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Momentum

University News Service

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Kent State University - Kent Campus

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Dear Friends —

My earliest school memories are library ones. I remember sitting on a little stool in the one-room library of my elementary school reading the Babar books. Later mending brokenbacked volumes after school for Miss Hackett, the junior high librarian. And the long summer afternoons at the public library where I quickly became hooked on the unmistakable aroma of books.

Even today, with my degrees behind me, I find it difficult to pass by a library without going in, either to discover pleasure books or the life-shaping variety we too often don’t make time for, the ones Melville slyly called “miserable reading at sea.”

So it is particularly pleasurable for me to introduce Kent State University’s towering new library which just opened. The official dedication isn’t until spring, but the building is open now and don’t be surprised if you come visit it and see me half-hidden behind a carrelful of books.

Peace,

Alex Gildzen
The tower rises 150 feet into the air. You can see it from almost any place in Portage County. From the top you can look out beyond the county to the next county.

But this 12-story tower is more than a county landmark. It's Kent State University's new $9 million library and, since a library is a university's central nervous system, it is at the center of campus.

As early as 1917 the board of trustees expressed a concern that a library be at the center of campus, a viewpoint shared by most librarians.

Facing the new building will be the University Center, now under construction. The two buildings will be connected by a plaza, forming a new gateway to campus.
Following a massive move of more than 700,000 volumes and furniture and equipment and personnel which closed Rockwell Library for only two weeks, the new building opened for students this fall.

"The new library has been designed to provide maximum service to students, faculty and visitors," said Hyman W. Kritzer, director of libraries and associate provost.

The building features a three-story base containing an undergraduate library, offices for many of the 150 staff members and the School of Library Science. The adjoining tower houses the graduate collection, a microform center, special collections and archives.

The undergraduate library on the first two floors is an innovation aimed at helping the new student. Those books he is likely to be assigned will be together, with many duplicate copies, on these floors.

"It should make it much easier for an undergraduate to come in and go about his work," commented Mary C. Amner, assistant director for technical services. "But if he gets involved in a subject, the whole library is at his disposal."

Throughout the library there is seating for 4,000 students as well as nearly 100 individual studies assigned to faculty doing research, group discussion rooms and a browsing room where new books are available for examination before being shelved.

Following years of planning, construction on the building, designed by Stickle & Associates of Cleveland, began in March 1968. The first of many contracts for interior work to be let was for the shelving required for books.

Much of the major moving was done in August while workmen put final touches on the inside of the building, which has a capacity for 1,400,000 books. The building has 330,000 square feet of space, compared to the 80,000 square feet in the old library.
history

It started with dirt floors and large stoves to keep readers warm when the weather became nasty. These were the conditions of Kent State Normal School’s first library, a reading room and stacks on the first floor of the Auditorium and Library Building, today’s Administration Building.

Margaret Dunbar, who had founded the library at Western Illinois State Normal School, was brought to Kent by President John E. McGilvrey. She began purchasing books in May 1914. By November 1915 the library had 10,000 volumes with an emphasis on education and psychology.

The board of trustees in an early report to the governor wrote, “The Normal School library is a professional library for teachers. No library selected with any other purpose in view than the training of teachers can take its place.”

In April 1926 the cornerstone was laid on front campus for a 108 feet by 126 feet gray stone building.

During the same week in March 1929 that the school became Kent State College, that building, the David Ladd Rockwell Library, was opened. It was named for Judge Rockwell, who at 22 had been elected mayor of Kent, the youngest mayor in the United States at that time.

Miss Dunbar, who had founded the library 30 years before, retired in 1943. Dr. Weldon Williams of the English department was appointed acting librarian until the appointment in 1945 of John B. Nicholson, who had cataloged the Robert E. Lee Library in Stratford, Virginia.

The next two decades witnessed the addition of a new three-story wing to the library in 1958 and the initial publication of the national quarterly, The Serif, in 1964.

