

## ***George Mason University Authors Reception***

On Thursday October 3, 2002 the University's Libraries, in conjunction with the *Fall for the Book Festival*, kicked-off their Millionth Volume celebration by hosting a reception to recognize all of George Mason University's creative and scholarly authors. A buoyant crowd of faculty, students, staff, and friends joined Provost Peter Stearns and University Librarian John Zenelis on an unseasonably warm October afternoon and heard ten faculty members from a variety of disciplines. Faculty speakers were invited to read from their works or offer reflections on libraries and the role the university plays in their research and writing.

***Thanks to the all who attended and special thanks to our faculty speakers***

Peter Boettke  
Economics

Alan Cheuse  
English

Robert Clark  
Public and International Affairs

Peter Klappert  
English

Beverly Lowry  
English

Maureen Miller  
History and Art History

Eric Pankey  
English

James Trefil  
Robinson Professor of Physics

Roger Wilkins  
Robinson Professor of History and American Culture

Terry Zawacki  
Writing Center

## MILLIONTH VOLUME CELEBRATION

Appreciation of GMU Authors, October 3, 2002

Remarks by John G. Zenelis

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all attending today's celebration, and most particularly to the George Mason University faculty. Thank you for coming. We are honored by your presence here this afternoon.

Today we are starting a year-long academic celebration commemorating the acquisition of the libraries' one millionth volume. To my mind, there is no better, more appropriate way to inaugurate such festivities than to dedicate the first event to our university's faculty.

We salute, recognize and honor George Mason's faculty. By doing so, we acknowledge both their individual and collective scholarship. And, at the same time, we have the opportunity to celebrate the book -- the written word -- certainly a most enduring feature of world civilization.

We all know about the power of the written word. Throughout history, ideas widely disseminated through publication have sparked social and political revolutions, have incited world-scale upheavals and wars, but have enriched our lives as well, by exposing us to the beauty and wisdom of humankind, expressed in words, teaching and inspiring us in all disciplines: poetry, literature, performing and visual arts, religion, philosophy, politics and government, the physical and life sciences, technology and commerce.

On this occasion, I am reminded of two books by Robert B. Downs. The first book, published in the mid-1950s, was titled Books that Changed the World. Books that Changed America was published in the early 1970s. In these two books, Downs attempted to identify books that changed the course of world history, revolutionized ideas about the universe, and helped shape the American dream and the American reality, as well as the way we live and think today. One could certainly argue with Downs' specific selections, but the point is that there indeed have been such transformative authors who, through their ideas and books, have made a lasting and positive impact upon our civilization.

In the George Mason University libraries today you can find all of Downs' selections in their various editions and manifestations, and much more. In fact, 1,000,000 volumes more (!) -- not to mention the other forms and formats of research materials available to the faculty, students and staff of the university. Although we increasingly live and work

in a digital world, the traditional scholarly book endures – in both production levels world-wide and, more importantly, in its continued relevance to the academy and society.

For this reason, we are delighted with the University's One Millionth Volume library achievement -- truly an incredible achievement given the relative youth of our institution!

How did we accomplish this? Certainly, healthy library materials acquisitions budgets, especially during the last eight years or so, have helped considerably. So have the professionalism, dedication and diligence of the libraries' staff. But the library has been assisted in countless ways by you -- the faculty. You have provided the libraries with advice and guidance -- have been excellent advocates for the notion that a great university requires a great library -- with many faculty members assisting the libraries in other material ways.

We are most grateful to the faculty, and everything that you do to advance the University and its libraries. Today's gathering illustrates faculty support for what we do, and can be measured in many ways – enthusiasm for the libraries, and a collaborative spirit that sustains the libraries' mission and role in the University's academic life.

We thank the faculty, staff and friends that have come here today to support this very important work and to help us celebrate this milestone.

I would also like to thank the Fall for the Book Festival and its director, Bill Miller of the English Department's Creative Writing Program, for inviting us to join their efforts.

Last, but not least, we thank the Provost's Office, and the international honor society Φ B Δ - E chapter, for joining with the Libraries to co-sponsor this event.

Thank you.