Michel Collections Provide Insight to National and Local History

by Walter Ray, Political Papers Archivist

Less than an hour and a half after President Kennedy was shot on November 22, 1963, Don Michel knew the name of the prime suspect: Lee Harvey Oswald. He knew the name even before it came across the United Press International wire by interviewing E. E. Taylor, one of the Dallas detectives who arrested Oswald at the Texas Theater. An audio recording and a transcript of this historic interview are among the treasures recently donated by Michel to Morris Library’s Special Collections Research Center.

A radio broadcaster at WRAJ in Anna, Illinois, Michel was among the first in the nation to announce Oswald’s arrest. Born in 1931 near Rochester, Illinois, Michel moved to Anna in 1957 to begin his long career in radio. After working there as an engineer, announcer, program director and salesman, he eventually bought the station. He sold it to pursue other interests in 1980.

Michel was at home for lunch when he first heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. He rushed back to the station and began broadcasting from the UPI teletype booth in the hall, reading the bulletins as they came in. When the pace of the reports slowed, he picked up the phone and called the Dallas police station.

Michel maintained a deep interest in the Kennedy assassination. He saved that day’s UPI teletype roll with its breaking news from Dallas. He saved all the recordings of Kennedy’s press conferences that WRAJ had received. He bought the full Warren Commission report on the assassination. He got copies of all the eye-witness films, including the infamous Zapruder film. He collected the wire service bulletins and newspaper articles about the 1967 investigation into the assassination by the New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison (the basis for Oliver Stone’s film, JFK). All of this material is now housed in Morris Library.

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Message from the Dean

Shifts

Recently, I have been speaking on campus about fundamental shifts in libraries and more specifically, shifts with the “raw materials” of libraries: books and journals. At Morris, a good example of such a shift is our spending for journals. Six years ago Morris spent less than half its serials budget for journals in electronic format, including various databases; last year, in contrast, we spent approximately 85 percent of our serials budget in electronic formats! At that level, one can say that the serials “portfolio” at Morris Library is electronic in all practical respects.

Another example of a shift: in July of 2010, Amazon.com announced that it was selling more eBooks on its Kindle platform than print hardcovers. Amazon said that for every 100 print hardcover books, they sold 180 eBooks. Six months later, Amazon announced that it is selling more books in Kindle format than paperback. The ratio is not as compelling—for every 100 paperbacks, Amazon sold 115 eBooks—but the volume for paperbacks is much higher than hardcover books and makes this shift more compelling. And after six months, what of hardcovers? Hardcovers were outsold by a factor of three! That is, for every 100 hardcover books, Amazon sold 300 Kindle eBooks!

I could cite numerous other examples of these shifts, some of which are more directly relevant to academic libraries (for example, the announcement in August that the Oxford English Dictionary has likely published its last print edition). These shifts have led me to suggest to the campus community that we re-think some fundamental, long-standing, and in some cases, deeply-held beliefs about the Library and, in particular, the allocation of our space and management of our collections.

I believe it is time to consider a selective, thoughtful, and strategic removal of print volumes from our collection and rely on the digital surrogates for our immediate access and long-term preservation.

I understand that for some this is anathema and I have many responses that will not fit within this short column, but I want to make one point. I find that many react to this suggestion envisioning an empty library, devoid of books with acres of empty shelving; a library filled with glaring computer screens and spaces given over to various university administrative offices and bureaucratic functions. *This is not my vision!* The careful withdrawal of selected print volumes has the potential for an enhanced and expanded vision of Morris Library as the vibrant center of campus community and life. This includes:

- Collaborative spaces for students to work in small groups.
- Private, consultative spaces for students and faculty to consult with librarians on effective digital research and the use of learning technologies in the classroom.
- Event space to acknowledge the accomplishments of SIUC faculty and students and as a venue for speakers and visiting scholars.
- Space for Special Collections, which truly defines the unique contributions of our collections to research and scholarship in print and digital formats.

Libraries have a vital and central role on campus (and in society). These fundamental shifts must not be ignored if we wish to preserve the vitality and centrality of Morris Library at SIU. We must have the courage to re-envision. Fundamental shifts call for fundamental change.
The Library Is Seeking . . .

