In the fall of 1970 Southern Methodist University celebrated its fifty-fifth anniversary. From a small college on a weed-choked prairie several miles north of downtown Dallas, it had developed into one of the major centers of learning in the state of Texas, with an outstanding faculty and a student body numbering close to 10,000.

The university's growth had been paralleled—had, in fact, been made possible—by the development of its libraries. The Bridwell Library, serving Perkins School of Theology, had recently added a wing, and under the leadership of Librarian Decherd Turner had begun acquiring the rare volumes and early examples of fine printing which would bring its collections national renown. A new four-story wing had just been added to Fondren Library, greatly expanding shelf space for the central library, as well as creating new reference and reading areas. The Underwood Law Library opened its doors that fall of 1970, providing law students for the first time with a spacious, modern facility.
With the libraries' physical plant so greatly improved, attention turned to the collections themselves. Through the fiscal inflation of the late 1960s, the cost of books and periodicals had escalated, and it was clear that the university's budget could not meet all the libraries' needs. The libraries needed friends. And because SMU represented such an important cultural and educational resource to the Dallas community, it seemed only logical to look to that community for support.

To this end, Provost Neil McFarland asked Professor Charles Ritcheson, who had served for several years as Chairman of the History Department, to accept appointment as Director of Library Advancement. As a historian specializing in British history, Ritcheson had conducted extensive research in libraries both here and abroad: Oxford's Bodley, the British Library in London, the Huntington, and others.

One of Dr. Ritcheson's first challenges was to assist in forming a Friends organization. He found an ally in Mrs. Charles N. (Elizabeth) Prothro, a member of the Board of Trustees as well as a generous donor to the university. Mrs. Prothro had helped found a Friends organization at her alma mater, Sweet Briar, and had quickly realized how valuable such a support group could be to an institutional library. Although Mrs. Prothro was unable to attend the organizational meeting of the SMU Friends group, she provided a copy of the Sweet Briar Friends' by-laws, to serve as a model for the SMU group, and she agreed to serve as Vice
President. During the next few years, she and her husband also continued to be leading benefactors of both Bridwell and Central University Libraries.

The founding meeting of the Friends of the SMU Libraries was held September 3, 1970, in Dr. Ritcheson's offices on the third floor of the Science Information Center. Present, in addition to Dr. Ritcheson, were Professor James Early of the English Department; Rabbi Levi Olan of Temple Emanu-El; Dallas businessman Charles G. Cullum; and Mrs. Eleanor Swank, secretary in the History Department who had been asked to provide staff support.

The founders were in agreement as to the purpose of the organization: "to provide opportunities through which Associates may become acquainted with each other and with the resources of the University library system; to share enthusiasm for learning, books, prints, and related materials; and to establish Southern Methodist University's libraries as centers of cultural activities enriching the whole community." They also selected a name for the group: "Colophon." A term referring to the graphic device by which printers marked their books, "Colophon" had been suggested to Drs. Ritcheson and Early by Decherd Turner. The founders also discussed the need for a symbol, or logo, for the organization and decided to ask students in one of the university's art classes to take on the project; eventually the students developed the logo which was used for the next twenty years.

Colophon was launched with remarkable speed as well as
success. Invitations to membership went out immediately, and only two weeks after the founding meeting, Colophon presented its first program. Held on September 17 in Fondren Library, the program coincided with an exhibition of the DeGolyer copy of The Nuremberg Chronicle and featured a film about the document. New officers were also announced at the meeting: Charles G. Cullum, President; Mrs. Charles Prothro, Vice-President; Dr. Charles Ritcheson, Executive Secretary-Treasurer; and Mrs. Downing Thomas, Recording Secretary. Mrs. Raymond Nasher and Lon Tinkle served as Program Co-Chairmen, and Mrs. Frederick Rowe and Mr. Robert Sparkman as Membership Co-Chairmen. Nine other community leaders agreed to serve on the Board of Directors.