The library has since added another publication, Occasional Papers, which debuted in 1968 with the publication of novelist Richard Wright’s letters to Joe C. Brown.
Hyman W. Kritzer, assistant director of libraries at Ohio State University, was named Kent's director in 1966 and began immediately to continue the planning Nicholson had started on a new library.

At the same time, the library's collection continued to grow. In 1968 the nation's press reported one of the largest library transactions in history when Kent State University purchased the entire stock of Gilman's, a Crompond, N.Y. bookseller.

The 250,000 volumes from this collection, which are still being processed, were delivered by seven trailer vans in 7,100 cartons weighing 325 tons.

In addition to quantity, the Gilman collection proved to be of the highest quality. Among items included are the rare 1814 publication of *History of the Expedition under the command of Captains Lewis and Clark to the sources of the Missouri*, four different editions of the Paris publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, an 1863 printing of the Gettysburg Address and one of the earliest histories of Texas.
technical services

Before the first student takes out a new book, that book already has its own history.

It begins with a need for the particular volume. This need becomes known through a request slip to the acquisitions department of the technical services division. Last year there were 23,000 such requests.

All requests are checked to be certain the book is available and has not already been ordered. Following the check, a requisition is made to the publisher or dealer, the book is received and paid for.

Then the catalog department decides the proper subject classification of the volume. Catalog cards are made up and labels and pockets are put on the book before it is shelved.

"It takes more than half the staff of the library to do the meticulous research for getting a book and processing it," explains Mary C. Amner who heads technical services.

Last year her division processed 103,000 volumes, a new highwater mark. "We will keep above that mark every year now," promises Mrs. Amner.

Another vital area in technical services is the serials department which handles over 6,000 periodicals. Each year hundreds of requests for additional magazines and newspapers are processed.

The first occupants of the new building were Duncan Wall, assistant director for planning and development, and Rosemary Harrick, coordinator of planning for the new library program. They began operating from the building in early August.
While technical services provide material, readers' services interpret that material. This area contains the circulation, reference and documents departments as well as departmental libraries.

"The importance of this division is to determine how satisfied faculty and students are with the library," says Dr. Paul DuBois, assistant director for readers' services.

The central circulation desk greets visitors as they pass through the air-flow doors. Here books are checked in and out. Under the auspices of the department is the microform center, housed in the basement of the tower.

Microform is the term for both transparent and opaque micro-reproduced materials dating from the invention of printing to the present.

Included are such items as 18th century American newspapers, the pre-Civil War Oberlin anti-slavery pamphlets, the official journals of the French Empire dating back to 1869 and the records of the German Reichstag.

The reference department is developing a series of subject specialists to aid readers in particular fields and to work with faculty in specialized areas. There also are general reference personnel, including those to help undergraduates in the first two floors of the library.

Following seven years of groundwork, Kent State was designated a depository of federal government documents in 1962 and since that time has been receiving a majority of all documents published by the Government Printing Office.

Located on the 11th floor, the documents department will handle state and United Nations documents in addition to such federal research material as the complete Congressional Records.

Outside the new building, but coordinated by the readers' services department, are six departmental libraries housed in the buildings of their area.

The first of these was the chemistry-physics library. Extensive map and music libraries have since been developed. In addition to serving the full-time faculty and student body, the music library is open to those who attend the famous Blossom Festival School.

There also are departmental libraries in mathematics and urban studies with more being planned.

Another area in readers' services is orientation. Currently a new plan is being implemented in cooperation with the English department.

All Kent freshmen are required to take the basic English series. An orientation lecture, pointing out the many services of the new building, is being included as part of each beginning English class this quarter. The lectures are held in a special orientation room that seats 150.
When poet Gary Snyder came to campus last year for a reading, he visited the library’s special collections room. The visit was more out of curiosity than courtesy. There he reviewed a part of his past.

Curator Dean Keller brought out a collection of 37 letters and postcards the poet wrote between 1956 and 1967 to his friend Will Petersen, the artist who designed the cover of Snyder’s *Myths & Texts*.

