

HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY *letters*

FALL 2009



On the cover:

The Widener Room—Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library

Photograph by Rayman F. Fritz
21 August 1915

“Commencement Day, 1915,” wrote University Library Director Archibald Cary Coolidge, “will remain memorable in the history of Harvard as the date of the dedication of the new Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library.” According to Coolidge, the Library “was dedicated . . . with simple but impressive ceremony, including an address by Senator [Henry Cabot] Lodge [Class of 1872] which will remain a model of its kind. On the same day, the moving over of books from Randall Hall began.”

The cover image by Rayman F. Fritz was made just a few months after the Widener dedication and just days after “the Harvard College Library officially began life in its new home” on Monday, August 9, 1915.

Then, as now, the silent rotunda contains memorabilia related to Harry Elkins Widener, a book collector and member of the Harvard Class of 1907, and to his death in 1912 aboard the RMS *Titanic*.

Beyond the rotunda stands the Widener Room itself. Harry’s portrait provides a focus for the room, which, since 1915, has housed his exceptional book collection, together with a Gutenberg Bible given by the Widener family as an additional memorial.

In the Fritz photograph, the Widener Room, clearly open for business, was still acquiring its present contemplative character, which was augmented later with the addition of a massive oriental carpet over the polished wood floor. Readers can see a view of the Widener Room today on page 9.

HUV-49 (2-4)
Harvard University Archives

A Letter from Steven E. Hyman



Steven E. Hyman is the Provost of Harvard University.

The Harvard library collections are among this University’s greatest treasures. Over the last decade, the confluence of many factors ranging from rapid technological change to Harvard’s broadening interests in global scholarly materials and the stunning increases in the costs of journal subscriptions have created challenges for our highly decentralized library system. Not surprisingly, these challenges have been significantly exacerbated by the current financial downturn.

In March 2009 I appointed a University-wide Task Force to examine our library system and make recommendations that would put it on a footing that could sustain and ideally enhance its excellence long into the future. I am pleased to share the Task Force findings and recommendations with you.

The report of the Task Force on University Libraries is a very thoughtful document about an extraordinary system. But it is also a stark rendering of a structure in need of reform. Our collections are superlative, and our knowledgeable library staff are central to the success of the University’s mission. The way the system operates, however, is placing terrible strain on the libraries and the people who work within them.

Over time, a lack of coordination has led to a fragmented collection of collections that is not optimally positioned to respond to the 21st-century information needs of faculty and students. The libraries’

organizational chart is truly labyrinthine in its complexity, and in practice this complexity impedes effective collective decision-making.

Widely varying information technology systems present barriers to communication among libraries and stymie collaboration with institutions beyond our campus gates. Our funding mechanisms have created incentives to collect or subscribe in ways that diminish the vitality of the overall collection.

Libraries the world over are undergoing a challenging transition into the digital age, and Harvard’s libraries are no exception. The Task Force report points us toward a future in which our libraries must be able to work together far more effectively than is the case today, as well as to collaborate with other great libraries to maximize access to the materials needed by our scholars.

The Task Force report marks an important first step in our efforts to align Harvard’s library structure with the University’s evolving academic priorities. The next step will be taken by the work group that I have named to carry forward the recommendations of the Task Force. The members of the Implementation Work Group will closely consult with existing library committees, faculty, students, and administrators. They are:

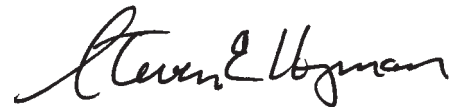
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- David Lamberth, *chair*, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Harvard Divinity School
- Nancy Cline, Roy E. Larsen Librarian of Harvard College, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library
- John Haigh, Executive Dean, Harvard Kennedy School
- Mary Lee Kennedy, Executive Director, Knowledge and Library Services, Harvard Business School
- Leslie Kirwan, Dean of Administration and Finance, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- Richard Mills, Dean for Operations and Business Affairs, Harvard Medical School
- John Palfrey, Vice Dean of Library and Information Resources and Henry N. Ess III Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

I am grateful to the members of the Task Force and the many people who advised them during the course of their work on this project. The Task Force has begun an important conversation that will be continued by the Implementation Work Group through many different venues, such as town hall meetings and focused conversations with faculty, students, and library staff.

I invite readers of this publication to share their thoughts with the Task Force by e-mail: library_taskforce@harvard.edu. And, of course, I look forward to a continuing conversation with many of you about strengthening our libraries for the 21st century.

