

*Concerning*  
GIFTS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA LIBRARY



“’Tis the spirit in which the gift is rich,  
As gifts of the Wise Ones were,  
And we are not told whose gift was gold,  
Or whose was the gift of myrrh”

• EDMUND VANCE COOKE •



# Gifts to the University of Minnesota Library

**O**VER the years, since the University of Minnesota was founded, many thoughtful donors have contributed significantly to the stature of the University Library. The University is deeply grateful for their gifts.

In the future the University will undoubtedly be offered additional collections of books and other library materials, and it feels a high sense of responsibility in accepting such gifts. This responsibility carries with it the obligation to inform potential benefactors of some of the principles that have emerged from its experience in receiving Library gifts. The following comments, therefore, are presented for the guidance of persons who may be considering gifts to the Library.

## ☞ *Monetary Gifts*

Many persons have materially aided in developing the resources of the University Library by giving money for the purchase of books. Such contributions, usually made as donations through the Friends of the University Library, are tax-deductible. Money received in this manner often makes it possible for the Library to purchase unusual, fine, or especially significant publications beyond the scope of its regular budget. A donor may ask that the funds be used for specific titles which the Library especially wishes to acquire, and titles thus purchased will be identified with the name of the giver.

Monetary bequests may also be arranged by naming the University Library as beneficiary in a properly executed will. The Director of Libraries will help, if desired, to phrase an appropriate statement for the bequest, to make certain that it will fulfill the donor's wishes, and at the same time result in permanent values and benefits.

## ☞ *Gifts of Books*

Donations of books sometimes raise problems which require mutual understanding to assure maximum usefulness of such gifts. The Uni-

NOTE. This statement, prepared by the Senate Library Committee, was presented to and approved by the University Senate and the Board of Regents, respectively, in June, 1955.

versity welcomes gifts of books that enrich its Library resources, but because the Library already has strong, basic holdings in most subject fields, a gift of books is most effectively administered if the librarian can be empowered to dispose of volumes such as duplicates for which the Library has no foreseeable need. The cataloging, storing, and servicing of library books require an expenditure of several dollars per volume, and the Library cannot undertake substantial commitments to process and maintain items it does not need. It is hoped that donors will appreciate this fact since any given collection is likely to contain items of which the Library already has sufficient copies at hand. When it has this discretion, the Library can then offer such duplicates to smaller libraries, or sell them and apply the proceeds to the purchase of other needed titles.

The University Library applies the same principles of selection in considering gifts as it does to books it buys. It is particularly glad to receive by donation out-of-print publications it cannot readily acquire by purchase. All gifts accepted by the Library should contribute either directly or indirectly to the program of teaching, research, and service of the University.

### •§ Gifts with "Conditions"

Sometimes, out of a natural desire to make sure that his gift will permanently fulfill the purposes he intended for it, a donor offers the University funds or a collection of books subject to certain specific limitations or conditions. Because of changing circumstances, necessitating library adjustments in emphasis, types of service, and space use, which can rarely be foreseen far ahead, such restrictions sometimes prevent the maximum utilization of a collection or monetary bequest. For this reason, faith in the University's pledge to administer all library gifts toward the end of providing the best possible library for the people it serves, is generally preferable to the establishment of rigid conditions over any given collection or contribution. The University offers such a pledge with no reservation.

### •§ The Administration of Gifts

Whether a Library gift consists of money or books, the donor may have confidence that it will be administered according to the following

principles: (1) conscientious effort to assure good physical care to all library materials thus secured; (2) physical arrangements that will make the gift available to faculty, students, or visiting scholars under conditions of responsible use; (3) maintenance of catalogs and other records prepared according to the best practices of librarianship; (4) proper identification of each item included as part of a gift; and (5) future acquisition of materials supplementary to those obtained by gift, as funds permit.

The University cannot ordinarily commit itself to keep a gift collection physically together as a separate entity, though occasionally this may be done for a strong collection that is focused upon a special subject field. Normally, books on any subject are much more readily accessible and useful if they are shelved along with the Library's basic holdings in the same field of subject matter.

The Director of Libraries is vested with full authority for the maintenance, development, administration, and use of Library materials. This authority provides a guarantee of the responsible management of gifts to the benefit of generations to come. The Director, who is always willing and ready to advise with prospective donors, functions under the general administration of the President and the control of the Board of Regents, who also serve as trustees for the future.

Theodore C. Blegen

CHAIRMAN, SENATE LIBRARY COMMITTEE