The poet, a leader of the Beat Generation, looked through the letters, pausing to read sections written from Japan, a tramp tanker off Singapore and a room above his father’s garage in California.

He laughed as he pointed to a sketch he made of a kerosene heater with instructions on how to clean it.

Since Snyder’s visit, the library has purchased the working manuscript of his second book, *Myths & Texts*.

The Snyder materials are part of the Robert L. Baumgardner Jr. Memorial Collection of Contemporary Poetry, named for the late son of a University trustee.

The collection includes 250 Robert Frost items, 200 William Carlos Williams items, the letters of Hart Crane to Charles Harris and first editions of key poets from John Ashbery to Louis Zukofsky.

Special collections, housed on the tower’s top floor, also has an impressive gathering of books and articles by and about William Faulkner and a large collection of Library of Congress copyright deposit books.

The 54 deposit books, including volumes by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and Mark Twain, are part of the B. George Ulizio collection of English and American literature acquired by gift and purchase.

Special collections is not confined to literature. Holdings include 13 incunabula, books printed before 1500. The rarest of these is Wynkyn de Worde’s history of the world, *Higden Polycronicon*, printed in 1495 in England.

Other items include the earliest collection of Handel’s compositions, the manuscript of President Warren G. Harding’s first major speech outside Ohio and a collection of books on cryptography.
Many additions to the collection are by gift and perhaps the most unusual presentation has been that of material about Queen Marie of Rumania. Washington book collector Ray Baker Harris gave his large collection of works about the queen to Kent State University after he determined that the largest concentration of Rumanian people in the United States lived in Northeastern Ohio.

The University archives, which preserves the documents of Kent State's history, also are serviced by special collections. Since the May 4 tragedy, the division is attempting to collect all pertinent campus and outside publications, papers and memorabilia concerning the events. Also under special collections will be the archives of the "Northeast Gateway" region of the Ohio Network of American History Research Centers. The University, one of eight regional centers in the state, will develop an archives of historical material from Ashtabula, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, Mahoning, Portage and Trumbull counties.

Henry Van Dyke signs a copy of his newest novel, "Blood of Strawberries," on a visit to the special collections room. Watching is Dean Keller, curator of special collections. Other recent visitors who have signed editions of their work include poet Robert Creeley and novelist James A. Michener.

Poet Gary Snyder reads his correspondence with artist Will Petersen during a visit to the special collections room. The letters are part of the Robert L. Baumgardner Jr. Memorial Collection of Contemporary Poetry.
Sharing the third floor of the new building is the School of Library Science. Faculty offices, classrooms, a student commons room and the files of library annual reports are located on that floor.

Kent State first offered library science courses in 1946. Graduate coursework was added in 1949 and presently 365 students have earned the master of library science degree from the University.

The department, originally under the College of Education, became the School of Library Science in 1966. Its chairman, Dr. Guy A. Marco, was named dean, a position he continues to hold.

Also in 1966 the school established a research arm, the Center for Library Studies. Its major projects to date have been a study of library services for the handicapped, a survey of Ohio library salaries and the use of automated library procedures in Canadian university libraries.

Publications of the school are Keys to Music Bibliography, a series of indexes of such topics as symphonic program notes and unfamiliar opera plots, and Aspects of Librarianship, a group of monographs.
looking ahead

The man who heads this growing library, Prof. Kritzer, can sit back in his new office and talk about plans even beyond the enormity of the recent move.

"A library is a collection of books with people to service that collection and a building to house it," he says.

"We have the new building. We have a competent staff which continues to grow to meet the University's many needs. And we continue to get the books.

"We had 376,000 volumes four years ago. Now we have 700,000. We expect to have a million volumes by 1972."

This is Kent State University's new library. It is already a landmark in Portage County. From the tower you can look out beyond the county to the next county.

Soon it will become a landmark in the minds of Kent State University's family and friends. From the tower you will look out beyond your time to all times.