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## The Charles C. Wise Library : a retrospective

Luke A. Boso

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*THE CHARLES C. WISE LIBRARY  
A RETROSPECTIVE*

*Luke Boso*

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## About the Author

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Luke Andrew Boso was born in Morgantown, West Virginia, to Edwin and Anne Boso in July 1983. He graduated from Parkersburg South High School in 2001, and he went on to earn a degree in English from West Virginia University in fall 2004. Luke is currently a first-year student at the West Virginia University College of Law.



ca. 2003, *Renovation*



## Acknowledgments

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## The Charles C. Wise Library: A Retrospective

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Luke Boso

When I enter the Wise Library today, I am energized,” comments Provost Gerald Lang. “The beauty of the facility evokes a desire to find a place to sit, to read, to write, and to reflect. It is a tremendous setting for learning.”<sup>1</sup> The looming building in the center of the West Virginia University downtown campus didn’t officially become the Wise Library until the morning of September 12, 1985. On that morning, a plaque bearing the words “Charles C. Wise Library” was mounted at the entrance, a ceremony was held on the front lawn, and the library finally got its name.<sup>2</sup> Former student body president and law school graduate Charles C. Wise and his sister had donated 4,260 acres of mountain timberland in Hardy County, valued at \$714,000, to the WVU Foundation. When he died in 1982 at the age of 71, the Board of Regents agreed to dedicate the library to Wise’s memory. Although the Wise Library wasn’t officially named as such until the mid-1980s, its history is rich and goes much further back.

Established in 1867, West Virginia University was equipped with a library from the very beginning. Woodburn Hall, in its original configuration, contained the early stages of the modest library. Under the leadership of Col. James Riley Weaver, commandant of the Cadet Corps, mathematics professor, and first part-time librarian, a collection of 300 volumes contained in a single room on the first floor was available to students on Friday afternoons along with one or two additional afternoons each week.<sup>3</sup> In the event of a special request, the library could be opened by appointment under the supervision of available professors.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, the number





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of books available increased to approximately 1,000 volumes. Books on history, biology, theology, agriculture, art, science, general literature, and a small assortment of weekly newspapers became available. Due to the meager size of the collection and the limited availability of a single book, students were required to offer more than just their good word to borrow from the library. At first, a personal item given to the presiding professor as collateral — say, a watch or a wallet — was a sufficient insurance policy. Ten years later, the checkout policy had changed to a \$2 deposit to ensure the book would be replaced in the event of theft or damage. If there were enough funds remaining at the end of the year, the students were reimbursed. The growing cost of books, however, convinced the university to abandon the deposit policy.<sup>5</sup>

In 1890, just twelve years after the single room in Woodburn Hall became the library's home, demand exceeded capacity. In an effort to expand, the library was transferred to a room formerly used as a chapel on the second floor of Martin Hall. During its stay in Martin, WVU's library adapted to the new technology of the twentieth century by initiating reference book storage, card catalogue usage, the Dewey Decimal System of classification, and the book reserve service. Nature abhors a vacuum, so the combination of additional space and innovative organization led to an influx of new books and resources. In the final days of the Martin library era, the number of books had approached 13,000—a far cry from the 1,000 held in Woodburn Hall.

Another significant change during the

Martin Hall years was the library schedule. The hiring of the University's first full-time librarian, Miss Margaret E. Morrow, made it possible for the library to operate during regular hours, rather than on undesignated afternoons each week. A student could now find an available reading room open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each weekday.<sup>6</sup> While the Martin Hall location fell well short of a modern university library, it did succeed in bringing the University one step closer to accommodating student and faculty study and research needs.

In 1902, the library was treated to a building of its very own. Designed and constructed specifically for the purpose of housing books, the University finally had what it thought would be the library's permanent home. The \$116,000 building, now known as Stewart Hall, was ornamented with gray sandstone and featured Romanesque architecture. It was erected as closely to the center of the downtown campus as possible and quickly established itself as a University focal point.<sup>7</sup> Although aesthetically attractive, the building's form did not follow its function, and major design flaws were soon exposed.