Six other programs were held during Colophon's inaugural year. On November 19, Professor Lon Tinkle was honored with a reception in the DeGolyer Library and dinner at the Dallas Club, following publication of his biography of Mr. Everette DeGolyer, Sr., Mr. D. In December, fine books from the private collection of Mrs. Charles Prothro were displayed at Bridwell Library. William Stafford presented a poetry reading March 2, and Professor J. H. Plumb, of Cambridge University, lectured on Winston Churchill March 18. Through Board member Stanley Marcus, Colophon was able to honor Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson with a reception April 14, at which she autographed copies of her book A White House Diary, with profits donated to Colophon. The year ended with a reception May 5 honoring Mr. and Mrs. Eugene McDermott on their
presentation to Fondren Library of a copy of the first English translation of Erasmus’ *The Praise of Folly*. The gift was made as a tribute to Dr. Ritcheson’s leadership in founding and promoting the growth of Colophon.

As remarkable as the number and quality of programs offered by the fledgling organization was its success in attracting members: 159 memberships, reflecting 279 individuals for 1970-71. Colophon was also able, from dues and donations, to contribute $4,372 toward book acquisitions.

At the March Board meeting, Dr. Claude C. Albritton was chosen to replace Dr. Ritcheson as Executive Secretary of Colophon. The Board announced that Dr. Ritcheson would be leaving SMU in June to become distinguished Professor of History at the University of Southern California; from that post he would take a two year leave of absence to become Cultural Attache to Great Britain. Dr. Albritton, Professor of Geology and Dean of Libraries, brought strong and dedicated leadership to Colophon. As both scholar and administrator (Dean of Faculty, Dean of Arts and Science, Dean of the Graduate School), Dr. Albritton had always maintained that Libraries were at the core of a university's intellectual life. At that time Eleanor Swank transferred to Dr. Albritton's office on the first floor of the Science Information Center, to become treasurer and administrative assistant for the organization.

Membership in 1971-72 saw further increases, to 200,
representing 364 individuals. Colophon sponsored three public addresses by writers associated with the American Southwest, Paul Horgan, Harry Ransom, and William Polk. The Friends also sponsored four book exhibits, including selections from the Clampitt Texana collection and rare volumes purchased with Colophon funds.

The most significant legacy of Colophon's second year was the establishment of what became known as the "Colophon Moderns Collection." The Committee on Acquisitions, chaired by Rabbi Levi Olan, recommended that Colophon should adopt as a central project the identification and collecting of books published in 1950 and thereafter "which are judged to be definitive in establishing the contours of the spirit-soul-mind of man." (A concluding date of 1975 was subsequently established.) Because of the contemporary aspect of the project, Colophon should actively seek to locate the finest possible copies of the books selected, with efforts made to get the authors to inscribe them.

In only the second year of this project, Colophon was able to purchase two major collections, one rich in literature of the "Beat" movement, and the other a nearly complete run of the first 100 publications of the Black Sparrow Press, including presentation copies.

Although the committee originally foresaw the project lasting only two or three years, in fact it has continued to the present (1991). For twenty years Colophon has made annual contributions
to the acquisitions fund, the collection has been periodically evaluated, and new authors have been included. By 1991 the Colophon Moderns Collection numbered some 1,400 volumes and was unique in its theme and scope in the nation.

Mrs. Elizabeth Prothro served as President for the next two years, during which membership grew to 321, representing 535 individuals. Diverse programs included Jacob Zeitlin of Zeitlin & Van Brugge, Bookseller, of Los Angeles; Nayantara Sahgal, Indian novelist and political writer; novelist Caroline Gordon; and Dr. Robert S. Sparkman and Dr. Jesse E. Thompson, who presented "An Evening with Cabeza de Vaca." Colophon members also received special invitations to other public lectures and sponsored several book exhibitions on campus. Colophon contributed over $15,000 toward book acquisitions by the SMU libraries during these two years.

Mrs. James R. Pratt served as President from 1974-76, with Everett L. DeGolyer, Jr., as Vice-President. Programs featured Professor Pascal Covici, of the SMU English Department, who spoke on his associations with John Steinbeck; Jack Werner Stauffacher, a California book designer and printer; novelist Larry McMurtry; SMU History Professor Luis Martin, who spoke on the civilizing role of books and libraries in transferring European culture to the Spanish colonies of the New World; and Bridwell Librarian Decherd Turner, who provided a special tour of that library. Mr. and Mrs. Milam Wade hosted members in their home to view their
collection of early Americana, early Bibles, and English literary works published in the seventeenth century; much of this collection was subsequently donated to Bridwell Library.

