

# Chronicle

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## Manuscripts, letters enhance Warren Collection

The Heard Library's impressive Robert Penn Warren Collection recently acquired manuscripts and correspondence exchanged between the late poet laureate and fellow poet William Meredith. Charles Delzell, president of Friends of the Library, announced this important new acquisition at the Friends' annual dinner in November. The new acquisition builds on Warren's other letters and materials, which are maintained in the Heard Library's Special Collections.

Written from 1962 to 1980, the material ranges from personal information shared by two friends to business matters discussed by fellow academics to artistic exchanges between two poets. Of special significance is the editorial advice that Warren elicits from Meredith and its influence on Warren's poetry.

Their craft can be seen in a critical letter from Meredith that addresses the typescript of Warren's collection, *Being Here* (1980). Meredith's attention to specific words—even punctuation—is acute. His suggestions are scrupulously tendered and, more often than not, are incorporated by Warren. Mutual fondness is conveyed with generous humor, as in Meredith's remark about Warren's poem, "Passersby on a Snowy Night":

What can I say? It has begun to memorize itself already. I'll stick my neck out and say I think you're a pretty good poet.

Letters to Meredith from Warren's wife, Eleanor Clark, and a typescript from his daughter, Rosanna, sent as a Christmas greeting, are also included in the collection.

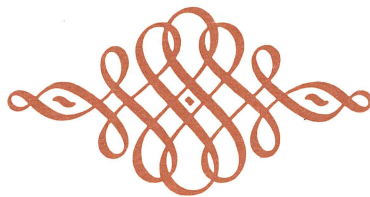
In addition to the Warren Collection, the university has also honored this distinguished alumnus by renaming the Vanderbilt Center

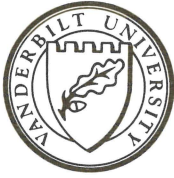


*Robert Penn Warren and fellow Fugitives: from left, Allen Tate, Merrill Moore, Warren, John Crowe Ransom, and Donald Davidson.*

for the Humanities as the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities.

Winner of three Pulitzer Prizes, Warren was the first to be so honored for both his poetry and fiction. As a Vanderbilt undergraduate, he was a member of the influential Fugitive and Agrarian writers and poets. He taught literature as a faculty member in the College of Arts and Science during the 1930s.





## The President's Corner



Charles F. Delzell

I was happy to see so many of you at our annual dinner on November 2 at the University Club. There were 136 of us present. Richard Marius of Harvard University, who was introduced by Ann Cook, spoke to us on the topic, "Life into Fiction" (please see related article on Page 3). He explained the

background of his forthcoming novel and read excerpts from it. Marius's novel is inspired in considerable part by the experiences of his father, a Greek immigrant in Appalachia in the 1920s. I am sure that many of us will want to read it.

At our meeting we also adopted revisions to our Constitution that clarify the purpose and structure of our organization.

Four hard-working members of the Board of Directors completed their two-year terms in November. We are much indebted to Louise LeQuire, Adele Schweid, William E. Turner, and Morris Wachs for their fine service. To replace them, we have elected Brigitte Porter, Jacque Voegeli, Blanche Henry Weaver, and Reba Wilcoxon. Congratulations!

Kay Beasley has asked to be relieved of the chairmanship of the Acquisitions Committee but has graciously agreed to continue to serve on it. Morris Wachs, who remains on the board as our new vice president for acquisitions, will head this committee.

At the banquet we announced the purchase by the Friends of a valuable collection of correspondence and manuscript material exchanged between the late Robert Penn Warren and fellow poet William Meredith in the years between 1962 and 1980 (please see related article on Page 1). This collection also includes variant versions of the typescript of poems that comprise Warren's book, *Being Here* (1980), and much more. In view of Warren's long-

standing association with Vanderbilt University, it is especially fitting that we now possess this exciting research material.

I am confident that with your continuing generous support the Friends will make additional important acquisitions for the Heard Library this coming year.

I hope all of you enjoyed a very happy holiday season and wish for you the best of new years!

Charles F. Delzell  
President



### A tribute to Catherine Duncan

During the season of joy, the Heard Library mourned the loss of its good friend, Catherine Duncan, long-time and indefatigable chairman of the Library Volunteers.

Always gracious and ever conscientious, Catherine drew together and encouraged a coterie of volunteers who shared her expertise in the French language. Together they did phenomenal work identifying and organizing the library's fine acquisitions of the 1980s, the Pascal Pia and Gilbert Sigaux Collections.