Cordially,



Steven E. Hyman
Provost

The full text of the Task Force report is available in PDF at http://www.provost.harvard.edu/reports/Library_Task_Force_Report.pdf.

Harvard's DASH for Open Access

Harvard's leadership in questions of open access took a significant step forward with the September 1 launch of DASH—or Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard—a University-wide, open-access repository. More than 350 members of the Harvard research community, including over a third of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, have jointly deposited nearly 2,000 scholarly works in DASH.

“DASH is meant to promote openness in general,” stated Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of the University Library. “It will make the current scholarship of Harvard’s faculty freely available everywhere in the world, just as the digitization of the books in Harvard’s library will make learning accumulated since 1638 accessible worldwide. Taken together, these and other projects represent a commitment by Harvard to share its intellectual wealth.”

Visitors to DASH (<http://dash.harvard.edu>) can locate, read, and use some of the most up-to-the-minute scholarship that Harvard has to offer. DASH users can read “Anticipating One’s Troubles: The Costs and Benefits of Negative Expectations” by Harvard College Professor Dan Gilbert. Markus Meister, Jeff C. Tarr Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology, weighs in with “LED Arrays as Cost-Effective and Efficient Light Sources for Widefield Microscopy,” while Harvard Law School Dean Martha Minow asks “After Brown: What Would Martin Luther King Say?”

From Abu Ghraib to zooarchaeology, from American literature to the Zeeman effect, nearly 2,000 items can be located in DASH today, with the number increasing every week. As vital as the repository is to current work, DASH also houses a growing number of retrospective articles and papers. Contributors include Harvard President

Drew Faust and University professors Robert Darnton, Peter Galison, Stanley Hoffman, Barry Mazur, Stephen Owen, Amartya Sen, Irwin Shapiro, Helen Vendler, and George Whitesides.

DASH has its roots in the February 2008 open-access vote in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. In a unanimous decision, FAS adopted a policy stating that

Each Faculty member grants to the President and Fellows of Harvard College permission to make available his or her scholarly articles and to exercise the copyright in those articles. In legal terms, the permission granted by each Faculty member is a nonexclusive, irrevocable, paid-up, worldwide license to exercise any and all rights under copyright relating to each of his or her scholarly articles, in any medium, and to authorize others to do the same, provided that the articles are not sold for a profit.

In addition, faculty members committed to providing copies of their manuscripts for distribution, which the DASH repository now enables. Authored by Stuart M. Shieber, James O. Welch, Jr. and Virginia B. Welch Professor of Computer Science and director of the Office for Scholarly Communication, the policy marked a groundbreaking shift from simply encouraging scholars to consider open access to creating a pro-open-access policy with an “opt-out” clause.

“It’s the best university policy anywhere,” said Peter Suber of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition in Washington, DC, and a fellow of Harvard Law School’s Berkman Center and the University’s Office for Scholarly Communication (OSC).

To date, Harvard Law School, the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education have joined FAS in supporting a comprehensive policy of open access. DASH fulfills the promise made in these four open-access votes.