Colophon also sponsored two out-of-town trips during this period. The first, April 30--May 2, 1975, was to the Nelson-Atkins museum and notable libraries in Kansas City during the exhibition of Chinese art from the People's Republic of China. The second, March 11-12, 1976, included tours of the new Houston Public Library, the Alley Theatre, and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

Another innovation during Joanne Pratt's presidency was the production of two Colophon Broadsheets. The first, published in 1974, described the Carter Taylor Library of Western Americana, a significant collection donated to SMU, comprising 1,000 monographs, periodicals, and manuscripts focusing on the history and literature of ranching, primarily in Texas and the Southwest. The second Broadsheet, designed by Colophon Recording Secretary Mrs. M. Sims Davidson, honored the Whitney and Vaida Stewart Montgomery Memorial Collection of Poetry, donated to SMU by the Poetry Society of Texas.

In 1974 the DeGolyer Foundation donated the outstanding Western library of the late E. L. DeGolyer, Sr., as well as his geological library, to SMU, along with an endowment which enabled the university to continue developing the DeGolyer collections. A major gift from the Leland Fikes Foundation allowed the
refurbishing of the "main reading room" in the original section of Fondren Library as a site for the DeGolyer Library.

Mrs. H. C. (Dorothy) Henderson, Jr. served as president during 1976-78. Programs featured printer Colin Franklin, Shakespeare collector William N. Stokes, Jr.; novelist Richard Condon; SMU Art History Professor Alessandra Comini; and English poet Stephen Spender. Under the leadership of Mrs. Henderson and Dr. Charles Tandy, Colophon members visited Austin in December, 1976, to view the exhibit, "Baudelaire to Beckett--A Century of French Art and Literature," at the University of Texas, as well as several libraries in the city. In October, 1977, members traveled to New Orleans to see the blockbuster exhibition of artifacts discovered in the tomb of Egyptian King Tutankhamun.

The November, 1977, meeting was held in the new Fikes Hall of Special Collections. At this meeting the Colophon Moderns Collection, which was now housed in the new facility, was officially presented to the University. Provost James Brooks accepted it on behalf of the SMU, and Colophon Broadsheet No. 3, designed by Decherd Turner as a brief interpretation of the collection, was distributed.

Membership continued to grow, with a total of 623 individuals represented by 1978. While maintaining its support for the Colophon Moderns Collection, the Friends also undertook a five-year commitment to an Art History Collection, to be housed in the Owen Arts Center; a total of $20,550 was eventually donated for
this project. Equally significant, through the goodwill engendered by the Friends organization, important collections were donated to the SMU libraries, including Stanley Marcus's fashion library and the papers of former Dallas Mayor and Congressman Earle Cabell.

In June 1978, Dr. Albritton announced his retirement as an active member of the faculty in order to devote more time to his writings and to serve as President of the Institute for the Study of Earth and Man. With his gentle humor, integrity, and appreciation of the libraries, Dr. Albritton had provided firm guidance during Colophon's formative years. Dr. Albritton had also encouraged the donation of many significant collections to the SMU libraries, as well as the contribution of funds by such generous friends as Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Jacobus and Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kahn. Dr. Albritton compiled the first "Guide to Special Collections," which documented the important resources available in the SMU libraries, many of them directly attributable to Colophon. Decherd Turner of Bridwell Library was nominated to serve as Executive Secretary, and the office of the Friends group was moved to the second floor of Fondren Library East. Eleanor Swank continued her duties as treasurer and administrative assistant for Colophon.

The strong link between Colophon and the SMU faculty was symbolized by the election of History Professor R. Hal Williams as president for 1978-79. The first annual book auction was held in
June, earning $2,386 for the SMU libraries.

