonnie Wheeler.

To contribute to the Stephen Paul McNally Collection of Contemporary Poetry please contact Curt Holleman, deputy director, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University, PO Box 750135, Dallas, TX 75275-0135, 214-768-2324.

The Island

When I was a child
The wind spoke to me and I heard it.
I thought everyone could.
I lived on an island
Unlike any other place.
Its trees were magical.
The stones which made up my floor
Gave off their own heat,
And the stars whirled in constellations
Understood by me alone.
That was a solitary kingdom.

But now as I see people pass me on the street,
As I watch my own feet move
Beneath the heavy overcoat which engulfs me,
I come to understand that I am still that child,
that I always have been and will be.
That the men I thought would be my brothers
Are simply noises
like the cawings of colorful birds,
And women the long breakers which collapse on the beach.

by Stephen McNally

Jack Miller, a first lieutenant in the 2nd Marine Raiders Battalion known as Carlson’s Raiders, was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for his extraordinary heroism in combat against Japanese forces while leading an attack at Guadalcanal on December 3, 1942. Miller died the following day from wounds he received. Because of the young lieutenant’s bravery, the U.S. Department of the Navy designated a destroyer escort vessel the U.S.S. Jack Miller, which was launched in January 1944.

The limestone memorial features a 40-foot curved bench wall, enclosing an area with a large live oak tree, ground cover, and seasonal plants. The plaza includes five bronze plaques: one dedicatory plaque mounted on a raised pedestal in the center and four plaques bearing the names of the SMU alumni who died during the war.

“We decided to establish this memorial, not just in Jack’s name, but for all alumni who lost their lives in World War II,” says Henry S. Miller Jr. “The movie ‘Saving Private Ryan,’ has made a lot of the younger generation realize what the World War II generation was like. I think it’s important we remember.”

For more information about Lt. Miller, the SMU World War II Memorial Plaza, or Fondren Library Center’s World War II materials, check the Web site at www.smu.edu/cul/memorial/memhome.htm.
Journal collection important to chemist’s research

On many Saturdays, SMU Associate Professor of Chemistry John Buynak may be found in the periodicals section of the University’s Science and Engineering Library. Buynak studies the library’s extensive collection of organic and medicinal chemistry journals to aid in his development of new, highly potent compounds that effectively treat penicillin-resistant infections.

“It’s incredibly important to know what’s been done, what’s been tried, what has worked, and what hasn’t worked,” he said.

The first line of resources available to researchers at the Science and Engineering Library is the periodical collection that contains the most current scientific information. Additional information is available through electronic journals that can be accessed through the Internet. For information beyond these resources, the library staff can tap into networks that link them with any library in the world, says Dev Bickston, director of the Science and Engineering Library.

“Through our library, John Buynak has access to the world’s scientific periodical resources,” says Bickston.

“The areas of organic chemistry, medicinal chemistry, and biochemistry are interwoven,” Buynak says. “The Science and Engineering Library has the best collection of scientific journals in these areas in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Researchers from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas frequently use the organic chemistry journal collection at SMU.”

Buynak’s latest research addresses the problem of penicillin-resistant bacteria. “Bacteria have developed a resistance enzyme that destroys penicillin, and the problem is worsening as the bacteria exchange and spread genetic information coding for this resistance,” said Buynak.

Penicillin, developed as a therapeutic drug in 1940, is one of the most widely used antibiotics in the world because it kills many of the common bacteria that infect humans. In recent years, however, penicillin-resistant bacteria have begun to evolve, making it more difficult to treat serious illnesses, including streptococcal infections, syphilis, diphtheria, and anthrax.

Buynak has developed four new classes of compounds, called beta-lactamase inhibitors, that can defeat resistant bacteria’s protective defenses without resulting in harmful side effects to humans. These compounds are then co-administered, with an antibiotic, to kill the resistant strains.

These inhibitors deactivate the bacterial enzyme beta-lactamase, which destroys penicillins and cephalosporins.

“We have more than a dozen compounds that are much better than anything on the market in terms of their ability to inhibit the isolated beta-lactamase enzymes,” Buynak says. “It’s now a matter of finding the compound which is best at penetrating the bacterial cell wall and which is most easily tolerated by the patient.”

Three of the new classes of compounds have been patented and a fourth has a patent pending.

New information retrieval system to debut June 1

Accessing online information in the libraries soon will be easier after the implementation of the new Endeavor Voyager information retrieval system. The Voyager system will replace the mainframe-based NOTIS software that drives the PONI information system for the University’s ten libraries.

NOTIS was designed more than twenty years ago and has remained a popular system among colleges and universities. Although NOTIS has been updated continuously, many of its components are now obsolete and the mainframe hardware required to run it is no longer affordable. Voyager is designed to run on UNIX-based workstation hardware, which will provide increased flexibility in data retrieval.

“NOTIS is relatively unchanged,” Systems Librarian Mary Queyrouze says. “Voyager is highly configurable, and we will have considerable flexibility about the look and feel as well as the function.”

Staff members from Information Technology Services and all the libraries have worked aggressively to bring the Voyager software online. Library staff members also have worked with representatives from Endeavor to convert SMU’s existing data to the Voyager system.

“We have teams working on the implementation issues, and other sites moving from NOTIS to Voyager have shared their experiences with us,” Queyrouze says. “Still, it continues to require hours of hard work involving numerous library and information technology services staff.”

Central University Librarian Gillian McCombs says the changeover to the new system will be well worth the effort.

“Voyager was designed for a world where the Internet and digital multimedia are routine aspects of life,” McCombs says. “Voyager will be pivotal in providing integrated access to print and digital materials for members of the SMU community wherever they need them. It should provide the libraries with a platform to incorporate new technological developments as they become feasible.”

For the most current information on the new system, check the Web site at www.smu.edu/libraries/system.
Access to library information available through e-mail

Two new electronic services have been created for Fondren Library Center users. Electronic reserve provides students increased access to reserve materials. Ask-a-Librarian enables faculty, students, and staff to use e-mail for specific questions relating to the library.

Electronic reserve allows convenient access to required reserve materials that must be used intensively for a short time or repeatedly throughout the term. Library staff members work with faculty to compile photocopies of journal articles, class notes, and sample course tests that are digitally scanned and placed on the Fondren Library Center Electronic Reserve Web site. To maintain adherence to copyright laws, access to reserve materials by e-mail is limited to the SMU community.

"Although this service does not replace traditional reserves, it extends the availability of the material beyond library hours and premises," says Carol Baker, director of Public Services.

The availability of librarians also is extended by the Ask-a-Librarian service. Through e-mail, questions can be directed to a librarian. Answers to questions such as "Where should I begin looking for information on this topic?" "I have looked in all the usual places, where else should I look?" or "Why can't I connect to this database from my home computer?" will be received within 24 hours. The service may be found on the Internet at www.smu.edu/cul/requestion.html.

Web Sites

"Ask-a-Librarian"
www.smu.edu/cul/requestion.html
Electronic Resources
www.smu.edu/cul/electronic_access/
General Libraries
www.smu.edu/libraries/
Voyager System Updates
www.smu.edu/libraries/system
World War II Materials
www.smu.edu/cul/memorial/memhome.htm