Harvard Acquires the John Updike Archive

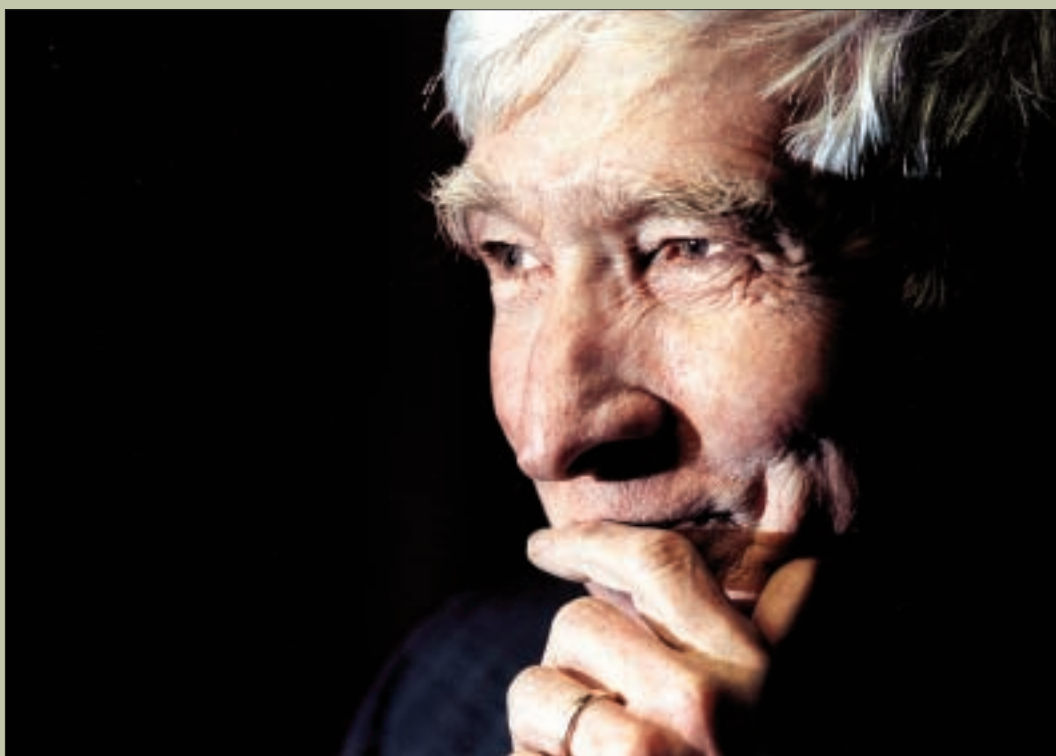
Harvard University President Drew Faust hailed the library's acquisition of the Archive. "I am delighted that John Updike's papers will be at Harvard as a lasting and living tribute to one of the College's most creative and accomplished graduates," Faust said in a statement. "This collection will enable teaching and research that will not just enrich our understanding of a distinguished writer and his work, but will also provide insights into the literary craft and its place in late-20th-century America."

Although portions of the Archive were given to the library during Updike's lifetime, and have been available for research at Houghton since 1970, they represented only a small fraction of the full collection. For decades, Updike had been depositing his papers, including manuscripts, correspondence, research files, and even golf score cards, in the library, but the material—since it was only on deposit at Houghton—was available only with the author's permission, and was not integrated with the material the library owned.

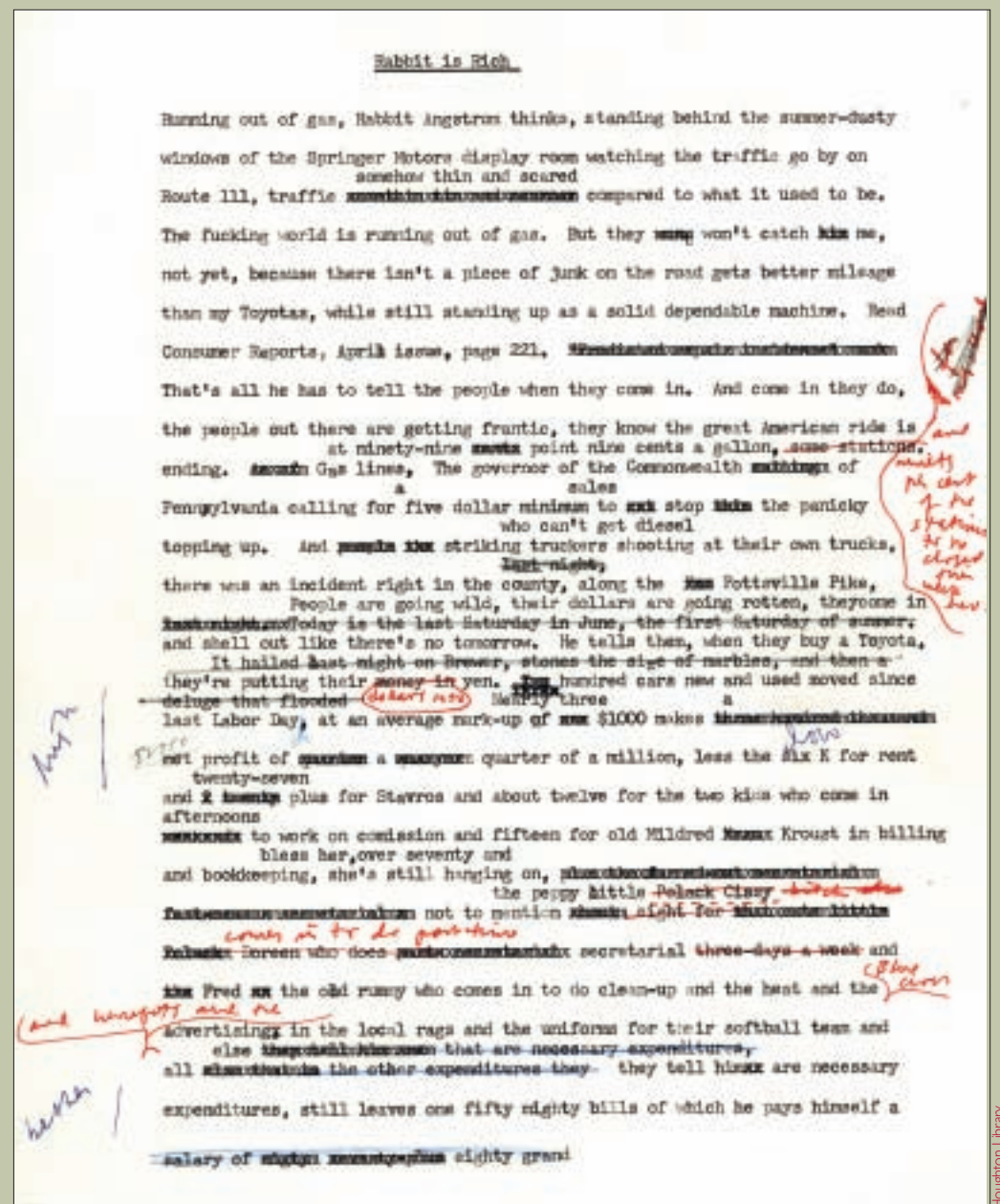
The John Updike Archive, a vast collection of manuscripts, correspondence, books, photographs, artwork, and other papers, has been acquired by Houghton Library, Harvard University's primary repository for rare books and manuscripts. The Archive forms the definitive collection of Updike material, said Leslie Morris, curator of modern books and manuscripts at Houghton Library, and will make the library the center for studies on the author's life and work.