With research library budgets strained by the increasing costs of electronic journals and databases, more traditional reference/replacement volumes are sometimes left behind. The Library Is Seeking . . . looks for private funding for those items that would not otherwise be purchased by the library. If you are interested in underwriting one of these items, please contact Kristine McGuire at kmcguire@lib.siu.edu or 618-453-1633.

$125 for Grand Atlas des Vignobles de France (second edition). The addition of this French reference volume would bolster the Library’s resources on the global wine industry and further satisfy the ever-growing thirst for information on wine making and vineyards.

$425 for Encyclopedia of Political Theory edited by Mark Bevir. “[The editor] has done a superb job with this new encyclopedia, which thoroughly addresses the key themes found in contemporary political theory and its historical antecedents. In the introduction Bevir explains that this work is constructed to help readers think about three central questions regarding politics and society—a framework that gives coherence to this three-volume set. The reader’s guide will be a helpful start for students attempting to understand the overall concepts of the field. Individual articles are detailed and well-written. The editorial choices made are sound and take the longer view of this discipline. For example, full articles are dedicated to Augustine, Bentham, Foucault, Hume, and John Rawls. Noam Chomsky and Robert Nozick’s contributions are treated in other articles that contextualize their work. This set evidences a sense of balance and proportionality among its articles that can be hard to achieve, given the many contributors writing within their various areas of expertise. Readers will appreciate the provision of accessible summaries in each entry. Issues such as affirmative action and climate change are addressed in balanced but informative entries.”—Choice

$225 for Routledge Handbook of World Englishes edited by Andy Kirkpatrick. An impressive collaboration by nearly forty experts from around the globe, this book comprises chapters on diverse topics, from historical to contemporary, and merges linguistic analysis with social factors across a wide geographic spectrum. The research reflects the latest analysis of developments affecting the new Englishes around the world. Discussions of the use of “world Englishes” in scholarly publishing and English as a medium of formal instruction provide a wealth of information not previously available in the literature.

$210 for a 10-sheet map set of Luxembourg that provides both topographic and tourist information. The Map Room at Morris Library seeks to maintain basic map coverage on a current and worldwide basis through a variety of map resources.

$250 for Encyclopedia of Research Design edited by Neil J. Salkind. “This is written for scholars in all fields involved in planning and conducting empirical quantitative and qualitative research. However, the general public also will find this set valuable when seeking information on how research is done. The three volumes feature over 500 articles on such diverse subjects as the role of ethics in research, the importance of professional organizations, and important mathematical and statistical concepts; also included are a review of seminal research articles in the field and a review of popular analysis tools. Almost 400 scholars wrote the signed articles, all of which contain internal references and bibliographies for further reading. A reader’s guide helps direct researchers to relevant articles in 28 general categories. The content is well illustrated when appropriate, and the articles are clear and well written.”—Choice

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Michel hopes that through his donation to Morris Library this material might spur further interest in the Kennedy assassination. "I hope that with the fiftieth anniversary coming up, people will reopen the whole thing," he says. He remains convinced that the assassination was the work of more than a lone gunman.

The materials Michel collected about the Kennedy assassination form one of three collections he has donated to Morris Library. Another collection comes from Michel's role as coordinator of Southern Illinois Citizen's for Ross Perot, the independent candidate whose 1992 presidential campaign was a precursor to the current Tea Party movement. The third collection consists of audio recordings of the many notables Michel was able to interview for Insight, his public affairs program on WRAJ, long sponsored by the First National Bank of Cobden.

Most of the interviews for Insight Michel conducted in person, only occasionally relying on a telephone interview. He says he feels really privileged to have had the opportunity to interview so many really interesting people during his career. "I just had a lot of fun," he says. Among the hundreds of people he interviewed for Insight are fellow journalists Walter Cronkite, Harry Reasoner, Eric Severeid, Roger Mudd, Marvin Kalb, and Peter Jennings; politicians such as Spiro Agnew, Barry Goldwater, Ralph Nader, Richard Ogilvie, Paul Douglas, Everett Dirksen, Adlai Stevenson III, and Charles Percy; and many celebrities, including Bob Hope, Nancy Reagan, Ann Landers, Arthur Godfrey, and Danny Thomas. Too, Michel interviewed local personalities such as Paul Simon, Ken Gray, and Clyde Choate; and many connected with SIUC, including Delyte Morris, Ralph McCoy, and Buckminster Fuller.

