



A newsletter for members of the Coe College Library Association

FALL 2010

SHIRER SYMPOSIUM HONORS COE'S 'LARGER THAN LIFE' JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR

Journalists and scholars from around the world joined Coe faculty members, students, alumni and other visitors in remembering the contributions of one of Coe's most renowned graduates, William L. Shirer '25, at a three-day symposium held on Coe's campus on October 13-15 in conjunction with Homecoming weekend. Marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of Shirer's most famous work, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," the conference was titled, "A 20th Century Journey: The Influence of William L. Shirer, A Symposium on World Politics, Journalists, and Their Impact on Society." Along with more than a dozen seminars on Shirer-related topics, the event included a public open house showcasing the voluminous Shirer Papers housed in Coe's George T. Henry College Archives.

"My goal was to bring Shirer back to life and have people see the connections between then and now," said conference organizer Jill Jack, interim director of Stewart Memorial Library. "His work was a reflection of who we were and what was happening at the time, but the impact goes far beyond that." She noted, for example, that discussions are raging today about ethics in journalism and the responsibilities of journalists covering wars – an issue for which Shirer continues to serve as a model and resource.

"Journalists continue to read and re-read Shirer's works," she said, "and some of the ones I talked to were floored to find out that his papers are here at Coe." The college's collection of Shirer's diaries, letters, files and manuscripts – including the original notes and manuscript for "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" – draws two or three inquiries a week from scholars and researchers around the world, Jack said.

Shirer wrote about events in Europe, India



▲ Historian Ken Cuthbertson of Queens University incorporated photos and documents from Coe's Archives into his presentation on the relationship between William L. Shirer '25 and Edward R. Murrow.

and the Middle East for various news outlets before being hired by CBS journalist Edward R. Morrow in 1937 as the network's European correspondent. He covered the rise of Nazi Germany and reported on the early years of World War II from Berlin until it became dangerous for him to remain there. Shirer continued to write about the war and its aftermath, including the Nuremberg Trials, and later drew on the experiences of his journalistic career to research and write more than 20 books chronicling 20th-century events. "He was a journalist turned novelist turned historian," said Jack.

The speakers who offered wide perspectives on Shirer's life and work included award-winning journalists, a research analyst who tracks hate

groups for the Center for New Community in Chicago, and Coe's Bethany Keenan, assistant professor of history; Monica Fuertes-Arboix, assistant professor of Spanish; and Steve Feller, B.D. Silliman Professor of Physics, as well as scholars from several other institutions

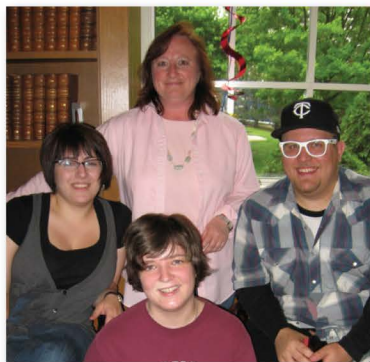
A remarkable – if troubled – friendship

In a presentation featuring numerous photos and documents from Coe's Shirer Archives, author and historian Ken Cuthbertson of Queens University in Ontario offered an intriguing look at Shirer's pivotal and ultimately stormy relationship with legendary CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow. Cuthbertson, who has relied heavily on Coe's collection to research his forthcoming

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LIBRARY LAUNCHES ANOTHER CLASS OF WORK-STUDY GRADS

This past summer the library said “good-bye” to another talented group of student workers who made their impact on the library and set off to begin jobs or continue their education. Many of them had spent four years working in the library. Below are the library supervisors with their graduating work-study students, along with post-graduate plans, where known.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

Circulation supervisor Sandy Blanchard (in back) with students (left to right) Aubrie Boniface, Melissa Thoman and Andy Johnson, who is working as a writer in the Enrollment Management Division at RuffaloCODY.

Audiovisual supervisors Linda Hummel and Laura Riskedahl (in back) with (left to right) Travis Nissenbaum, who plans to enroll in the St. Louis Police Academy, and Brad Slotter, attending law school at the University of Iowa.

Technical Services supervisor Jeff Schulte with (left to right) Kendra Olson, Site Coordinator for the Domestic Violence Shelter for Safe Horizon in New York, NY; Rachel Loutsch; and Justine Erickson, attending the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN, where she is pursuing a Master of Arts degree in counseling psychology.



Who's Leading the Library?

With the retirement of longtime Stewart Memorial Library Director Rich Doyle in June, Head of Reference Jill Jack was named interim library director. Jack joined the library staff in 2007.

