

NO.57 SUMMER 2001
BENE LEGERE
 NEWSLETTER OF THE
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UNIVERSITY REACHES INTO ACADEMIC RANKS TO APPOINT NEW UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

Five years ago, Thomas Leonard, professor and associate dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, volunteered to serve on the Academic Senate Committee for the Library. "Why not?" he reasoned. His mother is a librarian and he had served as a consultant to the Library of Congress. But more to the point, he was an active user of library materials, had been for years, so he had a professional interest in learning more about the Library and how it can best serve its clientele.



Thomas C. Leonard, Kenneth and Dorothy Hill University Librarian.

Who could have foreseen that in March 2001 Chancellor Berdahl and the Regents of the University would appoint Tom Leonard to be the Kenneth and Dorothy Hill University Librarian? What a strange turn of events.

Actually, it's not all that strange, just a little unexpected. In 1999, after three years on the Academic Senate Library Committee, Tom Leonard was appointed chairman. And when then-University Librarian Jerry Lowell stepped down in July 2000, Leonard, who by this time had learned a great deal about the Library and running it, was appointed interim university librarian. A national search ensued with many twists and turns. In the end the search committee, composed of faculty, alumni, and librarians, tapped Tom on the shoulder.

After earning a bachelor's degree in history at the University of Michigan and a doctorate in the same field from Cal, Leonard taught American history at Columbia before joining Cal's faculty in the School of Journalism (1976). Professor Leonard focuses much of his research and teaching on the role of the press in society, and is the author of three books, including *News for All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press*, which, according to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, "...has turned conventional journalism history on its head...and has written of journalism's users--the uncounted (and counted) millions who have given newspapers and magazines meaning by reading them." His current work is a study of "bad character," and, though it will be put on the back burner for a while, will result in *Bad Reputations: America's Most*

Notorious Men and Women, and explore how journalists and historians have helped to build them up and tear them down.

In a moment of retrospection following his appointment as university librarian, Tom observed: "As I have been 'interim' since last August, this has given me a honeymoon and plenty of time to learn more about the daily operations of the Library and to determine those areas which seem to need some attention. Also it allowed me to develop some priorities as to what I think needs to be done. It is exciting, but rather daunting, to be thrust suddenly into the driver's seat of such an enormous and respected institution and be in a position to make an impact on the future direction of the Library."

Continuing on this train of thought, he noted that his two highest priorities as university librarian are the collections and public service.

Chancellor Berdahl's three-year collections initiative (established in 1998) has done much to restore the quality of Cal's renowned collections, but inflation continues to be a major threat, as does increasing demand for electronic access to materials. So Tom's objective is to secure on a permanent basis additional funding specifically for the collections. This funding, combined with income from endowments, will enable the Library to realize the potential of the new information resources that are now available. The Chancellor has made a commitment to continued support.

The other priority is to restore public services that had been severely curtailed because of budgetary constraints during the early nineties. Special attention is being paid to Moffitt Library, which will be transformed into a true center for undergraduate intellectual life, with improved facilities and furniture, a targeted reference collection, and expanded hours and reference services.

"Concerning improved public service, one project is particularly appealing to me. It is restoration of the Great Rooms on the second floor of Doe Library. Many readers will remember these rooms as the 'north reading room' and the 'subject catalog hall' directly to the south of it. They are mammoth in size, have great light and space, but these days the rooms are looking rather dismal and as though they don't have a specific purpose. Plans call for restoring the rooms, one of which will be used to consolidate reference services, and the other will be used as a quiet reading room. Both rooms are listed on the Historic Register, which reminds us that we must be very sensitive to any changes. This project, which is just in the planning stage, will need to be funded entirely from private sources--and we look forward to significant interest and support from alumni who have memories of using the rooms in the past."

Alan Ritch, who came to Berkeley from UC Santa Cruz a year ago to be associate university librarian in charge of the collections, shared a short anecdote about Tom. "Soon after Tom became interim UL [university librarian], he had to welcome the annual statewide assembly of University of California librarians, which happened to be at Berkeley. Usually the welcome is a brief, ceremonial statement. In fact, Tom jumped right in and presented a lively discourse on what journalists have in common with librarians. In his usual calm and genial manner, he held the attention and won the respect of what might have been a pretty skeptical professional group....He has the broad perspective and conceptual imagination of a historian; the curiosity and factual accuracy of a journalist; and the honesty, good humor, and attentive listening skills of a superb administrator. We are really happy that he is here."

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