

## Memories of Millie

Dean Annie ruled, and the Apple Cup ended with a score of 0-0.

President Holland initiated faculty pay cuts, as the U.S. economy experienced the Great Depression.

Students could barely pay tuition or afford the Audian Theatre, which advertised "superb music" and "perfect sound."

Such was the climate at Washington State College in the early 1930s, when Mildred Sherrod walked the campus paths. Born in Tekoa, Washington, she was a member of Phi Kappa Phi, lived in McCroskey Hall, and graduated in 1933 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

She taught high school English for eight years before moving to San Francisco in 1943. She married John

W. Bissinger of Kentfield, California, in 1951 and was active in the League of Women Voters and the Marin County Friends of the Library. She was a longtime member of several book groups, a patron of the literary, visual, and performing arts, and a poet in her own right. She passed away on February 23, 1999.

Mildred was also a typesetter and printer. She hand set numerous books of essays and poems, which she printed in her home at The Upstairs Press. The WSU Libraries owns copies of her Upstairs Press work, described as "whimsical"—most notably, *Two Stories* by Guy de Maupassant. Located in Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC), the book was printed with

19 leaves folded accordion style, using brown ink and wrapped in stiff paper wrappers twice folded. Other titles in the collection are *The First Six* by Bissinger, *Please* by Alice Aspinwall, and *Thoreau* by Virginia Woolf.

Leila Luedeking, a retired MASC employee, remembered Mildred "Millie" Bissinger to *The Record*, saying, "She and I first met after John Guido came aboard. She came to campus, and we all went out to dinner with her. Ann Weirum and John Elwood were also there. Apparently, she'd been giving money to the archives for years. I went with her to the fine arts gallery, where a student exhibition was being

held. She picked out a picture she liked, met the artist, bought his picture, and gave him encouragement. She spent the week of her visit studying Leonard Woolf, and in her later correspondence was always recommending something to read."

Mildred Bissinger was also very fond of WSC's beloved professor, Frank Potter. Luedeking strongly suspected it was Bissinger who started the Potter Lecture. In *Going to Washington State*, the WSU history published in 1990, Bissinger reminisced, "I always felt exhilarated on leaving the classroom, and happy to write a paper for him." Recalling the famous gatherings at the Potter home, she said, "You rang the bell and Doctor Potter came to welcome you, and you were ushered into the charming living room, which was always spotless and fresh. In front of the fireplace two easy chairs faced each other. *Their* chairs."

Perhaps it was because she attended WSC during its leanest years that Bissinger became an anonymous WSU benefactor later in life. Her generous gifts benefit the Potter Memorial Fund, the Museum of Art, and the WSU Libraries Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections. The MASC endowment money supports the MASC conservation and preservation program as an internship with money matched by the state. WSU Libraries hopes to appoint the first recipient this summer. ☐☐



Mildred "Millie" Bissinger, a generous donor to the WSU Libraries conservation and preservation program.



Provided in part by the Students Book Corporation

## Reading Is a Gift

The Cougar mascot, Butch, who so delighted us at the library tour portion of the WSU Foundation's annual meeting in October 1998, was our unanimous choice to convey the message, "Reading Is a Gift—Give to Your Favorite WSU Library." The Butch poster, reproduced above, is modeled after the American Library Association's "READ" poster series featuring celebrities reading their favorite books. Our hope is that folks will not just be reminded that reading is a wonderful thing, but that, sadly, the Libraries continually have to play "rob Peter to pay Paul" with its budget. The poster is also a token of appreciation to donors and staff for their continued support and service to WSU Libraries.

Mary Gresch of the WSU Foundation provided the finishing touches to the poster slogan, and we were quite pleased when Mike Gore, director of the Students Book Corporation, agreed to provide mailing tubes

as a donation to the cause. By this printing, the posters have been mailed to President's Associates and WSU's major donors with a letter suggesting that they deliver one to their local library. Staff and library supporters will receive posters too. In fact, if you receive this newsletter, you should have received a poster. Let us know if you have not by phoning 509-335-4558.

The Libraries' poster project is the product of the Libraries Advancement Working Group (LAWG). A few months ago, LAWG met to begin discussing event plans for April's National Library Week. A brainstorming session ensued, and out popped the idea of creating a promotional poster for WSU Libraries, courtesy of Owen Science and Engineering Library head, Darlene Hildebrandt. The LAWG is also responsible for hosting the WSU Press spring cleaning book sale in the New Library that took place Saturday, April 17, over

Mom's Weekend, as well as other events.