Because Dr. Williams resigned due to increased academic responsibilities, the second year of his term as president, 1979-80, was filled by Mrs. Everett L. DeGolyer, Jr., who had been vice-president. Programs during the year emphasized conservation and the art of fine printing, with such speakers as Deborah Everts, Conservator of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York; David K. Stevens of the Eddington Bindery, Hungerford, England; Jacqueline Gilliam, Paper Conservator of the Fort Worth Art Museum; and Andrew Hoyem, San Francisco publisher. In October, 1979, Colophon members welcomed Robert Oram, the incoming Director of Central University Libraries. And in April they bid farewell to Decherd Turner on his departure to become Director of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

The second annual book auction was held in April, raising $3,355. Following the death of Marlene Chamness on April 12, Colophon was designated to receive gifts to the Marlene Chamness Book Fund totalling $20,000.

Colophon began its second decade in the fall of 1980 with Helen DeGolyer starting a two-year term as President. Programs again emphasized fine printing and book collecting, with lectures by Hans Schmoller of England; Dr. Charles Shattuck of the University of Illinois; and Robert Wilson of the Phoenix Book Shop in New York. Colophon members also journeyed to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth to view the Chinese Bronze exhibition. The
third annual book auction earned $5,593 for the libraries.

Robert Oram succeeded Decherd Turner as Executive Secretary in 1980, serving in that position until his retirement in 1989. Formerly Associate Director of Libraries at the University of Illinois, Oram had helped to found the Friends group there and had also founded a Friends organization at the Urbana Free Library. He brought a keen appreciation of the contributions a Friends group could make, both in financial support and in encouragement of the book arts. At SMU Oram was instrumental in protecting special collections budgets during a period of cutbacks. Under Oram's leadership, Colophon diversified its programs, maintaining the book arts element but also attracting a wider audience. With Eleanor Swank's retirement in 1980, he and his secretary, Betty Smith, were left with the daily administrative duties for two years until the university's budget permitted the creation of a Colophon staff liaison position, at three-quarters time. Jessie Sheshunoff filled this position for four years. When it was expanded to a full-time position, with responsibility for library development, in 1987, it was filled for a year by Sue Devine, then by Judy Searles.

Among the five lecturers presented by Colophon during 1981-82 were John Dreyfus of England, who spoke on the Nonesuch Press; John Graves, noted Texas essayist and author, who read excerpts from his latest work on cowboys; and Dr. Lola Szladits, curator, Berg Collection, New York Public Library, who described "How a
Private Collector Goes Public." Colophon sponsored a trip to the Humanities Research Center in Austin in November, where members attended the Guild of Book Workers 75th anniversary exhibition. Dallas author A. C. Greene presided at the fourth annual book auction in April.

Mrs. Marvin S. Sloman began a two-year term as President in 1982. A lively schedule included Dr. Robert Sparkman's illustrated lecture on Alexander Borodin; an evening at the El Greco exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts; a lecture by A. C. Greene on "Why Texas Books?" in connection with an exhibit at the DeGolyer Library of Greene's "Fifty Best Books on Texas;" and a luncheon at which Dr. Alan Coleman, Director of the SMU's Southwestern Graduate School of Banking, revealed "A Finance Professor's Philosophy about Collecting Books and Things."

During 1983-84, Colophon hosted a reception at Bridwell Library to honor the two millionth volume in the SMU Libraries; sponsored lectures by Harry Duncan, founder of the Cummington Press, and James Laughlin, founder of New Directions Press; and co-sponsored a lecture by noted Dallas author Frances Mossiker. Colophon members also toured Governor William P. Clements' Texana Collection at his offices in the Sedco Building, formerly the Cumberland Hill School. In April, the fifth fine book auction was held in the Meadows Museum. During this period, Colophon pledged $5,000 a year, over a three-year period, for specific music sets requested by Music Librarian Robert Skinner.
During 1984-85 President Claudia Robinson led Colophon to an increasingly active program schedule as well as the largest financial grants to the libraries in the organization's history, $21,250. Speakers included Dr. Paul F. Boller, Jr., who spoke on his new book, *Presidential Campaigns*; J. W. Jolliffe, Librarian of Oxford's Bodley Library; noted Texas bookman John Jenkins; and Colin Franklin, British author and specialist in the private press movement. In October, Colophon members toured the new Dallas Museum of Art library and viewed the special exhibition of Pierre Bonnard's paintings. In May members toured the fine book collection of Dr. and Mrs. Charles Tandy.