"Many scholars would argue that John Updike is one of, if not the, key novelists of the late 20th century," Morris said. "No one can really write about the American novel without taking Updike into consideration."

Cataloging the newly acquired material so it can be used by scholars is now one of the library's "highest priorities," since the Archive will not be available for research until that process is completed, Morris said.



Photographer unknown. John Updike '54, undated. John Updike papers, Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library.



John Updike, *Rabbit is Rich*. Typescript with autograph additions and corrections, undated [ca. 1981]. The third novel in the Rabbit series, it won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982. John Updike papers, Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library. © John Updike Literary Trust.

However, scholars will still be able to access materials given to the library by Updike before 1970, including early short-story manuscripts written for *The New Yorker*; *Telephone Poles*, Updike's early poetry collection; and nearly complete documentation on the creation of the novel that brought him his first taste of fame, *Rabbit, Run* (1960).

Considering Updike's close association with Harvard, it seems fitting that the Archive find a permanent home in the Harvard College Library's collections, said Nancy Cline, the Roy E. Larsen Librarian of Harvard College. "This collection will be an exciting new addition to Houghton Library's holdings, and will provide researchers and students with a unique insight into the life

and work of one of the major figures in modern American literature," Cline said. When the cataloging of it is completed, the Updike Archive will offer students and scholars unparalleled insight not only into the working life of the man hailed as America's last true man of letters, but into the cultural transformations reflected in his works.

One of the major shifts that can be traced through Updike's work concerns sex in mainstream literature. Though it may be difficult for today's students to imagine, attitudes about sex in fiction have changed radically in the past generation, due in no small part to Updike. Close examination of manuscripts and correspondence in the