Morris Library staff is in the process of digitizing Michel's audio recordings to make them more accessible to researchers. They will provide an interesting window on American life in the second half of the twentieth century. For a complete listing of Michel's interview subjects and finding aids to all of his collections in SCRC, click on the Special Collections button on Morris Library's web site: www.lib.siu.edu. Or call 453-2516 for more information.
Drive By Press will bring their mobile, print-making operation to Morris Library at SIUC on Wednesday, April 27 and Thursday, April 28. Drive By Press is Greg Nanney and Joseph Velasquez, who met in graduate school in Madison, Wisconsin, and made it their mission to share their enthusiasm for printmaking with audiences across America. In 2005 they loaded a 600 pound printmaking machine in the back of their vehicle and took off across the country. They principally support their operation through the sale of custom-made t-shirts.

At the Carbondale event Velasquez will demonstrate his artistic prowess by drawing and carving several single-color woodblock designs exclusive to Drive By Press. Clients will then choose options during the printing process, selecting color and design placement. This way each guest gets to help create their very own piece of one-of-a-kind wearable art. When asked about their strangest request, Velasquez responded, “We’ve had many requests that include hand pressing an inked block on people’s bare flesh to printing on bath room mats, toilet seat covers, tire covers, shower curtains, couch covers, parachutes, ski pants, pantyhose, dog sweaters, baby blankets… if it can lie flat, we’ve likely printed on it.”

DBP has worked hundreds of venues from coast to coast, including art exhibitions, university events, and outdoor music festivals. DBP has exhibited thousands of pieces of art in the form of prints and has made over 10,000 pieces of one of kind wearable art along the way. When asked about the future, Velasquez said, “With every stop a new opportunity emerges for us. We’ve been fortunate in being so rewarded after taking the risk we did. We can see no reason to stop.”

Edible Book Festival Comes to Morris Library

On April 1, 2011, Morris Library will host its first Edible Book Festival. The event has been organized by Head of Preservation, Julie Mosbo, and Fine Arts Librarian, Megan Lotts. The Carbondale event seeks to unite bibliophiles, book artists, pastry chefs, and hungry students to celebrate the consumption of world culture. Participants create edible books that are exhibited, documented, then consumed. Prizes will be awarded, and Best in Show will receive an Amazon Kindle.

The global event has been celebrated since 2000 in various parts of the world, where edible books have been created and displayed. The creations are photographed and submitted to www.books2eat.com and then consumed. Groups from all over the world regularly contribute to this site. The event was initiated by Judith A. Hoffberg and Béatrice Coron in 2000. April 1st is the birthday of French gastronome Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826), famous for his book Physiologie du goût, a witty meditation on food.
$335 for Handbook of the Birds of the World. Volume 13: Penduline-tits to Shrikes. This series is the first ever to illustrate all the species of birds in the world, in addition to providing access to all the essential information about each of them. This volume includes coverage of the Passeriformes: Nuthatches, Creepers, Orioles, Shrikes, Tits, and more. Sixty color plates, more than 500 color photographs, and distribution maps. Morris Library currently holds the previous twelve volumes of this acclaimed series.

$265 for Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe by Stefano Evangelista. This is a comprehensive volume of international research on the European reception of Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), who is now widely recognized not only as one of the most representative figures of the British fin de siècle, but as one of the most influential Anglophone authors of the nineteenth century. In Britain Wilde suffered a long period of comparative neglect following the scandal of his conviction for ‘gross indecency’ in 1895; and it is only recently that his works have been reassessed. But while Wilde was subjected to silence in Britain, he became a European phenomenon. His famous dandyism, his wit, paradoxes, and provocations became the object of imitation and parody; his controversial aesthetic doctrines were a strong influence not only on decadent writers, but also on the development of symbolist and modernist cultures.

$165 for Time: Limits and Constraints (The Study of Time) edited by Jo Alperson Parker, Paul A. Harris, and Christian Steinbeck. The nature of time has haunted humanity through the ages. Some conception of time has always entered into our ideas about mortality and immortality, and permanence and change, so that concepts of time are of fundamental importance in the study of religion, philosophy, literature, history, and mythology. How humanity experiences time physiologically, psychologically, and socially enters into the research of the behavioral sciences, and time as a factor of structure and change is an essential consideration of the biological and physical sciences.