The LAWG is charged with establishing library development priorities for the Libraries each year; identifying special funding opportunities for the Libraries and soliciting funding sources; increasing the donor base in the Libraries through "friend raising," direct mail, phonathons, etc.; increasing awareness among donors and potential donors of the Libraries' concerns and issues; and identifying potential donors and matching their interests with priorities from the Libraries.

Members of this group are Nancy Baker, Paula Elliott, Darlene Hildebrandt, Kathie Meyer, Robert Staab, Laila Miletic-Vejzovic and Nancy A. Wagner. If you have any suggestions to offer the LAWG, please contact Robert Staab, the Libraries development director, at 509-335-8726, or send email to <[rstaab@wsu.edu](mailto:rstaab@wsu.edu)>. 📖

## Owen Turns Twenty

There was food, music, and fun on Friday, April 23, when the Libraries celebrated the 20th birthday of the Frances Penrose Owen Science & Engineering Library's dedication. The Owen Library opened in fall 1977, absorbing several departmental libraries spread across campus.

At the time, it was the largest and most technologically advanced science and engineering library in the Pacific Northwest. Its gross area covers 123,231 square feet, and it has a seating capacity of 888 and a book capacity of 412,000 volumes. The Tacoma architectural firm of Harris, Reed, and Litzenberger designed the building, and the general contractor was Vern W. Johnson & Sons, Inc., Spokane. The cost of the project was \$6,270,000. A display of items from the building project was on hand for the event.

The birthday celebration included a welcome and introduction by Nancy L. Baker, director of Libraries, and remarks by Gretchen Bataille, provost and academic vice president, Darlene Hildebrandt, head of Owen



*Darlene Hildebrandt, (center), Kirk McMichael (right), and friend celebrate 20 years of Science and Engineering Library service.*

Library, and Kirk McMichael, associate professor of chemistry and a member of the original Science Library Building Committee. Music was provided by the WSU Student String Quartet, and an appearance was made by Butch, the Cougar mascot. A birthday cake was served in the concourse area connecting the library to Science Hall.

Owen Library was named after Frances P. Owen, the first woman member of the WSU Board of Regents. A native of Walla Walla, she was appointed to that position in 1957 by Governor Albert D. Rosellini and served until 1975. She was president of the board for two terms, 1961-62 and 1973-74. Her father, Stephen B.L. Penrose, was president of Whitman College for 40 years. 📖



*Professor Robert C. Speth, College of Veterinary Medicine, winner of the 1999 Library Faculty Award.*

## Library Faculty Award Announced

Professor Robert C. Speth of WSU's College of Veterinary Medicine was honored as the 1999 Faculty Library Award recipient April 14. The award presentation was part of the University's National Library Week observation.

Established in 1980, the award is given to a departmental faculty member who has shown exceptional support to WSU Libraries.

Speth has long been devoted to the WSU Libraries. He has been a member of the Veterinary Medical Pharmacy Library Committee since 1984 and served as chair from 1987 to 1991. He has also been a member of the WSU Faculty Senate Library Committee since 1992, serving as chair in 1992-93. Other committees that Speth has worked with include the Ad-Hoc Committee to Develop a Library Survey (1996-1997) and the Provost's Steering Committee for the Libraries (1995-1998, chair 1996-97).

While a member of the Ad-Hoc Committee on WSU Libraries in the 21st Century, Speth co-authored an article, "WSU Libraries in the 21st Century: Meeting the Needs of Faculty and Graduate Assistants on All WSU Campuses." The article was published in the May 1998 issue of *Journal of Academic Librarianship*.

A reception for Speth was held April 14 in the Kamiak Room on the fourth floor of Holland Library. 📖

THE RECORD  
WSU LIBRARIES  
PO BOX 645610  
PULLMAN, WA 99164-5610

(4910-4585)  
*Address service requested*

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Pullman, WA  
Permit No. 1

## *A Magnificent Reading Machine*

Marion and Robert Parker, the parents of Jane Parker, an employee of WSU's Student Advising and Learning Center, recently donated a reading machine to the WSU Libraries. Patrons will find this machine in the Owen Library Reference area. The Parkers are lifelong supporters of libraries in Pennsylvania, where they lived until their retirement. They now reside in Pullman.

The Parkers' gift brings the total of reading machines owned by the Libraries to two. Another is located in the Holland Reference area. These machines magnify print and can be used by those who are sight-disabled, as well as for reading small or obscure print.

The Libraries thank the Parkers for this generous and useful gift. 📖



*Marion and Robert Parker contributed the reading machine demonstrated here by Owen Library employees.*