Saving Your Unique Family History

Is there a faded scrapbook full of photos and mementos on your shelves? A box of old cards and letters from loved ones at the back of your closet? Home movies for which you no longer have a projector? An older relative telling great family stories?

You've probably been meaning to capture and preserve these memories, but where to start? Our preservation and conservation staff deal with these issues all the time and have gathered some simple ways for you to preserve and share your unique family history with future generations.

First and foremost, follow a few broad guidelines on storage and display.

Most archival objects deteriorate faster in high or fluctuating temperatures and relative humidity. Keep irreplaceable items in interior spaces like a bedroom or living room, where the temperature and humidity are more likely to be steady.

Long-term exposure to any light source can fade materials such as color photographs, books, and prints. Place such treasures out of direct sunlight and on interior walls, and rotate what's on view. Use UV-resistant Plexiglas in frames to screen out harmful ultraviolet rays.

And for very fragile, rare, or fading items, consider having a facsimile – a high-quality digital reproduction – created, then store the original out of the light.

Routine cleaning can help keep household pests such as silverfish, cockroaches, or beetles from damaging paper items. By dusting books regularly, you'll protect them from damage and also notice any new evidence of or damage from pests.
Chela Metzger, who became head of the UCLA Library Conservation Center last December, has worked as a librarian, educator, and library materials conservator since 1994.

In support of the Library’s goals to transform education, empower new discoveries, and advance the public good, Metzger plans to build a center for excellence here. “UCLA’s students, faculty, and staff and the Library’s amazing collections deserve nothing less,” she notes.

Metzger views preservation and conservation as a dynamic, service-oriented venture. By using carefully developed tools and techniques, conservators give fragile or rare materials new life, making them accessible and usable for teaching, research, and display.

“This can mean training a student to do basic repairs to get a well-used book back on the shelf, or carefully unrolling a twenty-five-foot-long Armenian scroll to be read and digitally documented for the first time,” Metzger explains. “It can mean building a special enclosure for a unique medieval manuscript, or making sure a modern artists’ book survives into the future.

“We intersect with each and every aspect of building, storing, and celebrating UCLA Library materials, and through them, with everyone who uses these remarkable collections,” she concludes.

The Conservation Center welcomes visitors and questions; email Metzger at cmetzger@library.ucla.edu.

Books
Stand most books vertically, with each supported by neighboring books or bookends, but don’t pack them in tightly. Keep them an inch or so back from the front edge of the shelf, and leave space for air to circulate behind the books.

Use pencil when writing in books, and use paper bookmarks only. Don’t use self-stick memo slips, which leave an invisible adhesive residue. And bear in mind that storing flowers, letters, or other documents in a book can leave stains and stress the binding.

Documents
Keep your precious documents in folders and boxes made of cotton rag or acid-free paper. When you put all the folders in boxes, make sure they’re supported on both sides so that the contents don’t slip or deform.

Photos
Photo albums are a great way to store heirloom photos and other important prints. Archival plastic sleeves, folders, or boxes are easy and affordable ways to store casual snapshots.

Digitizing photos makes them accessible and shareable without risking damage to the original print. But don’t consider the digital files as a replacement for the originals; the storage media can deteriorate and software and hardware become obsolete.

Files for digitized or born-digital photos should be kept in several locations. Check the files at least annually to make sure they’re still viewable, and create new copies at least every five years on upgraded hardware/software.

Film and Videotape
Although it captures our lives with great vividness and immediacy, film and videotape present both preservation and technological challenges.

Store videotapes standing on one end like books in inert plastic sleeves. Store them away from household equipment that generates a magnetic field, like TVs and computers. Given how rapidly this technology evolves, you may want to consult with a professional about transferring irreplaceable footage to a format with a longer life.

Do-It-Yourself Oral History
Is there a landmark birthday or anniversary coming up in your family? A memory book containing many individuals’ memories of the occasion, perhaps illustrated with treasured photos and documents, would make a uniquely meaningful gift! Capturing and preserving those stories is easy and fun.

There’s no need for an expensive recorder, but if possible, invest in an external lapel microphone. It won’t cost that much, and it will make all the difference in the recording’s quality.

When it comes to the interview itself, ask questions and listen, but try not to share your experiences. Broad questions that begin “Tell me about . . .” or “Can you describe . . .” will stimulate your subject’s memory, then you can ask about specific details as necessary.

Try not to interrupt; wait for a pause before asking another question. Ask the interviewee to speak about personal experiences rather than what he or she thinks people in general felt or did.