One of the biggest problems facing the new facility was its overall layout. On the first floor, the circulation desk was situated directly facing the main entrance while the card catalogue sat to its right. Also located on the first floor were the reading and reference rooms.<sup>8</sup> The exchanges that took place at the desk, paired with the chaos





generated by the use of a single card catalogue, made for a noisy experience in the nearby reading rooms. Add to that the shuffling to and from English, Greek, and fine arts classes held on the third floor, and the result was an environment more suited to socializing than to studying.<sup>9</sup>

As the University grew in the teens and twenties, the Stewart Hall library outgrew its space. The library had been designed to accommodate 150 readers and stacks consisting of 20,000 volumes. As the years passed by and more books and students occupied the library, the fatal design flaw was revealed: the design did not allow for expansion. With no room to grow, demands for a more practical space could no longer be ignored. Plans for a new library began, and the 29-year-old building was converted into much-needed offices and classrooms for various University programs. Today, the old library contains the offices of both the University President and Provost.

Planning for the library's new facility began in early 1929 under the direction of WVU President John Roscoe Turner. A number of plans were presented, including one for a building with a seating capacity of 430 and enough room for some 350,000 volumes. Librarian Lonna Dennis Arnett approved of another plan, which provided for a building whose twin, with an additional million-volume capacity, could be constructed adjacent. "This will make one building separated from the other only by a small court, though it may not be needed for years to come."<sup>10</sup> Many of the designs proved to be too extravagant and exceeded the allotted funding.

The design finally selected for the new

library's exterior blended nicely with already existing campus structures. In addition, the library was planned as the centerpiece for what was to be a future cluster of buildings — two on the side and one in front. While the exterior was in keeping with the general architectural style on campus, the interior design was innovative. Typically, libraries are designed using the "U" or the "H" plans, both of which refer to the location of the main book stack in relation to other rooms within the library.<sup>11</sup> The area of a library that contains the books is known as a stack.

In an "H" plan, the stack is flanked by a variety of different rooms for three floors, with the second floor forming the crossing piece of an "H." The WVU library plan borrowed some elements of the "H" design; however, the stacks on these floors were to be smaller and without accompanying reading rooms on either side.<sup>12</sup> The concept was to build up rather than out, using vertical stacking, rather than horizontal widening. For a library, this type of design had never been attempted and came to be known as the "skyscraper" design. The decision to go with the experimental skyscraper plan was made, in part, due to two critical factors: projected enrollment growth and cost. The old library had demonstrated that a structure built to accommodate the present student body might not be sufficient in coming years. WVU was growing and would not make the mistake of underestimating the numbers of students it could attract. Thus, planning for future additions was essential.





While lateral expansion was generally the norm, land costs were high in Morgantown, and the West Virginia legislature could only appropriate so much for the project. Moreover, thousands of new students were predicted to enroll in the years to come, making the amount of space required for future expansion hard to estimate. Rather than buying large plots of land for potential library expansion, the university opted to build up rather than out. Contractors assured the University that the cost of removing a roof to add extra floors would be equivalent to the cost of pouring the foundation for a new addition. In fact, the only aspect of the skyscraper design that would be more costly than a traditional design was the price of steel. The steel used in skyscrapers must be thicker and more durable than that used in ordinary buildings.<sup>13</sup> This requirement, however, was only a minor hitch when compared to the overall flexibility and efficiency of the new skyscraper design.

The C.A. Moses Construction Company of Chicago, Illinois, won the construction contract, and excavation began on January 30, 1930.<sup>14</sup> The president of C.A. Moses estimated, "The structure will be approximately 150 feet in length and 100 feet in depth. Three thousand cubic yards of dirt will be taken out. Twelve hundred cubic yards of concrete for footings and walls, 800,000 bricks for walls, and 425 tons of structural steel will be used."<sup>15</sup> The basement housed the first stack; rooms for unpacking, storage, binding, and custodial use; and machinery used to regulate ventilation and the building's central heating plant.<sup>16</sup> Fit snugly between the first and second book stack levels was a section of the library