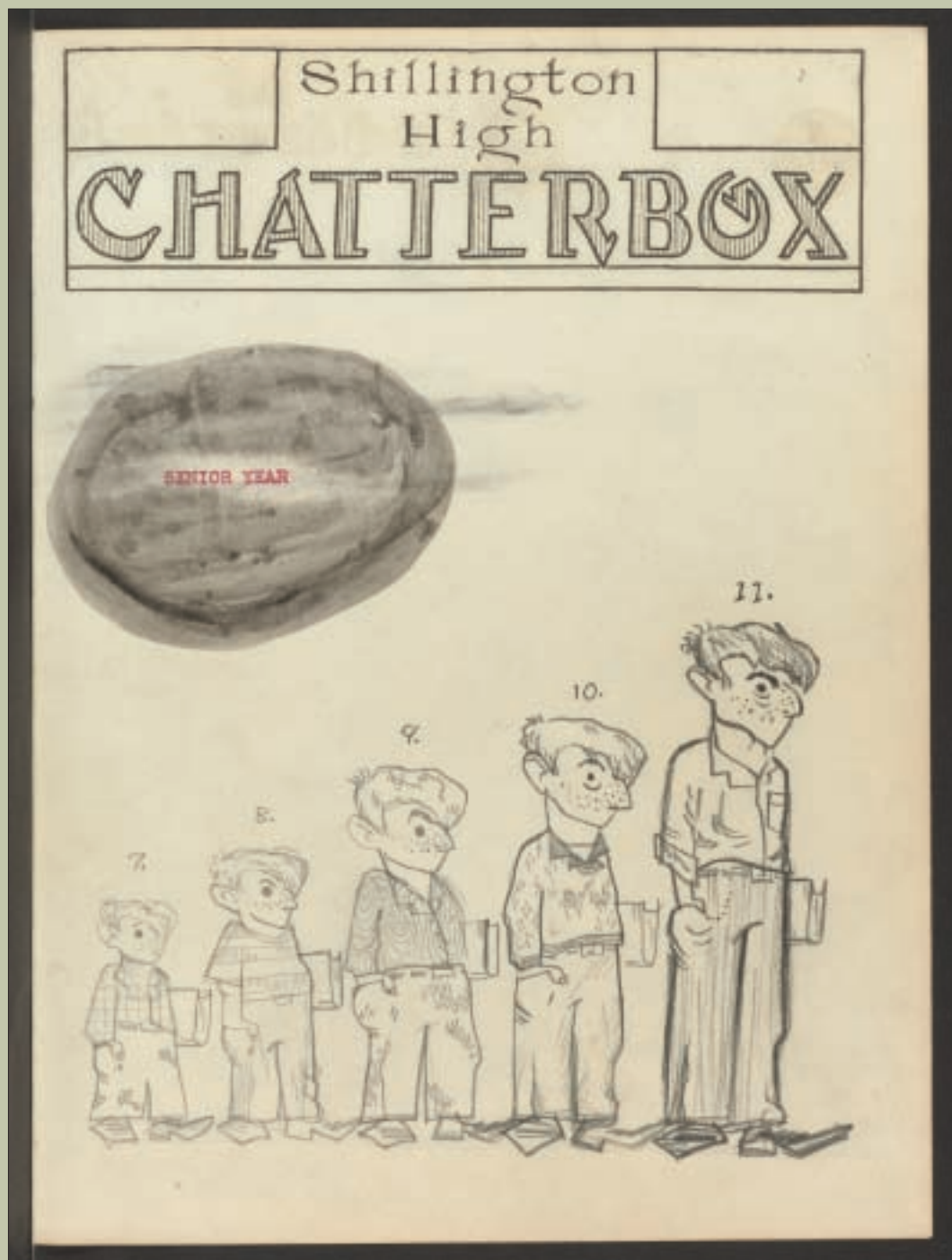
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Archive shows that editors often pushed the author to remove passages considered (at the time) too sexually explicit. As cultural attitudes changed, however, later editions would restore those same passages.

“You can see, in the physical medium of Updike’s edited manuscripts, how the cultural perception of sex in fiction was changing,” Morris said. “For students accustomed to reading the published text without thinking of what went on behind the scenes to create

that finished product, these manuscripts can have a tremendous impact.”

“John Updike left a huge footprint on American letters,” said Louis Menand, the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of English. “For more than 50 years, he was the fictional chronicler of the American middle class, but he was also a prolific critic of literature and art. His papers will be important for scholars and historians working in any number of areas.”



John Updike. Frontispiece with self-portraits for his bound volume of the Shillington (Pennsylvania) High School Chatterbox issues for his senior year, 1949–1950. Pencil and ink on paper, undated. Updike both drew and wrote for this weekly newsheet, and his copy is embellished with numerous original drawings, clippings, ephemera from his senior year, and school essays. John Updike papers, Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library. © John Updike Literary Trust.

New Digitization Agreement Links Harvard and the National Library of China

One of the most extensive collections of rare Chinese books outside of China will be digitized and made freely available to scholars worldwide as part of a six-year cooperative project between Harvard College Library (HCL) and the National Library of China (NLC).