She nourished us all with madeleines and her abundant energy, and devotion to her family was always evident in her conversation. We extend to Starkey Duncan, and to their children and grandchildren, our deepest sympathy and our gratitude for the joy Catherine shared with us.



*Richard Marius charms Friends at annual dinner.*



*Malcolm Getz chats with Virgil and Louise LeQuire.*

## Marius: 'Writers Make Things Up'

More than 130 guests enjoyed remarks by Professor Richard Marius at the 16th annual Friends of the Library dinner held in November at the University Club.

Marius, director of expository writing and senior lecturer at Harvard University, entertained the group with stories illustrating how writers transform life experiences into fiction. "They make things up," he stated.

As a preface to reading excerpts from his upcoming book—tentatively called *Once in Arcadia*—Marius recounted an experience from his childhood. The poignant recollection focused on his father's attempts to divorce himself from his Greek heritage while living in various Western European countries, whose urbane ways he perceived as disapproving of folkish affiliations. His father's reluctance to

acknowledge his roots extended so deep that he refused to speak his native tongue—even privately among family.

But on a holiday to the Greek islands, the senior Marius could not resist the tantalizing music emanating from a nearby festival. The young Marius watched his stoic father succumb to ardent dance and song, to the delight and frequent applause of the other celebrants.

Marius has taken this theme of cultural rejection/acceptance and woven it loosely throughout his new novel, which is scheduled to be published in 1991.

A native of Lenoir City, Tennessee, Marius taught history at the University of Tennessee for 14 years before joining the Harvard faculty in 1978.



*Marius, left, enjoys a laugh with Chancellor Emeritus Alexander Heard and his wife, Jean Heard.*

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## New Director Guides Central, Science Libraries



Bill Robnett, new director of the Central and Science Libraries.

The Central Library and Sarah Shannon Stevenson Science Library have a new director. Bill Robnett, former director of the Division of Reader Services at Rice University's Fondren Library in Houston, assumed his new responsibilities in October. At Rice, Robnett headed the collection development efforts, a task he looks forward to at Vanderbilt.

"The Heard Library is forward-looking," he says. "At the same time, because we can't be all things to all people, we have to choose where to focus, where to build."

Building activity of a different sort greeted Robnett on his first day, as Project Havoc—work related to the General Library Building's heating and air-conditioning (HVAC) renovation—focused on his office. He was not put off, however, by the Central Library's disrupted environment. "When I left Rice, we had just completed three years of HVAC and other modifications to the library building," says Robnett. "Taking time to correct long-term problems improves the surroundings for the long term."

Robnett has a scientific background as a

librarian, technical editor, and college instructor. He spent several years as a teacher in Southeast Asia, initially as a Peace Corps volunteer. At the end of his tour of duty, Robnett went to Malaysia, attracted by the chance to design research facilities and organize curricula in scientific disciplines. A similar sense of adventure and motivation led him to Vanderbilt. "(Library Director) Malcolm Getz sent me a draft of *Leadership in the Information Age*," he says (see excerpt on Page 6). "I appreciated that the Heard Library had direction and momentum, that the leadership knew what it wanted to accomplish."

"We are happy that Bill chose to join us," says Getz. "We are looking forward to his experienced leadership in directing the Central and Science Libraries during this stage of broad development."

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## Friends of the Library Board of Directors 1989-91

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Paula Covington

## Raider of the Lost Books

Contrary to popular notion, librarians aren't always surrounded by books. Combining the skill and care of a scholar with the gumption of an explorer, Paula Covington has taken her job as a Vanderbilt librarian far beyond the walls of Central Library.

Covington has logged many hours at her computer and on the telephone in her role as project director and general editor for the publication-in-work, *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Critical Guide to Research Sources*. Her interest and expertise in Latin American studies has also led her to pursue sources in the field, in this case Latin America.

Like a "Raider of the Lost Books," Covington goes into the field to bring back primary sources. Her expeditions are colored by adventures—such as the night she found herself listening to a Nicaraguan revolutionary who literally came out of the jungle to join her and several dinner companions and impress them with his stories. The surprises in her travels have taught Covington the virtues of flexibility—a lesson she has applied in her work as editor on the critical guide in progress.

Since 1976, Covington has served as Vanderbilt's Latin American and Iberian Studies bibliographer. She also teaches courses in research methods for the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies.

