Hall-Perrine gift to create Gayle S. Whipple Browsing Area

Gayle Schroeder Whipple loved to read. Throughout her life she encouraged people to read. She also persistently promoted libraries and recorded books for the blind.

In memory of this bright and generous Coe graduate who died in November, the Hall-Perrine Foundation has provided $10,000 to establish the Gayle S. Whipple Browsing Area at the Coe library.

“We are very excited about this idea,” says Richard Doyle, director of library and computer services. “We used to have a small browsing area. People missed it when it had to be discontinued during a change in automated systems for the library, and now we have overcome that difficulty and can even provide additional space.” Currently the campus community has access to the library’s catalog and CD-ROM indexes such as the InfoTrac information retrieval system on nearly every computer on campus, so the number of computer terminals needed in the library’s lobby area has been significantly reduced.

The newly freed space will now be used for a comfortable reading area with bookshelves displaying the library’s newest arrivals.

“I was kind of emotional when I heard the idea announced at the Coe trustees meeting in February. This is so appropriate! Gayle would have been so pleased,” says William Whipple (Coe ’35), chairman of the board of the Hall-Perrine Foundation, Coe trustee, and Gayle’s husband for 59 years. “Gayle was an avid reader and for 13 or 14 years read for the blind. She did all the reading for a young man from Vinton who was completing his master’s degree.”

On President James Phifer’s request, Doyle and the library staff first came up with the idea of a browsing area to honor Gayle. “We get many best-sellers, titles of current interest, award winners, and landmark publishing editions that we would like people to know about—and begin reading,” Doyle says.

He emphasizes that the browsing area is not yet reality but plans are moving ahead very quickly. Even though the reading area is not yet completed, the lobby display shelves are tempting library users with such new spring arrivals as these:

- *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller* (1996) by the National Gallery of Art
- *Down With Big Brother* (1997) by Michael Dobbs
- *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth* (1996) by Fischer, Hout, Jankowski, Lucas, Swidler, Voss

Bill and Gayle Whipple have been part of the Coe community for more than 60 years. Following Gayle’s death in November, 1996, the Hall-Perrine Foundation is establishing a browsing area of the library in her memory.
Intriguing books added to Alumni-Faculty Collection

Many good choices for booklovers are among the newest additions to the Alumni-Faculty Collection in Coe’s archives. Fifteen fast-moving suspense novels by Ed Gorman (Coe ’68) head the list. Also for general reading, The Anniversary, a savvy first novel by Rachel Canon (Coe ’66); A Lucky American Childhood, a delightful posthumous memoir by Paul Engle (Coe ’31) of his growing-up years in Cedar Rapids; and At Your Own Risk: An American Chronicle of Crisis and Captivity in the Middle East, with alternating chapters by wife Jean (daughter of late Coe trustee William Murray ’24) and former hostage Tom Sutherland (Coe HD’92).

For more specialized topics, look for Invest Your Way to Wealth, by Ted Miller (Coe ’66), vice president of Personal Finance Publications and editor of Kiplinger’s Personal Finance Magazine. And Mark Twain in the Company of Women. by Coe’s new vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Laura Skandra-Trombley, who received the Choice award for this top academic book for 1995.

The full list of recent additions is given below:


LeRoy, D. J. Building Champions. Marion, IA: Building Champions, 1992. (2 videocassettes) [LeRoy, Assistant Professor of Physical Education]

Levin, Kathryne. I Believe It All. S.L.: Alevin Productions, 1995. (Compact disc) [Levin, Coe ’78]


Gift helps students access books in new forms

A $5,000 gift from the family trust of Jean Barkes Griffith (Coe '52) of Manhattan, KS, and her sister, Mary Barkes Smith, is helping to bring five new microcomputers to the student areas of the library. This means more access for students to information of all kinds.

"It's a wonderful gift," says Richard Doyle, director of library and computer services. "Our primary form of information is still the book, but we now have many different formats—a number of which require machine access." Assistant Professor of English Gina Hausknecht, for example, ordered a CD-ROM version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet for Coe freshmen to read and view simultaneously in preparation for seeing the American Players Theatre's live performance of the play at Coe last fall.

Doyle has observed that students like having the digital resources of the network side by side with the print resources. The newly-acquired computers now fill the only empty wired carrels that remained on the main floor of the library.

"With technology becoming increasingly important, we need to have quality computer services to deliver a quality library product," Doyle emphasizes.

He adds that, with these recent additions, the library now has 44 computers available for student use—10 in an electronic classroom and 34 with unlimited access to students throughout the library's daytime and late evening hours. (Another 72 microcomputers with access to the library's resources are available to students in three other academic campus buildings until midnight each weekend, and 125 students have their own personal computers in their residence hall rooms.)

