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The Library Associates

Join more than 6,000 other friends, book lovers, alumni, and faculty who recognize that the influence of a great research library reaches beyond the university it serves to the many communities of which it is a part.

Library Associates receive complimentary copies of the quarterly newsletter *Bene Legere*, as well as invitations to special occasions at the Library. For more information on the Library Associates program, please write or telephone: The Library Development Office, Room 131 Doe Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-6000;

The Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library Turns 75

One of the great treasures of the Berkeley campus, the Morrison Memorial Library celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. Dedicated by UC President William Campbell on February 5, 1928, it opened as a reading room and browsing library for faculty and students, housing a non-circulating collection of some 10,000 volumes, mostly from the personal collection of its namesake, San Francisco attorney Alexander Morrison (1856-1921). The Library was made possible by a significant gift from Morrison's widow, philanthropist May Treat Morrison (1858-1939). Both of the Morrises graduated in the Cal Class of 1878. The Library now contains a circulating selection of current works of fiction and nonfiction and is open to the public.

In contributing her husband's book collection to the Cal Library, Mrs. Morrison believed that the books that had been the delight and enthusiasm of A.F. Morrison's life could serve no finer purpose than to stimulate a love of reading in the students of his University. Besides the marvelous book collection, furniture from the Morrises' San Francisco home was also donated to the library and is still in use today. Students often say that the Morrison Library is one of the few quiet spots on campus, where the harmony of color, the views from the windows and the comfort and peace of the place allow them to release the tension from their busy University lives.

On February 7, 2003, Chancellor Robert Berdahl rededicated the Morrison Library during a special public reception. His speech that day as well as the remarks of President Campbell at the original dedication in 1928 are presented here in recognition of the Morrison Library's wonderful history and enduring legacy on the Berkeley campus.

Morrison Library Rededication Celebration
Remarks by Chancellor Robert M. Berdahl
February 7, 2003

For 75 years this beautiful and elegant room has provided reading and relaxation for generations of Cal students. The library began with the over 10,000 volumes of Mr. Morrison's personal library. The sofas and over-stuffed chairs, although necessarily refurbished, came from the Morrises' home. The library's wide-ranging collection of poetry, fiction and non-fiction books gives students and others the joy of discovery in a comfortable environment. Over the years a number of librarians have added to the original collection. Periodicals and CDs of music and the spoken word have enriched the offerings. The current maintenance of the old-fashioned grace of this room has been preserved by caring efforts of the present head, Alex Warren.

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The room is more than a refuge of tranquility. It is the site for important literary and scientific lectures. It was the venue for the moving reading of his poetry by Nobel Laureate, Czeslaw Milosz. The popular "Lunch Poems Series," organized by Professor Robert Hass, is a monthly presentation in this place. The Morrison Library has been the unofficial reception salon for the university. The Queen of the Netherlands and the Dalai Lama have been greeted by previous Chancellors in this room.

How this fine place came to be is a story in itself. Alexander F. Morrison and May T. Morrison were graduates of the California Class of 1878. May T. Morrison was one of the first women to graduate from the university. Alexander Morrison subsequently graduated with a law degree from Boalt. He joined a San Francisco law firm in 1881.

Two years later, he partnered with another attorney to found what became a prominent law firm still bearing his name today. The Morrises had a deep attachment to this university and made contributions to their alma mater all their lives. Mr. Morrison was a life-long reader and collector of books from his childhood until his death in 1921. Mrs. Morrison was approached by the University to donate her late husband's large collection to the library. She understandably had a strong sentimental attachment to the books that had been such a large part of his life. She was reluctant to see the personal character of his collection be lost in the much larger university library. When William Wallace Campbell became the tenth president of the university in 1923, he suggested that a special room could be built to house this collection intact and become a memorial to her late husband. Mrs. Morrison was delighted with the idea, donated the collection, and made a generous endowment for the maintenance of the library for years to come. The Morrison Library was dedicated on February 5, 1928. It is the rededication of this happy event that brings us together here today.

The world, the University, and the very nature of academic research have changed greatly since 1928. What is the role of a library geared to non-academic pursuits, in a room apart, in the age of the Internet? There is no doubt of the power and efficacy of the Internet for research of all kinds. It was because of the desire to increase the extension of research sources that drove its creation three decades ago. Yet, for all of us who have used it, its limitations are evident. The very fact of its enormous number of digitized sources often produces an overwhelming number of "hits." Its method of searching by word or phrase matching produces a large number of irrelevant results. Since there is no editor of the Internet, the quality of the facts that result must be given close scrutiny. In fact, many people find that, in the end, its greatest use is to locate a printed book to seriously advance an intellectual inquiry. For the foreseeable future, libraries as repositories of the printed word are secure.