reserved for study. This area contained nine special reference rooms with adjoining studies on the south end and two rooms for special collections and maps on the north end. Also found on this level were the offices of the librarians and secretaries, staff restrooms, and a kitchenette. A second-floor lobby containing the main desk and two sets of stairs tied together the library's north and south wings. On the third floor was stack number three, surrounded by the north end reference room and the south end reserve reading room. The third floor completed the final portion of the building's modified "H" plan. Floors four and five housed stacks only and began the more vertical portion of the library. Floor six, the final floor to be completed during original construction, did not contain a stack. Instead, it housed a large graduate reading room (with its own circulation desk), two seminar rooms, a room for special collections, and the periodical room. In preparing for future additions, the sixth floor was designed to be a transitional level that would link the two sections of the library.<sup>17</sup> Harold Forbes, Associate Curator of the West Virginia and Regional History Department, commented, "In traveling to different parts of the country, I could see pretty clearly the difference in the architecture. The biggest feature was that Wise was built to be tall and compact."<sup>18</sup> Initial funding for the library topped off at around \$300,000. By the final days of construction, the total cost had escalated to \$450,000.<sup>19</sup> Though more





expensive than intended, the result proved to be worth the cost.

Students returning to classes in the fall of 1931 found the new campus library redefining the surrounding landscape. The five-story Georgian-style building had a modest exterior of red brick and Indiana limestone designed using strong, simple lines. Nothing overly ornate detracted from its straight lines and large features. The few details ornamenting the building's exterior were specifically appropriate to a library.<sup>20</sup> Placed directly above and to the sides of the main entrance was a series of seals carved in limestone specially crafted as a tribute to famous librarians, printers, and presses, with the West Virginia seal proudly positioned in the middle.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast with the building's modest exterior, the library's interior featured elaborate woodwork, bold colors, and elegant furnishings. Various shades and types of marble were used throughout the library: corridors were outfitted in gray Vermont marble; staircases were lined in pink Tennessee marble; and many of the large door facings were decorated in green New York marble. Forbes said of the interior, "It was a darker environment because of the distinct architectural style."<sup>22</sup> The library woodwork was finished in a distinctive dark walnut. All of the library's desks and catalog cases, which were given the same walnut finish, were purchased from the Bentley and Gerwig Furniture Company of Parkersburg, WV.<sup>23</sup> Simple on the outside, magnificent on the inside, the new library was appreciated and respected by all.

On the afternoon of November 20, 1931, the library was officially dedicated in memory

of Dr. Lonna Dennis Arnett, a Morgantown native who had served for twenty years as a WVU librarian. A loyal employee of the University, he had envisioned a library that the school would be proud of. Alumni Association President F. Witcher McCullough presided over the dedication as the master key was passed to the President of the State Board of Control, the Governor, and finally into the hands of WVU President John Roscoe Turner. The library was then opened to students and faculty.<sup>24</sup>

As more and more students made use of WVU's new library, it became clear that the design would require a change in library procedures. In a typical laterally-spread library, books are housed mostly on a single floor. While this type of layout can be efficient in a smaller library, taking books from place to place in a large building means traveling long distances and is physically draining for both librarians and patrons. In the new WVU skyscraper library, transporting books from floor to floor was done by elevator rather than by walking the entire length of a building.<sup>25</sup> This feature greatly benefited the librarians and staff who sorted, delivered, and restocked the shelves. For students, a whole new process for looking up and checking out books was introduced. By 1960, the steps involved in the check-out process were outlined as follows:

To acquire a book, the patron must first go to the card catalog in the Reference Room and look up the desired book by either author,







title, or subject. He must then copy down the call number in the upper left-hand corner of the card on the call slip and take it to the Circulation Desk in the main lobby. This slip is sent to the stack area by tubes, and the book is sent to the desk on a book lift. Students who have at least a 3.0 average for the previous semester or are involved in the graduate program may get a stack permit, which allows them to go into the stacks to select books themselves. These permits may be obtained from the Circulation Desk.<sup>26</sup>

Some might argue that selective admission into the stacks was unfair to many students, but without strict requirements for stack entrance, students risked not being able to find the specific book that they needed. During the library's pre-stack pass period, approximately one thousand books were lost each year. Although some losses might have been attributed to theft, an overwhelming number of books were simply misshelved by students reading in the stacks.<sup>27</sup> The mechanical book carriers and pneumatic tubes that linked the desks to the stacks were tremendously efficient, and ensured a much tighter control over the flow of books going into and out of the library. By awarding stack access to only a small percentage of responsible students and taking care of the remaining requests on their own, librarians were able to drastically cut book losses and provide better service for the University.