When completed, you can transcribe the interview yourself, or have it transcribed. You may want to ask the interviewee to review it to make sure all the facts are correct, but try not to let him or her rewrite sections. Transcripts can be shared with family members, as can digital audio, if you recorded the interview on a digital recorder.
Music Library Strikes a Happy Note

Since 1957 the Music Library’s sunny space in Schoenberg Music Building has served students and faculty from UCLA’s renowned music programs as well as any class with a music component. Musicians and scholars from throughout Southern California have also relied on its extensive collections, recognized as one of the largest in North America.

But the library’s configuration and furnishings needed an upgrade after many years of heavy use. Recently completed renovations feature a new central service desk, exhibit area, and improved furnishings and equipment.

“We’re delighted to offer all those who study, practice, teach, and enjoy music a more pleasant and comfortable facility,” said University Librarian Ginny Steel.

The reinvigorated library supports individual study, research consultations, and group projects. It also serves as a venue for performances, offering a stress-free space where students can try out new material, perform with colleagues and faculty, and experiment with their performances.

More information on the Music Library is available at <www.library.ucla.edu/music>.

recent contribution to the UCLA Library, to endow a research fellowship, will support scholars conducting research with special collections.

“I hope that this fellowship will create more awareness of the fabulous resources of the UCLA Library, both archival and printed book collections,” Karmiole said.

To help broaden awareness, his gift specified that fellowship recipients give a public presentation at the end of their residency period to share what they’ve learned. “In addition to UCLA students, faculty, and staff, this will be of interest to the rare book community in general,” he noted.

According to Karmiole, “a lot of people who make donations do it because they have an idea of their own.” Finding ways to broaden awareness of rare books and archival studies is his idea. And it’s led to his previous gifts to the UCLA Library for the Kenneth Karmiole Endowment for Rare Books and Manuscripts, to the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library for an endowed lectureship on the history of the book trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies for a fellowship.

And is there a “hidden treasure” in UCLA Library Special Collections that he’d like to broaden awareness of? “Early children’s books,” he replied. “Someone ought to do a published bibliography of that collection.” An idea for a fellowship recipient perhaps?

“Kenneth Karmiole” continued from page 1
Giving Opportunities

The UCLA Library Associates

Support from the UCLA Library Associates ensures that critical needs, from special-opportunity acquisitions to information literacy programs, are addressed. Discretionary funds available to the university librarian will make a significant impact on the quality, innovative resources and services that the UCLA Library is able to offer.

Honor with Books

Honor with Books allows donors to pay tribute to a special person by placing a bookplate in his or her honor in a newly purchased book in the subject area of the donor’s choice. This $100 gift supports a critical acquisitions need while honoring a loved one, friend, special teacher, or colleague in perpetuity.

Collection Endowment Initiative

The Collection Endowment Initiative provides critically needed funds to acquire, preserve, and make accessible library materials in a particular subject area of interest. Collection endowments begin at $50,000, and the Library invites donors to make a single gift or to build an endowed fund over several years. Special bookplates reflecting the interests of the philanthropist are designed in consultation with the donor and affixed to each item added to Library collections that was made possible by his or her generosity.

Making a Bequest

In writing a will or living trust, donors can specify that they would like their estate to benefit the UCLA Library. In recognition of alumni, friends, faculty, and staff who have chosen to benefit the university through planned giving, they are welcomed as members of the prestigious First Century Society. Planned gifts include gifts through wills, living trusts, charitable trusts, charitable gift annuities, retirement plans, or other estate planning arrangements.

If you would like to receive more information about these or other options to support the UCLA Library, please contact Stephanie Kimura, executive director of UCLA Library Development, by telephone at 310.206.8551 or by email at <sbkimura@library.ucla.edu>. Or visit the website at <www.library.ucla.edu/about/giving-library>.

From the University Librarian

Dear Donors and Supporters of the UCLA Library:

“Spring is the time of plans and projects,” wrote Leo Tolstoy in Anna Karenina. For many of us, those plans include spring cleaning, and in that regard, this issue’s article on preserving your family treasures may be particularly timely and useful.

Who better to offer advice on this subject than the UCLA Library? Our collections now total tens of millions of items, in formats ranging from cuneiform tablets to website screen captures.

Keeping all of these materials ready for use by UCLA students, faculty, and staff presents daily challenges to our talented and inventive preservation and conservation professionals. Catch a behind-the-scenes glimpse of their hands-on activities on the preservation program’s blog at <blogs.library.ucla.edu/preservation>.

The UCLA Library’s collections continue to grow in size and scope, presenting us with logistical and technological challenges to preserve materials and provide access across campus and around the world. Partnering with national and international colleagues on projects such as the International Digitizing Ephemera Project, HathiTrust Digital Library, Internet Archive, and the Digital Public Library of America enables us to leverage our collective efforts to build collections and reach users.

