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Daniele C. Struppa Donates Libraries' Millionth Volume

Diverse collection illustrates dean's lifelong interests

Professor, mountain climber, mathematician, distance runner, student, collector: this is only a sampling of the labels that express the varied interests of Daniele C. Struppa, dean of George Mason University's College of Arts and Sciences and donor of the University Libraries' Millionth Volume—a collection of rare books and manuscripts that composes the Daniele C. Struppa Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts.



Mountain top self-portrait of Struppa

Collecting Rare Books

Struppa, a native of Italy and professor of mathematics, collected the books and manuscripts over 20 years, mostly in Italy and France. All titles but one are about mathematics, primarily geometry. The works include Euclid's *Elementorum Libri XV* (1627) and Clavius' *Aritmetica Practica* (1671). Perhaps the most notable book in the collection is the Roman poet Juvenal's *Satirae* (1515). It is the earliest imprint in the collection, and the quality of its printing, paper, and woodcuts is outstanding. Dean Struppa, who joined George Mason in 1989, says, "I felt the university is now my home. I like to have the books to look at, and I can still look at them in the library where they'll be well taken care of. I don't lose anything and other people gain." Struppa says he collected these particular books because "mathematics is one of my great passions, and I enjoy reading about the fundamental ideas when they first originated. It's interesting to see these ideas at the beginning, before they evolved over hundreds of years."

One of Struppa's enduring childhood recollections is when he was home sick reading *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling. As a child, Struppa's parents allowed him practically unlimited spending for books and music. "I got to spend money not for clothes or other things, but just for books and music," recalls Struppa, whose passion for collecting began at an early age. As a child he had an impressive collection of minerals, which unfortunately has been lost through the years, but which he just might be able to rebuild through his mountain climbing adventures. Dean Struppa believes humans love to collect things. The purpose of such activity is to gather items that represent the real objects of our affections. Dean Struppa feels that rare book collecting is one of the most humane activities one can engage in. "Reading and writing are the highest activities of the human mind. Collecting these rare books and manuscripts connects you directly to people in the past that shared the same values; you hold in your hand and internalize the very same thing that someone from hundreds of years ago held in their hands." The first book Struppa ever purchased for his private collection was Joseph-Louis Lagrange's *Algebraic Equations*, which is one of the volumes donated to the libraries.

A Lifelong Passion for Music

Struppa credits his mother for his lifelong interest in music, particularly classical music. He began playing the piano at the age of five but stopped when he began his university studies. But he does hope to start playing again someday. Mirroring his music interest, the Struppa collection contains several letters, autographed pictures, and other memorabilia of important classical music figures. One item is a long handwritten and signed letter of Arrigo Boito, author of the opera *Mefistophele*, as well as many librettos for Giuseppe Verdi. "The letter is particularly interesting," says Struppa, "because it deals with the creation of a collection of autographs of the great writer Stendhal. I found intriguing the idea of collecting a manuscript that talks about collecting." Other items in Struppa's gift include manuscripts and autographed photos of Gustav Mahler, Giacomo Puccini, Pietro Mascagni, Anna Moffo, and Mstislav Rostropovich.

Message from John G. Zenelis

University Librarian and Associate Vice President for Information Technology

One million volumes! Truly a remarkable accomplishment for a university as young as George Mason. Although Fenwick Library is only a few steps from East Building, we have traveled quite a distance from that September day in 1964 when the library for the newly minted campus of George Mason College of the University of Virginia provided study space for 50 students on East's second floor.

This yearlong celebration of the libraries' Millionth Volume gives us the chance to reflect on our growth from those early days, recognizing where we have been, taking pride in today's achievements, and anticipating what our future role will be as an integral part of a dynamic learning and research community.

When Fenwick Library (what is now Wing A) first opened its doors in the fall of 1967, it had room for 300 patrons and housed approximately 28,000 volumes. The building's expansion – two additional wings – over the next 15 years was a harbinger of the explosive growth that was to follow. In 1979, the university added a law library for its new School of Law; then three new libraries, each with a distinctive mission, opened between 1995 and 1999 on the Fairfax, Arlington, and Prince William Campuses. This rapid development secured for George Mason a distinction as one of the most promising young universities, not only in the mid-Atlantic region, but also far beyond. The university's libraries are, and will continue to be, an essential part of this promise.