Nancy Cline, the Roy E. Larsen Librarian of Harvard College, and Dr. Furui Zhan, director of the National Library, signed an agreement detailing the project on Friday, October 9, in the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Rooms in Widener Library.

“We are pleased to engage in this important collaboration with our colleagues from the National Library of China,” Cline said. “Dr. Zhan’s commitment to ensuring that these rare materials become an important part of the digital future will have a significant impact on scholarship.”

Among the largest cooperative projects of its kind ever undertaken between China and US libraries, the project will digitize Harvard–Yenching Library’s entire 51,500-volume Chinese rare book collection. One of the libraries that make up the Harvard College Library system, Harvard–Yenching is the largest university library for East Asian research in the Western world. When completed, the project will have a transformative effect on scholarship involving rare Chinese texts, Harvard–Yenching Librarian James Cheng predicted.

“Scholars come from all over the world to use our rare book collection because many of these titles are not available anywhere else,” he said. “I think this project will be a huge contribution to scholarship by making these materials available to a much broader audience. We need to change the mindset that rare materials must be kept behind closed doors. A library is not a museum. We need to



Among the staff who will take part in the digitization project, from left, Sharon Li-Shiuan Yang; James Cheng; Nancy Cline, the Roy E. Larsen Librarian of Harvard College; Dr. Furui Zhan, director of the National Library; Dr. Zhi-geng Wang; and Bill Comstock, head of HCL Imaging Services.

begin making these materials available to scholars, and the best way to do that is through digitization.”

The six-year project will be done in two phases. The first phase, beginning in January 2010, will digitize books from the Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties that date from about 960 to 1644 CE. The second phase, starting in January 2013, will digitize books from the Qing Dynasty that date from 1644 until 1795 CE. The collection includes materials that cover an extensive range of subjects, including history, philosophy, drama, *belles lettres*, and classics.

While the notion of digitizing the collection has been discussed for years, the concept of the two libraries working together was first proposed last November by Cheng and Zhan, who began discussing the idea while attending a library conference in Macau. A series of meetings in Beijing followed, and the project soon became a reality.

“They are just beginning to build their digital library collections, and this material will be a great addition to that effort,” Cheng said of the National Library. “I think they will be an excellent partner for us because they are a national library, and they can make the material available to the citizens of China.”

Giving to Harvard Libraries

Legendary Collections

Since 1638, generous support of alumni/ae and friends has been key to building and sustaining Harvard's library collections. Nearly 375 years after John Harvard's bequest, Harvard University is the steward of one of the five great libraries of the world. Today, the Harvard collections are peerless in magnitude, global reach, and overall breadth.

Throughout history, the strength of the Harvard collections has been derived from visionary gifts that support acquisitions.

Collecting for the Future

The Harvard Libraries must reflect the complex world of scholarship and information in the 21st century. Meeting the challenge means that the libraries must acquire, disseminate, and preserve information in all the forms in which it is created. Today's acquisitions range from traditionally published books to "born digital" objects that exist only in cyberspace. The Harvard Libraries provide the University's faculty, students, and researchers—now and in the future—with comprehensive access over time to all of these materials.

New levels of support are needed to strengthen traditional as well as digital collections and to acquire materials worldwide.

Unique Materials

Harvard's library holdings embrace thousands upon thousands of individual items that are historical, rare, or unique. These materials range from illuminated manuscripts and the earliest of printed books to photographs gathered since the dawn of photography, as well as personal papers and organizational records, cartographic holdings from around the world, and much more. The experience of working with materials has long been an irreplaceable part of a Harvard education.

Increasing access to unique materials demands increased investment in preservation and digitization.

Outstanding Services

Legendary collections linked to high levels of service lead to effective learning, cutting-edge research, and new knowledge. The University must retain and cultivate an exemplary cadre of librarians, archivists, technologists, and other dedicated professionals who serve the University with tremendous skill innovation. It is in the hands of these extraordinary individuals that the Harvard collections come alive every day.

Underwriting for strategic positions across the library system adds important value to Harvard's legendary collections.

Meaningful Opportunities

The Harvard Libraries provide each donor with the unique opportunity to make a gift that reflects personal interests and intellectual commitments. The Harvard Libraries will work with you to create a gift that is meaningful to you and to Harvard students, faculty, and researchers.

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Thank you for your generosity.

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