$175 for Africa Water Atlas published by The United Nations Environment Programme. This volume is a visual account of Africa’s endowment and use of water resources, revealed through 224 maps and 104 satellite images as well as some 500 graphics, hundreds of compelling photos plus a brief profile of the water situation in every country. These visual elements vividly illustrate a succinct narrative describing and analysing Africa’s water issues and exemplifying them through the judicious use of case studies. This atlas tells the paradoxical story of a continent with adequate renewable water resources, but unequal access because the water is either abundant or scarce depending on the season or the place. It explores the opportunities to develop Africa’s untapped water resources and human capacities to deliver safe drinking water and sanitation services to achieve the water-related Millennium Development Goals, as well as hydro-power and irrigation services that help support livelihoods and boost economic development.

$905 for Handbook of Nanophysics edited by Klaus D. Sattler. This seven-volume set provides broad, in-depth coverage of nanophysics, and “brings together multiple disciplines to determine the structural, electronic, optical, and thermal behavior of nanomaterials; electrical and thermal conductivity; the forces between nanoscale objects; and the transition between classical and quantum behavior. Facilitating communication across many disciplines, this landmark publication encourages scientists with disparate interests to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects and incorporate the theory and methodology of other areas into their work.” —Choice

$185 for The Routledge Companion to Ethics, a superb resource for anyone interested in the subject, whether in philosophy or related disciplines such as politics, education, or law. Fully indexed and cross-referenced, with helpful further reading sections at the end of each chapter, it is ideal for those coming to the field of ethics for the first time as well as readers already familiar with the subject.
Ceremonies on February 23rd marked Roland Burris donating his papers from his time as a U.S. senator and his terms as Illinois comptroller and attorney general to the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Morris Library.

Born and raised in Centralia, Burris came to SIUC as a student in 1955. He graduated in 1959 with a BA in political science and received a scholarship to study international law at the University of Hamburg in Germany. He earned his law degree from Howard University in 1963.

But it was dramatic events in the summer of 1953 in Centralia that prompted his career in politics. That summer the city had unofficially barred its African American residents from its municipal swimming pool. It was a decision that outraged Burris’ father, Earl, who said, “If we as a race of people are going to get anywhere, we need lawyers and elected officials who are responsive and responsible.”

After law school, Burris became the first African American bank examiner for the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency for the U.S. Treasurer Department and later worked in a number of capacities for the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company. Former Governor Dan Walker appointed Burris as the director of the Department of Central Management Services, and he subsequently became the first African American elected to statewide office as comptroller in 1978. After twice winning re-election, he was elected attorney general in Illinois, only the second African American in the country to hold that position.

Burris has recently served as U.S. senator, following a controversial appointment to fill Barack Obama’s seat. Burris’ career also includes terms as executive director for Operation PUSH, as CEO of Burris and Lebed Consulting LLC, and as adjunct professor in the SIUC master of public administration program.

Named one of the Ten Most Distinguished Alumni of SIUC in 1997, Burris has maintained a strong connection to SIUC through the years, and this donation of papers is just the most recent of his contributions to the University. He announced in 2008 that he was creating a $100,000 endowment to provide scholarships for African American undergraduate students in the College of Liberal Arts from the Centralia or Chicago metropolitan areas.

“Roland Burris is an inspiration as a local student and alumnus who has done very well. We are proud to add his senatorial and state government papers to the Special Collections Research Center of Morris Library,” said Pamela Hackbart-Dean, director of SCRC.

A Special Request on Behalf of Buckminster Fuller...

The Preservation Unit is requesting funding to create custom enclosures for SCRC’s Buckminster Fuller three dimensional models. The SCRC’s University Archives is home to an estimated 150 Buckminster Fuller 3D models, believed to be the largest such collection in the world. These models were built to demonstrate structural concepts such as tensegrity, a Bucky term that literally blends tension and integrity. The cost of building a hand-made box is $150 in time and archival materials, and Preservation initially has planned the construction of twenty custom boxes. To sponsor the construction of one or more box to which a commemorative label will be placed, contact Kristine McGuire at 618-453-1633.

These models were created in the early 60s in collaboration with University of Oregon art professor Charles B. Ryan.
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