Today, the libraries' strong presence on campus takes many forms, whether it be our ongoing support of the undergraduate curriculum, the services we provide to the university's burgeoning graduate programs, or our sustaining assistance to cutting-edge research programs. Mason's libraries are considered a strong and reliable partner by other academic libraries in the region, and our research materials are much sought after. As the university continues to grow, library services continue to progress in the digital arena, assisting with the vital transformation of information into knowledge. While technological advancement is essential, the professionalism and expertise of our staff will continue to be an indispensable part of this process, as they always have.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite the friends and supporters of the libraries, both on- and off-campus, to help us celebrate our progress and this historic millionth-volume milestone. I hope you can join us at the Fenwick Library to browse Dean Daniele C. Struppa's remarkable gift of rare and early imprints that comprise the symbolic Millionth Volume, which is now available for research and consultation in Fenwick Library's Special Collections & Archives.

I would also like to express our appreciation to Dean Struppa and to salute him for his additional gift to the libraries—the establishment of a book endowment in honor of his parents, Emilia and Giuseppe Struppa.

Join us for a fascinating look into the past, and contemplate the countless possibilities of our future.



Millionth-Volume Celebration

2002-2003 EVENTS

OCTOBER 2002

Thursday, October 3

George Mason Authors Reception
(in conjunction with Fall for the Book
Literary Festival)

Friday, October 4 – Sunday, October 6

Library Book Sale
(in conjunction with Fall for the Book)

NOVEMBER 2002

Friday, November 1

Submission Deadline for Student Essay
Contest

Thursday, November 21

Fall Fenwick Fellow Lecture – Peter
Mandaville, Public and International Affairs

DECEMBER 2002

Wednesday, December 4

Reception for Student Essay Contest
Winners

FEBRUARY 2003

Thursday, February 27

Spring Fenwick Fellow Lecture – Rose
Cherubin, Philosophy and Religion Studies

APRIL 2003

Wednesday, April 2

Millionth-Volume Celebration Day
Presentation, Exhibition of the Millionth
Volume and Lecture by Dean Struppa

Congratulations!

Daniele C. Struppa Donates Libraries' Millionth Volume *continued*

Dean Struppa returned to campus in January after a six-month break for scholarship, marathons, and mountain climbing. During his "vacation," Struppa accomplished things that many would never even attempt. He spent time in Belgium collaborating with other scholars from Italy and Belgium on a soon-to-be published volume titled *Computational Algebraic Analysis*. He climbed peaks in the Alps and the Caucasus Mountains, but was prevented from reaching the top of Cho Oyu in the Himalayas when he fell victim to high altitude pulmonary edema, the leading cause of death among mountain climbers at high altitudes. Fortunately, Dean Struppa recovered and made it back to the United States in time to run in the Marine Corps Marathon last October. In December 2002, he was off again to climb mountains, this time in the Ecuadorian Andes.

Anyone who has heard Dean Struppa lecture becomes instantly aware that his days spent on campus, as well as his adventures, ultimately illustrate one thing: an exuberance for life and learning that is infectious. His research in the area of mathematics and his personal achievements are an asset to George Mason. The libraries are privileged to count Dean Struppa among its friends.

Adriana Ercolano



Fairfax Circle, Fairfax, VA. Confluence of Lee Hwy. (VA Rte. 29/50), Old Lee Hwy., and Arlington Blvd. (VA Rte. 50), looking south in the direction of Fairfax City. 12/14/52. SC&A



Tysons Corner, VA Area. Interchange at Capital Beltway (U.S. Rte. 495) and Leesburg Pike (VA Rte. 7) near Tysons Corner, VA, looking west. Tysons Corner Shopping Center can be seen in upper right. 7/30/64. SC&A

Focus On the Collection—

The Charles Baptie Historic Aerial Photographs of the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area

The Libraries' Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) department holds an impressive collection of over 7,000 images donated by photographer, printer, and publisher, Charles Baptie (1914–2000). Reflecting Baptie's particular interest in aerial photography, *The Charles Baptie Historic Aerial Photographs of Washington, D.C. and the Metropolitan Area* is an interesting and even astounding record of this region's development over the last half century.

SC&A has made these images available through the EyeSpy Image Server, a product of AXS Technologies, Inc., of Annapolis, Maryland. Users may access high-resolution images via the Internet with the same defense and intelligence-related technology used to interpret satellite imagery. Persons browsing the Baptie images can zoom-in and pan-through sections while experiencing very short load times and retaining a high degree of detail.