As the library continued to grow, gifts began to pour in. Local Morgantown residents, University alumni, various community organizations, and library friends had together contributed roughly 1,000 new volumes per year

since the opening of the library. In 1949, an impressive donation was given on behalf of the late Arthur S. Dayton, an alumnus of the University class of 1907, by his widow, Mrs. Ruth Woods Dayton. The contribution consisted of a 7000-piece book collection that was to be cared for and displayed in a new rare books room within the library. Glass cases were ordered to showcase many of the celebrated works from the collection including the four folios of William Shakespeare, and first edition writings of Milton, Jane Austen, Mark Twain, and more. The Rare Book Room was formally opened by Mrs. Dayton on October 30, 1951, and it continues to serve as a monument to the library's finest and most valuable works today.<sup>28</sup>

Another one of the more significant individual donations given was the result of a practical joke pulled on Halloween night in 1950. Several collegiate pranksters had turned on a water hose and left it running inside of the building, resulting in the loss of thousands of books. The worst damage befell the University's large collection of surgical manuals.<sup>29</sup> In response, Dr. W.C. Moser, a local physician who had practiced within the community for 45 years, contributed his entire medical library in an effort rebuild the collection and hoping that more local physicians would follow suit.<sup>30</sup>

While most library donations have been in the form of books, there are a few noteworthy exceptions. In 1896, an 18-year-old Italian





named Thoney Pietro crossed the Atlantic to start a new life in the United States. Pietro entered the States with no money and no place to go, but was soon living the American dream. Starting out with only a wheelbarrow and a trowel for laying bricks, he soon amassed a fortune as a skilled and respected contractor. In 1940, the retired contractor contacted Peter Bazzanti of Florence, Italy, to commission a thank-you gift to America for having offered him such opportunity. Bazzanti sculpted a bust of the famous Italian poet, Dante Alighieri. Due to numerous confusing encounters with customs and its temporary holding at the Library of Congress, Pietro's gift was eight years in transit before arriving at its final resting place at the WVU library.<sup>31</sup> The bust of Dante was sculpted from white marble and rests atop a green and brown marble pedestal. On the day of its dedication, Pietro said, "The gift I am making is only a symbol which I hope for years to come will remind our young people of Italy — not the strife-torn, misguided Italy, but the real Italy, of music, laughter, art, and friendship."<sup>32</sup> The impressive bust can now be found in the library's Robinson Reading Room, keeping careful watch over each new generation.

By 1949, just eighteen years after the new library first began operation, talks of expansion were already underway. Overcrowding had become an issue, and a makeshift reserve reading room was fashioned in place of the library's old cafeteria, allowing for 170 seats to be added to the 600 for which the library had been designed. As the forties drew to a close, the student population soared and new buildings rose, filling any and all available campus space. Carroll Wilkinson,

Head of the Downtown Library Access Services and Depository, remarked, "The Wise was grand in the 1930s, but by the 1950s, it was characterized by modesty."<sup>33</sup> According to an article in *The Daily Athenaeum* in January of 1949, "It was announced that the West Virginia University Board of Governors had accepted a grant of \$15,000 by the General Education Board of New York for the purpose of strengthening the University's collection of periodical, yearbook, and other service material."<sup>34</sup>

The University's West Virginia Collection also became a focal point of development. The University's collection of West Virginia history, social development, genealogy, and literature had become the most complete collection in the world and was in desperate need of new housing. University librarian E. M. Grieder lamented, "We are able to house it, but we cannot put it in shape for the researchers who can bring these treasures to light."<sup>35</sup>

Preliminary plans called for an additional 12-story tower to be built atop the already-existing five-story structure. The addition would have made the WVU library the state's tallest building and provided room for a staggering one million volumes.<sup>36</sup> While the proposed building would have been a permanent solution for all future overcrowding problems, the impracticality of such a structure in 1949 combined with limited funds sent the elaborate plan straight to the archives. Instead, a scaled-down version of the plan that called for five additional floors rather than 12 was adopted. Construction for the project began in March 1950 and was completed just in time to kick off the fall semester of 1951. Adding