"Our goal is for the library to become the true information center of the campus."

A Coe-related website for booklovers

Do you search out new literary magazines in bookstores? Want to know how to access libraries, booksellers, publishers, drama and film resources worldwide? Get on-line with the help of a computer-smart Coe alumnus.

Scott Retberg, a 1994 English and philosophy grad who won Coe's first Paul Engle Prize in Creative Writing, has created a website on the Internet called Books in Chains (BIC)—an overview of literary resources linked to many intriguing categories on the World Wide Web. Included are lists of indexes and general humanities projects, lists of electronic texts, lists of libraries and institutions, lists of bookselling and publishing resources, drama and film lists, titles of academic journals, and reference tools and word miscellany.

Under "Metapages/Indexes," one can find Bookwire, for instance, which Retberg describes as "one of the best book sites on the web. They host several book-related periodicals, and sport one of the best indexes of book-related links to be found on the net." Another is Zuzu's Petals Literary Resource—"If you're interested in writing, or reading, on the net, you should check out Zuzu: they've got everything, nearly, tons and tons of links for writers (and a lit mag too)."

Retberg explains in the opening paragraphs of the website that he began developing this site for a presentation he made at a Conference on Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University in November. He adds, "The links collected here represent the best of what I've found...It's not meant to be a comprehensive index, but one which will get you to 'much of the best' of what's out there. The list is shaped by my own interests and will remain somewhat limited in scope."

Check out "Books in Chains" at http://www.us.edu/~rettberr linkage.html.

'Young Draftsman' added to Metcalf Collection

"Young Draftsman," an oil and pastel work on paper by Boston artist Conger Metcalf (Coe '36), is the newest addition to Coe's Metcalf Collection. It is a gift to the college from Coe trustee William Shuttleworth and his wife, Winifred, of Cedar Rapids.

The painting is a new version of an earlier work of Metcalf's. This piece was done in 1994 for Coe's alumni art auction fundraiser, to help defray the costs of refurbishing Dows Fine Arts Center on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. The Shuttleworths purchased this painting at the auction and are now giving it back to the college for its Permanent Collection of Art.

"We're delighted to do it," says Winifred.
Historic Flunk Day handbills restored

Flunk Day is an 85-year-old tradition that today’s students have carried on, undoubtedly because it means a day off from classes in the spring!

Yet the manner in which the day is celebrated has changed through the years. Researchers looking for the most authoritative chronicle of that change can now go to the library archives and read the recently restored collection of handbills dating back to the first Flunk Day in 1911.

“We sent the handbills to a conservationist in Iowa City who de-acidified them and repaired their deteriorating edges with Japanese rice paper,” explains Randall Roeder, head of technical services.

He has been fascinated with the varied styles—and rationales—of the historic handbills, which were posted around campus on the morning of the day each year that Flunk Day was declared. Some of the announcements refer to wartime and revolution. Others include a treatise on the value of recreation. Many include artwork. “They’re precious,” says Roeder.

A scrapbook page given to Coe’s archives by the late Lucy Steele Preston, class of 1912, documents the origins of the first Flunk Day and includes photos of “the instigators”—Lucy, Howard Preston ’11 (whom Lucy later married), B.W. Smith ’10, Trissa Darnall Smith ’10, Archie Preston ’11, Genevie Bergstresser ’12, John Parker ’12, and Agnes White Parker ’12.

That first 1911 announcement declared:

**Today is Flunk Day!**

Realizing that there comes a time in the Spring when from a biological, physiological, and psychological standpoint, the student should pause in his rush for knowledge and give his intellectual organ a short respite, we do hereby, after the customs of all Higher Institutions of Learning, set apart

This Day as Flunk Day

upon which

Everybody Shall Cut Classes

We trust that the faculty will lend us their cooperation by taking their wives and going on a picnic.

Notations on the scrapbook page further explain that in 1911, “During Chapel, this notice was ‘sprung’ on the Coe world, numerous copies being posted in classrooms and on outside walls. Only a few ‘diehards’ refused to cut classes.”

Entertainment for that first Flunk Day consisted of “a picnic up the Cedar at ‘Highrock,’” evidently in the rented boats shown in the photographs.

Newspaper clippings from the 1970s show that later Flunk Day entertainment sometimes turned into disorderly behavior. On one such occasion, nine Coe students were arrested for violating Cedar Rapids’ “missile ordinance” by littering the campus with bottles, cans, and toilet paper.

Today the day designated as Flunk Day is decided by the outgoing student body president the night before, and a special Flunk Day newspaper is slipped under student doors early in the morning as the Victory Bell is ringing.

A sampling of Flunk Day handbills, dated 1927, 1931, and circa 1916, show the early spirit of the day that has become a tradition. Rice paper repairs are visible on the outer edges of the 1916 announcement.