Three years ago she began work on the ambitious project of compiling a critical research guide for Latin American and Caribbean studies. Funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, Covington is responsible for coordinating the efforts of nearly 50 faculty and bibliographers across the country who are contributing research essays and resource descriptions to the publication.

Bibliographic sections will be tailored to the scholars' essays on research trends and issues in areas ranging from literature, politics, and history to women's studies, film, and music. Also included will be a section covering resources and special collections of Latin Amer-

ican materials in academic libraries in the United States. One of Vanderbilt's strengths in this area—18th- and 19th-century travel writing—has been built with Friends' support and will be cited in the upcoming publication. Travel accounts are primary sources in the study of Latin American history.

Much like the scientists, soldiers, and fortune-seekers who penned these accounts, Covington is no stranger to travel in Latin America. On a trip to Nicaragua, for example, she drove through the countryside looking for books in happenstance locations: markets, airports, and small rural libraries. Such canvassing is necessary in some Latin American countries because no organized method exists for collecting and maintaining books, pamphlets, and letters. "In many cases," Covington says, "The U. S. has better collections available than does the home country."

Ironically, the political turmoil that impedes the conservation of books and written information is the very thing that inspires the writings in the first place. As Covington observes, "The literature generated out of political strife is a primary source for scholars interested in the period."

In organizing the diverse group of scholars and librarians working on this project, Covington has spent much time reviewing and editing the manuscripts and communicating with contributors and potential contributors. It's a job that requires an adept hand at managing last-minute changes and unpredictable problems.

One of the best aspects of the project is the network of scholars that has been created by cooperative work on the book. It is a network that Covington foresees will continue long after the book itself is finished.

Both the publication and the network of scholars owe much of their success to Covington's energy and focus. In her travels from Vanderbilt's Central Library to the Latin American countryside, she proves that the best librarians sometimes crop up in the most unlikely places.

# Leadership in the Information Age: Electronic Services

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*(This is the second in a series of articles taken from the library's new publication, Leadership in the Information Age, written by Malcolm Getz, director of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library.)*

The Heard Library is among the most innovative libraries in the world, showing significant leadership in bringing electronic systems to the campus to improve the quality of library services. The information age is nowhere more manifest than in Vanderbilt's libraries.

The library's electronic services complement the fundamental role of books in three ways. First, some documents are more useful in electronic form. Second, electronic tools can provide convenient access to many more books and articles than any library can hope to own. Third, some information is available only in electronic format.

Electronic documents are useful for quick recall of facts, for rapid association of terms and ideas from disparate sources, and for information that is to be counted, sorted, and shared with a group of people simultaneously, or dispatched over a distance. Electronic tools are so important in law that, since 1982, all first-year law students receive detailed formal instruction from Law Library staff in the use of the full-text electronic legal databases LEXIS and WESTLAW. These services allow students to find information by individual keywords in federal and state statutes, judicial cases, and in many other documents quickly and in ways not possible with printed sources.

Relying exclusively on the purchase of materials as the vehicle for providing information to scholars is no longer sufficient. The number of books published has grown rapidly and will continue to grow. World-wide there may be 600,000 new titles of all kinds published each year; the Heard Library acquires about 30,000 current book titles annually from around the world. In addition to books, libraries must select from more than 100,000 currently published series titles. The Heard Library subscribes to about 19,000 of these. With electronic tools we can locate and borrow copies of articles in thousands of titles that we do not currently receive. Electronic tools then provide a significant measure of access to a

rapidly growing universe of information, only part of which we can afford to acquire.

In more technologically oriented disciplines in the sciences, engineering, and some of the social sciences, scholars now communicate routinely via electronic means. Young scholars have achieved international reputations for their intellectual contributions based solely on their electronic communications, shared with leading scholars exclusively in electronic form. Where electronic documents are the dominant mode of scholarly discourse, vehicles for capturing, indexing, and archiving them must be found for the benefit of students, scholars in tangential disciplines, and future scholars.

## *Directions of growth for electronic services*

Acorn is the centerpiece of the library's electronic services. Named for an icon on the university's shield, Acorn is an electronic catalog that includes citations to the holdings of all the university's libraries by title, author, subject and keyword. Not only does Acorn list all the books in all the units of the Heard Library, but Acorn itself can be consulted electronically from faculty offices and student dormitory rooms.