Support for library acquisitions in 1984-85 was wide-ranging. The Acquisitions Committee recommended grants of $5,500 to Fondren Library Reference Department for back issues and a continuing subscription to the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, a multidisciplinary index to the literature of the arts and humanities; $5,000 to the Fine Arts Library to develop its collection of iconography; $3,750 to DeGolyer Library for processing the DeGolyer family papers; $2,000 to the Music Library to purchase scripts for the Theater Division's Script Library; $2,000 to Underwood Law Library to develop the legal history resources in the Charles O. Galvin Rare Book Room; and $2,500 for the continuing development of the Colophon Moderns collection.

Colophon conducted its first official membership drive during
1985-86, and held its most successful book auction to date. In October New York Times Book Review editor D. R. J. Bruckner spoke to members at the Dallas Museum of Art on "Battles of the Book Review," and in January Dr. Ron Tyler of the Amon Carter Museum presented a slide lecture on "Texas Lithographs of the Nineteenth Century." Other speakers included Dr. Richard P. Heitzenrater, who discussed fine religious printing; Bill Chiles, who spoke on typography as a medium of design; and Al Lowman of the Institute of Texan Cultures, whose talk was entitled, "Books for Ballast." Colophon members also toured the Reves Collection at the Dallas Museum of Art.

Van Robinson began his two-year term as President in 1986 by announcing the largest grant ever to the SMU libraries. The gift of $28,750 was made possible through membership dues and the proceeds of the 1986 rare book auction. This year the Friends of the SMU Libraries also initiated a new tradition, the DeGolyer Medal, to be awarded to an individual who has made significant contributions to librarianship, book collecting, scholarship, and writing. The first DeGolyer Medal was presented to Lawrence Clark Powell, former director of libraries at UCLA and founding dean of their library school. Dr. Powell received his medal following his talk to Colophon members in April.

Programs during 1986-87 included a tour of the Jenkins Garrett Collection at the University of Texas at Arlington; a talk by noted wood engraver Barry Moser; a slide lecture by British art
historian Malcolm Miller on the art and architecture of Chartres Cathedral, with an attendance of more than 200 people; a discussion by Andrew Hoyem of fine book production at the Arion Press in San Francisco; and a luncheon at which Richard Dillon, former director of the Sutro Library in California, lectured on his new book, The Texas Argonauts--Accounts of Texans in the Gold Rush.

The Friends presented an unprecedented fourteen programs during 1987-88. Fort Worth twin artists Stuart and Scott Gentling launched the season with a talk on their new book, Of Birds and Texas, a copy of which was presented by Colophon to Bridwell Library. In October, in a program at Perkins Chapel, Stanley Marcus reminisced about the Book Club of Texas, which he had co-founded in the 1930s; following his talk, Mr. Marcus was presented with the second DeGolyer Award for his significant contributions to the world of books. Other speakers included SMU Professors Dr. Alessandra Comini, Dr. David Weber, Dr. Luis Martin, Dr. Eleanor Tufts, and Marshall Terry; noted Dallas author and critic Evelyn Oppenheimer; Fine Print editor Sandra Kirshenbaum; and David Vaisey, Bodleian Librarian from Oxford University, who presented an illustrated lecture to a capacity crowd about the 500th anniversary of the Bodley Library. Members also toured an exhibit on the history of the book at the Dallas Public Library, viewed the Still Point Press, operated by Charlotte and Gould Whaley, and visited the Humanities Research Center in Austin.
Under the leadership of President Jackie McElhaney, Colophon continued to expand its membership and offer more diverse programming during 1988-89. In September over 200 people attended a talk by famed Texas humorist and political commentator John Henry Faulk on "J. Frank Dobie--Freedom of Speech." Two weeks later, SMU President A. Kenneth Pye revealed his literary preferences in "Thoughts About Reading." Lawrence H. Budner reflected on the life of "The Incredible Theodore Roosevelt" on November 2, and a week later Anthony Rota shared "A Day in the Life of a London Bookshop" with Colophon members. Following his talk, Mr. Rota was presented with the third DeGolyer Medal. Other speakers included SMU's Dr. David Farmer and Dr. Ron Davis; Diane Galloway and Kathy Matthews, authors of a new history of the Park Cities; and Roderick Stinehour, head of a small press in Vermont.