26,000 square feet and elevating the building's height to 108 feet, the brick and steel addition more than doubled the size of the library. Of the five new floors created, four were used as additional stack levels for books, documents, and manuscripts.<sup>37</sup> The newfound stack space improved organization within the library, allowing for each floor to become specialized in certain subjects. Wedged in between the first and second stack tiers, the extra floor housed periodical and reserve reading rooms along with four separate rooms specifically designated for special collections, including biological and physical sciences, public documents, rare books, and the library's extensive West Virginia Collection.<sup>38</sup>

The expansion project of 1950 provided ample new library space for books and students alike. With the final cost approaching \$500,000, the new addition increased book capacity to over 400,000 and successfully increased student seating by 340. In addition to the much-needed space, the project brought with it a number of additional benefits. With students' study needs in mind, 140 separate carrels were installed. Patrons yearning for a quiet place to read were treated to 35 of these carrels per floor, each equipped with a desk, a chair, lighting, and electrical connection.<sup>39</sup>

Advancements were also made in the organization of the books themselves. Courtesy of the Virginia Metal Products Company, over twelve miles of books could now be shelved on modern, pre-fabricated shelving.<sup>40</sup> Once in the stacks, books and manuscripts were preserved with newly-installed humidity controls to adjust humidity on all nine stack levels. The humidity

monitoring system remained effective as the sole air control in the library until 1970, when an automatic heating and cooling system was installed by the Stuart McMunn Co. of Clarksburg at the cost of \$387,000.<sup>41</sup> When construction had finished, the overall magnificence of the new structure was clear. The upward extension made the WVU library one of the largest university libraries in the nation at the time, while the extra attention to detail and design made it one of the most modern and user-friendly.

The completion of the library's expansion came at a perfect time in our country's history. With the beginning of a new decade came also the beginning of new ideas. By the end of the 1950s, new technology in the United States was surging. Information was being gathered and processed more quickly than ever before, and for college students, the changes were happening right in their own libraries. With ample space to house a variety of services, the WVU library's first steps toward a new era in education came in April of 1956 in the form of microfilm. Information previously unavailable to Morgantown residents and students could now be accessed via small rolls of film, each containing hundreds of newspaper articles or complete volumes. The microfilm purchased in 1956 included the Early American Imprints Collection, which contained the full text of every obtainable book, pamphlet, and broadside printed in the United States from 1639 to 1800. Soon after, the library purchased a collection of over 5,000 plays written in England from 1500 to 1800 and in America from 1741 to 1830, along with microfilm subscriptions of 18 major newspapers including the



*New York Times*. By the end of the year, WVU's investment into the new technology had paid off, offering University students and faculty an array of newfound resources contained in just over 4,500 reels.<sup>42</sup>

Access to microfilm was just the first of many new services to be offered in the library over the following years, and with each passing decade came newer and better technology. In the sixties, the library made an investment that forever simplified the gathering of resources — the photocopy machine. For the first time, students were effectively given home access to information in reference books that were unavailable for checkout. By May of 1966, it was estimated that over 100 people took advantage of this new service each day, and 18,000–20,000 duplications were generated from the library's two machines each month. While microfilm provided new information, photocopying succeeded in making that information more accessible.

In the seventies, resource accessibility stretched beyond the confines of a single library. Opening up a doorway between WVU and the whole of the state, teletype service introduced networking to the education system. Offered through the library's reference department, the teletype service was made possible by a single machine that electronically linked WVU to the West Virginia Library Commission in Charleston. A total of twenty libraries around the state — ten regional and ten collegiate — were hooked up to the circuit. Twice a day, the Teletype machine printed out a list of the resources requested from all around West Virginia. In the 1970–1971 academic year, over 8,100 teletyped and mailed