But what of places like the Morrison Library? No claim for the value of this collection for the single-minded pursuit of an intellectual proposition on the edge of human inquiries is made. Quite the contrary, every attempt is made to make this a place apart. A place to escape into the worlds of ideas and the contemplative realm of the more personal plane of poetry and fiction. Here the point is to free the mind to explore beyond the confines of the known and familiar. It is a place of serendipity and entertainment. Its air of quiet is an important, and increasingly scarce, quality in this hectic and noisy urban environment. In an often-secular world, places like this are some of the few

refuges left to entertain one's own thoughts without interruption. Whether the thought is of the highest philosophical nature or the value of a clue in a fictional mystery, they are welcome and nurtured in this place. Nor is there any current replacement for the much greater comfort of reading from a book in any posture one chooses. The feel and smell of a book while cozily enveloped in an over-stuffed chair is one of the underrated human pleasures.

In short, the value of a wonderful place like the Morrison Library cannot be doubted. As long as we desire a comfortable and peaceful place for individual entertainment and relaxation, there will always be a need for this room. There is still no such thing as "virtual" relaxation. Therefore, I join with you in rededicating the Morrison Library to the continuance of its service to the students and community of Berkeley for the generations present and future.

Dedication of Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library

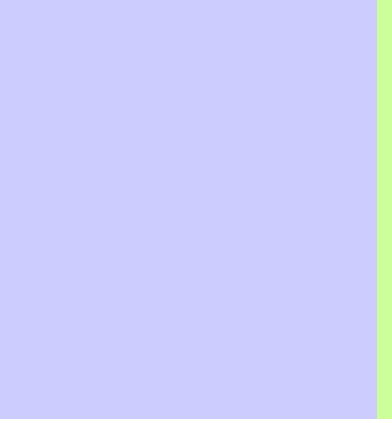
Remarks by President W.W. Campbell

Sunday Afternoon, February 5, 1928

The great numbers of students found today in essentially all American institutions of higher education, effectively prevent the direct contact of the students with the bookshelves of their libraries. In consequence of this regrettable fact, there has developed in our universities and colleges a strong and definite desire for special libraries, in special rooms, where students may freely go and see the best books on all important subjects, take the books off the shelves and leaf them through; where they may carry the books to comfortable chairs, in beautiful surrounds, and, at their leisure and in tranquility of spirit, commune with the master minds of the past. In recent years Harvard University and Minnesota University, and possibly one or two lesser colleges, have come into possession of such libraries, but they are on a scale small in comparison with the special library which you are assisting us to dedicate today.

Throughout the busy years of his regrettably short life, a noted graduate of this University, member of the Class of 1878, Mr. Alexander F. Morrison of San Francisco, devoted much of his leisure time to the personal selection of books which have lived, and to the reading and the consideration of their contents, until at the time of his lamented death he had fifteen thousand volumes near and dear to his heart. They represented the philosophy, the literature, the science, the history, the religions, the civilization of the centuries-the treasured wisdom of the ages.

And now, Mrs. Morrison, an Alumna of the University-a classmate of Mr. Morrison's-out of the goodness of her heart, in gratitude to their combined Alma Mater, in behalf of the students and faculty of the University, not only of this day and generation but of subsequent generations, and especially in loving memory of her husband, has most graciously and generously presented this splendid collection of books, these carefully selected volumes to the University of California. Mrs. Morrison has also borne the total cost of making ready to receive them and their readers the room which the University gladly assigned to the good cause; still more has she contributed by giving constant time, strength, and thought to having not only the general features of the library room, but every detail of the room and its furnishing exactly right. As a result of Mrs. Morrison's generosity, of her thoughtful planning, of Mr. Morrison's reverence for good books, of Architect Ratcliff's interest and the unselfish devotion of this



time and ability, we have in the Alexander F. Morrison Memorial Library, today formally presented to the University by Mrs. Morrison, a treasure, an influence for great good which the students, the faculty, the University community, and ever a wider constituency will always hold in high esteem.

In testimony to the University's appreciation of this gift, and in recognition of the eternal values represented therein, we have organized a program of exercises suitable to the occasion.

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