Vanderbilt scholars can use Acorn to search national and international databases such as MEDLINE, the National Library of Medicine's index to medical journal articles. Citations to articles in well over 3,000 journals, many including abstracts, may be located by author, title, subject, and individual keywords on Acorn. The Heard Library subscribes to a major portion of the periodicals indexed in MEDLINE. Articles in journals not held by the Heard Library can be obtained from other libraries using DOCLINE, another system devised by the National Library of Medicine.

We expect to support a similar file for locating government documents and another file to describe the holdings of the Center for Research Libraries, of which the Heard Library is a member. The Center holds an outstanding collection of foreign dissertations; regional, ethnic, and foreign newspapers; foreign technical journals; and other rare and unusual items. Those items not held in the collections of the



*Arlene and Raymond Zimmerman present a portrait of his parents, Mary and Harry Zimmerman, to the Divinity Library at a reception honoring the Zimmerman Judaica Collection.*

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## Celebrating the Zimmerman Judaica Collection

A reception honoring the Mary and Harry Zimmerman Judaica Collection of the Divinity Library was held October 16. Sponsored by the Vanderbilt Divinity School and the Divinity Library, the event celebrated the naming of the collection and a \$500,000 commitment from the Zimmerman Family Foundation.

Walter Harrelson, Distinguished Professor of Hebrew Bible, spoke on the significance of the collection. Materials in this fine collection enhance the ability of Hebrew scholars to

study and interpret Jewish and early Christian thought and practice, he noted. These resources make possible richer interaction between researchers of both Christian and Jewish faiths.

H. Jackson Forstman, Charles G. Finney Professor of Theology and former dean of the Divinity School, added that the collection serves as an important resource for the wider community as well.

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Heard Library can be identified and borrowed electronically. Acorn will provide access to other indexes to the periodical literature.

The Heard Library also provides more than 40 other electronic databases on compact disks, including the Current Index to Journals in Education, PsychLIT, Dissertation Abstracts, and Art Index. The rapid extension of Acorn and the implementation of compact disks has been generously supported by the Pew Charitable Trust.

Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt expects the electronic dimension of library service to advance the university significantly. The Heard Library is committed to making research easier by bringing powerful, but easy to use, electronic tools to bear in appropriate ways. We seek to extend support for materials in electronic format. We require more powerful software, adapted to specific library applications, and additional hardware so that scholarly communication can keep pace with the modes of communication in other dimensions of our society.

For example, we propose to bring full-text documents to the electronic medium in two ways. First, we propose to manage documents that can be transferred to individual computers in faculty offices and student dormitory rooms. Second, we propose to mount significant reference tools in full-text with graphics in the large computer environment, on-call on Caravan, the campus network for faculty and students. Each user of the library at Vanderbilt should have on-line access to such tools as

major dictionaries in multiple languages, the Constitution and other founding documents, a pharmacopeia, an extended information base organized around the periodic chart of the elements, and a version of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. This information-rich environment will put facts and relationships in the hands of writers as they are needed and in a very useful form.

In addition, we will provide a sophisticated electronic gateway to off-campus sources, which will allow our scholars to extend their reach to other campuses around the world. The community of scholars, then, is limited by the academic network and not by the confines of the campus. Facsimile transmitters and receivers can send copies of articles quickly via the Caravan network to researchers and clinicians on request. Facsimile documents are received from distant libraries by researchers on our campus.

Our leadership position in electronic library services makes our library easy to use, encourages more active use by students, and so enhances scholarly pursuits across the university. In many ways high quality electronic services humanize the library by allowing users to concentrate on intellectually interesting and important tasks. Electronic tools also provide access to many times the number of titles in our own collection as well as information that is available in no other way. We seek support for added software, more hardware, and the acquisition of documents in electronic form.

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## Friends, Indeed!

The Jean and Alexander Heard Library is proud of its Friends. Members of this important organization—now numbering more than 500—have contributed greatly to the accomplishments of the library. You can help the Heard Library continue its momentum by filling out the membership card below and becoming a member of Friends of the Library. If you are already a member, please share this membership form with someone else or consider giving membership in Friends as a gift.

I/we wish to become a member of the Friends of the Library as indicated below:

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*Contributions of \$100 or more may be restricted to the collection of your choice. All contributions are tax deductible. Send to: The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University, Box 155 Peabody Station, Nashville, Tennessee 37203*

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