While many of our collections and services can be accessed remotely, our focus remains firmly on students, faculty, researchers, and staff on the Westwood campus. Our flexible spaces accommodate everything from a Friday afternoon student concert to a late-night group project meeting to a scholarly book talk. Through hands-on workshops, in-person instruction, and customized research consultations in the libraries, classrooms, residence halls, and offices, we help everyone from a first-quarter freshman working on an assignment to a Nobel Prize winner completing a new publication.

With UCLA’s ever-expanding areas of research and instruction, particularly on cross-disciplinary, multimedia, multimodal projects, we are eagerly embracing new areas of opportunity. Yet our traditional role as the heart of the campus remains at the core of our mission.

I hope your spring plans will include a gift to the UCLA Library. Your support will help countless projects flourish across the campus and benefit current and future generations of UCLA students, faculty, and staff.

Virginia Steel
University Librarian
Search for books by Jacqueline Briskin in the UCLA Library Catalog, and you’ll find nearly one hundred titles in at least sixteen languages, in addition to English. That’s quite a legacy for someone who didn’t start writing until her mid-thirties – but it’s not her only legacy. Jacqueline passed away in December 2014, and we recall her with gratitude and appreciation.

In the late 1990s Jacqueline and her husband, Bert, created a collection endowment in the UCLA Library. The Bert and Jacqueline Briskin Endowed Collection in Fiction provides critically needed funds to acquire, preserve, and make accessible print material in the field of fiction. These books now educate and inspire new generations of writers, readers, and dreamers.

But Jacqueline’s connection with UCLA was far deeper than books on a shelf. She was enrolled at UCLA with the intention of becoming a lawyer when she met Bert, himself a 1942 UCLA alumnus with a degree in business administration.

Marriage and three children soon followed. Then in 1964 Jacqueline enrolled in a UCLA Extension course she thought was about literature appreciation, which was taught by her friend Robert Kirsch, then a book reviewer at the Los Angeles Times. “My mother was a lifelong reader; it was one of her true pleasures,” says her daughter, Liz.

When the course turned out to be about creative writing, Jacqueline embraced the challenge. “That’s when I started to be a writer,” she said to a UCLA interviewer several years ago.

Liz picks up the story from there, recalling her mother’s account of what happened next. “Not knowing any better, my mother put an unsolicited manuscript in a manila envelope and mailed it to Lippincott. Against all the odds, someone picked it up from the slush pile and read it.”

That was Jacqueline’s first book, California Generation, published in 1970. Over the ensuing twenty-five years nine more books followed. They sold more than thirty million copies, landing her on countless bestseller lists. And recently three of her titles were released as e-books, attracting new legions of fans.

Setting her books in locations ranging from historic California to occupied Paris to present-day Beverly Hills, Jacqueline conducted extensive research to ensure their accuracy. For this she relied in part upon the holdings of the UCLA Library. Now some of her personal research materials have joined Library collections, forming yet another legacy for today and tomorrow’s students and scholars.

“She was happy to support UCLA,” her daughter notes. And with the gift annuities she and Bert created (see sidebar) to fund their collection endowment, that support will continue for generations yet to come.

Gift Planning: Helping You Build Your Legacy

When the Briskins decided to support the UCLA Library by establishing a series of charitable gift annuities, they used a philanthropic approach known as gift planning, which allows donors the flexibility of building a lasting legacy through various arrangements. Opportunities include making a gift (bequest) through a will or living trust, establishing charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts, and using a variety of assets such as real estate, cash, appreciated stock, life insurance, or retirement accounts. Some options result in estate tax savings while others produce lifetime fixed income and significant income tax advantages.

For more information, please contact Julie Gutowski, UCLA Library director of development, at 310.206.9234 or <jgutowski@library.ucla.edu>.
Arts Library Receives Gift from the Michael Asher Foundation

Michael Asher (1943-2012) achieved international acclaim as a conceptual artist whose site-specific, temporary interventions altered how viewers perceive and value art. He also left a lasting impact on a generation of young artists through his decades of teaching at the California Institute of the Arts.

Though he earned his undergraduate degree at UC Irvine and worked at CalArts, Asher had fond memories of working in the UCLA Arts Library. According to Foundation President Ann Goldstein, “We are particularly pleased that the UCLA Arts Library, which was an important and generous resource to Michael, is among the very first organizations to receive a charitable distribution from the foundation.”

Created following Asher’s death, the foundation oversees, supports, maintains, and protects the historical accuracy and authenticity of his work and also provides support for the arts. Goldstein continued, “We are honored to make this donation to the UCLA Arts Library and proud that we are playing a role in advancing UCLA’s mission of research, education, and public service by supporting the Arts Library.”

The Arts Library serves UCLA students and faculty and the broader Southern California community as an essential cultural resource. In particular, its collections, services, facilities, and expert staff support UCLA’s world-class programs in the arts, architecture, art history, film, television, theater, and the humanities.