The collection is a most useful source of information for historians, architects, planners, developers, and researchers interested in studying a geographical area's past. Whether used to locate non-extant buildings, study previous topographical features, investigate earlier land uses, or simply satisfy nostalgia or curiosity, well-executed aerial photography freezes time and captures the essence of subjects for future generations. For those studying the history of a geographical location, a picture is truly worth a thousand words.

Other research materials in the Baptie Collection include:

- Color prints and negatives of Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason
- Color transparencies from the *Encyclopedia of United States History*
- Color transparencies and prints from the *Great Houses of Washington, D.C.*
- Photographs of George Mason University

Visit the site at: <http://www.gmu.edu/library/specialcollections/baptie.html>

In Memoriam

Long time benefactor and friend of the Libraries' Special Collections & Archives, Ann Rohrke "Nan" Netherton died on June 9 at the age of 77. Over the past several years, she and her husband, Ross De Witt Netherton, contributed books, manuscripts, and maps about the history of Northern Virginia. Mrs. Netherton's enthusiasm and dedication to the history of the region helped promote the collecting of Northern Virginia, making original research materials available to the university's students and scholars. A member of the university family, Mrs. Netherton earned a master's degree in history at George Mason in 1988.

Special Collections and the University Libraries regret her passing and will remember her fondly as students continue to encounter and learn about our region's history through the Nethertons' generosity.

Millionth-Volume Student Essay Contest

"As long as she has a book, she'll never be lonely." So begins George Mason student Christina Chapman's winning composition in the University Libraries' Millionth-Volume Essay Contest. The contest, which was open to currently enrolled Mason undergraduate students, asked for submissions that spoke of how libraries have influenced their lives or society. The wide variety of essays received by the contest judges treated this subject from differing perspectives; and, as University Librarian John Zenelis remarked at the Contest Awards Reception, they did so in a manner that was often "interesting, inspiring, and moving."

Lillie Wade, second place winner, refers to libraries as society's "intellectual granaries, where precious knowledge of ages past must be saved and guarded." The third place winner, Randa Adechoubou, wrote of the opportunities provided by the library and how it "transformed [her] life" as a child growing up in poverty in Africa.

Grand prize winner Chapman's essay describes the myriad ways in which libraries have encouraged her intellectual curiosity and nourished her spirit over the years. "Whenever I have needed time to reflect and do something for myself, I have turned to the library," she writes. As the mother of a three-year-old, she is now passing on this love of the library as a "special place" to the next generation. Whenever they leave the library today, Chapman observes, it is her daughter who has her own "big stack of books" to keep her company.

Kudos to all the student writers, who remind us of the difference that libraries can make in a hectic, complex world. And many thanks to contest coordinator Donald Brown, the contest judges (Jonathan Fiencke, William Fleming, Craig Gibson, Anne Hakes, Sandy Kelso, Andrew McNeil, and Linda Swann), and the Millionth Volume Celebration Committee for putting together such a worthwhile endeavor, one commended by both library administration and university officials alike.

William Fleming

Spring 2003 Fenwick Fellows Lecture

On a snowy Thursday, February 27, 2003, George Mason University Libraries Fenwick Fellow recipient Dr. Rose Cherubin, assistant professor of philosophy, presented a lecture titled, "Change and Knowledge: Aristotle, the Eleatics, and the Possibility of a Science of Nature." The lecture was part of the libraries' yearlong Millionth-Volume Celebration.



Can truth be found, and will we recognize it when we find it? Can we gain knowledge of things that change? During her fellowship, Cherubin wanted to explore the standard view of the Eleatic philosophers Zeno, Parmenides, and Melissus in relationship to Aristotle and his *Physics*. She found that certain ancient Greek philosophers anticipated these questions and gave us tools for addressing them. The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database, a digital library of all ancient Greek texts from Homer to 600 AD, with additional texts up to 1453 AD (<http://www.tlg.uci.edu/>) facilitated her research (the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* is available for use at Fenwick Library).

Cherubin's research found evidence that neither Zeno nor Parmenides made direct assertions about the nature or number of what *is*, and that Aristotle's response to them was more subtle and sensitive than the blanket refutation commonly attributed to him. He explored the assumptions that would enable us to gain knowledge of a world of change, and assessed the value and cost of using such things for learning about the observable world. Aristotle's results are of continuing importance for our understanding of what we can say about the nature of what *is*.

Two Fenwick Fellows are selected each academic year to support instructional faculty research projects. Recipients are awarded a stipend and have a research office located in Fenwick Library. During the following academic year, fellows are invited to share the results of their research through a lecture open to the entire university community.

Anne Hakes

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Full Text

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