Colophon members also had the opportunity to participate in tours to Washington, D.C., in October and San Francisco in February. Both trips provided members unique opportunities to see some of the finest book collections in the country. Artist Pedro Cano offered a preview tour of a special exhibition at the Meadows Museum in October, and in May members enjoyed a tour and demonstration at the Old City Park Print Shop. The Friends' first annual Christmas party featured Dallas actress Norma Moore reading Truman Capote's A Christmas Memory.

The Fine Book Auction, held at the DeGolyer estate, realized nearly $9,000 to support library acquisitions. A new fund-raising
program in the spring targeted parents of graduating seniors, who were invited to honor their son or daughter by placing a book in the library in the name of the new graduate. Colophon also inaugurated a project called "Faculty Favorites," in which faculty members were asked to lend several of their favorite books, along with notes explaining why each book was special, for exhibition in the lobby of Fondren Library. History Professor Peter Onuf in the fall and Music Professor Herbert Turrentine in the spring were the first participants.

A special project during the spring of 1989 was publication of a second edition of a booklet briefly describing the special collections in all the SMU Libraries. Designed to serve as an aid to researchers as well as a salute to the many generous donors of collections, the booklet was dedicated to the late Dr. Claude C. Albritton, Jr., in honor of his many contributions to the SMU Libraries. The first copy was presented to retiring Central Universities Librarian Robert Oram on the occasion of a reception held in his honor by the Friends and FOLUSA (Friends of the Libraries USA) at the American Libraries Association convention in Dallas in June.

In the fall of 1989, Colophon welcomed Maureen Pastine as new Director of the Central University Libraries and Executive Secretary of the Friends organization. A busy fall season of programs included Dallas Times-Herald editorial page editor Lee Cullum, profiling the Dallas character; Dr. Rene Prieto,
discussing "The Unique Vision of Love" in works by Gabriel Garcia Marquez; Dr. Rennard Strickland, presenting his analysis of the image of Native Americans in film and in print in connection with a special exhibition at the DeGolyer Library; and SMU English Professor Bonnie Wheeler, relating King Arthur to today's need for heroes. Spring lecturers included Dallas author Natalie Ornish, on pioneer Jewish Texans; Dr. Hugh Ford, on American and British expatriate writers in Paris in the 1920s; former SMU faculty member Jo Brans, on novelist Angela Thirkell; and Columbia University School of Library Science professor Terry Belanger, on 19th century extra-illustrated books. Special activities in 1989-90 included the second annual Christmas party; a tour of the newly renovated Bridwell Library; and a trip to Waco to view the Armstrong Browning Library.

Traditionally, the Friends group had awarded monies to enhance the collections or to purchase materials not within library budgets. In 1989-90, recognizing the urgent needs of automating the SMU Libraries, the Acquisitions Committee gave top priority to the automation project, funding computers and software throughout the library system. The Friends also funded a cataloguing of the Colophon Moderns Collection and appointed a committee to assess the current status of this ongoing project. In the spring Colophon repeated its successful appeal to parents of graduating seniors to honor their children with a gift to the SMU Libraries. The election of Elizabeth Albritton Scott,
daughter of Dr. Claude C. Albritton, Jr., as Colophon President for 1990-92 symbolized the commitment of a new generation to uphold the goals which had always inspired the organization.

At the close of its second decade, Colophon: The Friends of the SMU Libraries, is truly fulfilling the ambitions of its founders. Through its varied programs and successful membership drives, it has gained thousands of friends and supporters for the SMU Libraries from throughout the community. Many of these friends, in turn, have donated valuable collections to the SMU libraries. Through income generated from dues, the fine book auctions, and other enterprises, the Friends have donated significant funds to support the Libraries' acquisitions programs and equipment needs. Serving as a vital link between the SMU libraries and the Dallas community, the Friends have proven their value and can look with pride on twenty years of achievements.