requests were sent to the WVU library.<sup>43</sup>

In 1989, what was arguably the most important advancement in information exchange during the last century was introduced to West Virginia University. Ten years in the works, talks of automation finally became a reality when RMG Consultants, Inc. of Chicago were contracted to assist in the preparation of the Requirements Report for an Integrated Library System and Related Services for the West Virginia University Libraries. NOTIS Systems, Inc. was selected as the official online library information system during the winter of 1991, and by September 30 of the following year, online access to materials housed in the University Libraries was launched. The inaugural day of the library's connection to the World Wide Web also brought about the dedication of MountainLynx—WVU's very own online catalog. The new library system cost \$1.2 million with \$720,000 of the bill paid for by the athletics department's donation of profits made from a single WVU football bowl game.<sup>44</sup>

For students attending the University during the nineties and today, new technology has virtually eliminated any chance of coming up empty-handed when accessing the library's resources. Advances in technology such as the MountainLynx database have not only eradicated the need for the classic card catalog, but have also made possible online access to the full text of journals, links to volumes and newspapers located in other libraries, and in 1998, fully operational electronic access to WVU theses and dissertations.

The electronic thesis gives graduate students a chance to make their research available





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worldwide via the Internet. WVU was the second institution in the world to implement the electronic thesis program, and since its introduction, WVU ETDs have been accessed over three million times in more than 100 countries worldwide. In addition to our own ETD, WVU is currently engaged in an outreach program to help under-developed countries implement similar programs.<sup>45</sup> John Hagen, coordinator of the ETD Program, says that, “For very little cost, we can have a huge impact. It’s like opening up our library’s doors to the world.”<sup>46</sup> The continuous growth of new technology has forever changed the way people think about education. Rather than undermining the original foundation of the library as the primary learning institution, the addition of online texts and resources during the past decade has only made the University library system stronger and all-encompassing.

On June 20, 1999, the University proved once again just how important a strong library was to the furthering of education. As the ground was broken for a new library adjacent to Wise, Provost Gerald Lang commented, “The enhancement of the WVU Libraries is essential for the University to continue its mission of service to the state and to maintain its status as a Carnegie I research institution. An effective library system is also vital in attracting top faculty members, and producing students who are prepared to function in a global society.”<sup>47</sup> The \$36 million facility contributed an additional 124,000 square feet to Wise’s existing 86,000, and focused particularly on students’ study needs. Rather than coordinate with Wise’s unique stack structure, the decision was made to build the new library as

an entirely separate entity positioned directly in front of the Wise Library on University Avenue. Carroll Wilkinson suggested that the need for the new structure was so strong because, “The old building never got to expand with modern trends. This is the largest academic library in the state of West Virginia, but it was in a facility that could not accommodate all of our holdings.”<sup>48</sup> Renovations to Wise allowed for the structures to be connected by a series of hallways and one stunning glassed-in atrium, which retains Wise Library’s original limestone façade and provides a spacious study area. The new structure includes a number of group study rooms and quiet enclaves for students seeking solitary working space. The new building also houses an assortment of specialized rooms, similar to the area in Wise containing the West Virginia Collection.<sup>49</sup> The five-story construction project was completed just in time for the spring semester of 2002. Penny Pugh, long-time librarian and current Head of the Reference Department, said of the new library building: “I am in my dream job at my dream location. We have this wonderful new facility, but we have also retained the character of the Wise Library.”<sup>50</sup>

After the new library was opened, the original Wise Library received some improvements of its own. Rather than give Wise a new modern look, the \$4 million project renovation returned the building to its roots. According to Dean of Libraries Frances O’Brien, “All the spaces in this building are deliberately sort of old fashioned and have a classic library look. Efforts were made to take [it] back to how [it] probably looked in 1931 when the library was built.” The renovated



library features original chairs, desks, and tables, many with their original inventory tags. In an effort to mix the historical and the modern, slight alterations were made to many of the early pieces to include data ports, enabling students to connect to the Internet. Myra Lowe, associate dean of University Libraries, expresses her own thoughts on the preservation of Wise Library artifacts: “I’m very grateful that we were able to have the furniture from the 1930s in the reading rooms refinished, and that the beautiful woodwork and marble in Wise could be restored and retained. These historical spaces are inspirational, and they are important to many former students. I’ve spoken with many individuals who have used Wise Library since it opened in 1931, and they’re thrilled to see that these parts of the building are still being used for library services.”<sup>51</sup>

With the addition of the newly completed library next door, space in Wise was freed up to house art, historical archives, and rare book collections. The majority of the new exhibits in Wise are affiliated with West Virginia culture, and each room has an Appalachian flavor. Artifacts dating back to the Civil War, a folk music collection from the thirties recorded by a

WVU professor with a primitive record cutting machine, approximately 125,000 photographs of West Virginia images, two art galleries, and four floors filled entirely with archival collections from both the University and the state are just some of the treasures located within the restored Wise Library.

Wise Library, an integral player in the development of West Virginia University as an esteemed institution of higher education,

was rededicated on the morning of October 4, 2003.<sup>52</sup> Each year, book endowments, many supported by faculty and staff, grow and technology improves. The words of a WVU librarian in 1949 remain true today: “The library serves students and faculty members in every part of the institution; instruction, research, and general cultural development which we

associate with higher learning are all absolutely dependent on it.”<sup>53</sup>

From its charming architectural presence as a campus landmark to its high-speed connections to information sources from around the world, the Wise Library, the oldest part of the Downtown Library Complex, is and will continue to be the beating heart of West Virginia University.







## Notes

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- 1 Gerald Lang Interview, October 2004.
- 2 Mildred Moyers with Marianne Courtney, “*Brief History of the WVU Libraries From 1931.*” Available <http://www.libraries.wvu.edu/history/> (9 June 1999).
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 “First University Library Was Housed In Woodburn,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 15 February 1955.
- 5 “Library Is Nineteen Unit To Be Finished Since 1870,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 21 November 1931.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Moyers, “Brief History.”
- 8 “First University,” 1955.
- 9 “Library Is Nineteen,” 1931.
- 10 Moyers, “Brief History.”
- 11 “The Book Tower,” *Central Press Bureau*, December 1931.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 “Book Tower,” 1931.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *The Daily Athenaeum*, 1 February 1930.
- 16 “Library Is Nineteen,” 1931.
- 17 “Book Tower,” 1931.
- 18 Harold Forbes Interview, October 2004.
- 19 Moyers, “Brief History.”
- 20 “Book Tower,” 1931.
- 21 “Library Efficiency Aids In Research,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 2 May 1975.
- 22 Forbes Interview, 2004.
- 23 “Book Tower,” 1931.
- 24 “New Library At University Is Dedicated,” *The Morgantown Post*, 20 November 1931.
- 25 “Library Plans Are Explained By Dr. Arnett,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 20 November 1931.
- 26 “Library Efficiency,” 1975.
- 27 “U’ Library Missing 1,023 Lost Books,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 19 October 1966.
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- 29 “Water Soaks Thousands of ‘U’ Books,” *The Daily Athenaeum*, 2 November 1950.
- 30 “Library Is Given Medical Volumes,” *The Dominion News*, 3 November 1950.
- 31 “Poet’s Bust In WVU Library Took 8 Years To Reach Campus,” *The Morgantown Post*, 21 November 1959.
- 32 *The Daily Athenaeum*, 10 November 1959.
- 33 Carroll Wilkinson Interview, October 2004.
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ca. 1967



## Façade carvings from the front of the Wise Library are now preserved in the Atrium.

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### *Page 11*

The seal of the printing house of Jacques Moderne of Lyons, France — a seal the fifteenth century with the *fleur de lis* as the central motif, having the rope intertwined, significant of the complete work of this house.



### *Front Cover, Title Page and Page 9*

The seal of the Morley Press, Ltd., London, England. This is a modern seal of the twentieth century and represents the richness of the borders and bookplates of this house.



### *Page 7*

The seal of a librarian and printer — Christoph Valdarfer of Milan, Italy, about the year 1474, being the shield surrounded with crossed keys, a medieval note.



### *Page 13*

The seal of the librarian, Jean Saugrain of Lyons, France, during the years 1554 to about 1574.



### *Page 15*

The seal of the House of Stephanus de Nebiis du Burgo Franco of Pavia, Italy, of the year 1484.

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