A search for a new library director is being conducted during the current academic year.

To replace Jack, the library hired Suzette Blanchard as interim head of reference. Blanchard is a Muscatine, Iowa, native who did her undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Iowa, where she recently earned her M.A. in library and information science. The move to Coe suits her well, says Blanchard. “I really like the fact that it's small enough that you can develop relationships with the students.”



▲ Suzette Blanchard, interim head of reference

SHIRER SYMPOSIUM *(Continued from page 1)*

book, “A Complex Fate: William L. Shirer and the American Century,” described Shirer as “a remarkable man and a larger than life character.” He traced the parallel lives of Shirer and Murrow, who were raised by parents with strong moral sensibilities and developed working-class sympathies from an early age.

Shirer, who set off for Europe soon after graduating from Coe with no job and a small loan from Coe President Harry Gage, worked for several international news services before he caught Murrow's attention. Cuthbertson painted a contrasting picture of the two journalists – Murrow tall, handsome and sharply dressed, Shirer a bit overweight and rumpled – but said that Murrow saw something in Shirer and hired him to help develop CBS' coverage of events transpiring in Europe. The

two subsequently became close friends and met in cities all over Europe for long, alcohol-fueled discussions of world events. Their on-air reporting of Hitler's march across Europe created a sensation that allowed CBS to surpass news rival NBC and made Murrow and Shirer household names.

When threats and censorship forced Shirer to leave his post in Berlin, Murrow and Shirer met for an emotional good-bye in Lisbon before Shirer returned to the United States. Shirer went to work for CBS and wrote “Berlin Diary” while Murrow continued to report on the war from London. After the war, Cuthbertson says, both men struggled to redefine themselves as the American appetite for international news declined. Tensions between Murrow and Shirer escalated when

Murrow became a CBS vice president and failed to defend his colleague when Shirer was let go for being “too liberal.” A bitter Shirer was blacklisted for 13 years, during which time he wrote five books. In 1956 he began work on “The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,” which was published in 1960 and became an international bestseller.

Murrow had his own confrontation with Joe McCarthy in 1954 and came to regret his failure to stand up for Shirer. As his health failed from a lifetime of overwork, alcohol and cigarettes, Murrow reached out to Shirer several times in an effort to reconcile. Shirer and his wife, Tess, visited the Murrows on their farm in New York in 1960 shortly before Murrow's death from cancer, but a stubborn Shirer refused to discuss the most

DISPLAY CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF PHI BETA KAPPA AT COE

An exhibit marking the 60th anniversary of Coe's Phi Beta Kappa chapter is on display in the library's first-floor Pochobradsky Reading Room during the fall semester. The installation includes a traveling history display created by the national Phi Beta Kappa organization, augmented by Coe-related items such as the college's Phi Beta Kappa charter.

The oldest and most prestigious honor society in America, Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary. The society's Greek initials stand for the motto, "Love of learning is the guide of all life," and the organization has been an advocate for excellence in the liberal arts and sciences throughout its history. Seventeen U.S. Presidents, several U.S. Supreme Court Justices, and many national leaders, inventors and authors have been among its members, who are chosen by invitation only based not only on GPA but on breadth of academic interests. Membership is offered to no more than 10 percent of the graduating class at Phi Beta Kappa institutions.

Notable Coe Phi Beta Kappa members have included journalist William Shirer '25, painter Marvin Cone '14, NFL Hall of Fame coach Marv Levy '50, and musician and educator Alma Turechek '25. ■



▲ The Phi Beta Kappa display in Stewart Memorial Library's Pochobradsky Reading Room: The exhibit will remain on display throughout the fall semester.

FROM IOWA TO INDONESIA: PILOT PROJECT PROVIDES ACCESS TO WORLDWIDE MEDIA

This year Stewart Memorial Library was invited to participate in a pilot project made available by NewsBank, a web-based information provider, through which library users have online access to state, national and international news sources. The college was given free access to NewsBank's vast resources in exchange for providing feedback collected through user surveys and other activities.

Interim Library Director Jill Jack says NewsBank offers access to news sources from six continents, ranging from Iowa newspapers to national publications, international newspapers translated into English, military and government publications, and broadcast transcripts from major news networks. "It's a great research tool and it crosses so many fields," she says. "If students and faculty take advantage of it, they can really mine it and get valuable information." ■

NEW TOOLS FOR LIBRARY USERS

In its never-ending endeavor to remain on the cutting edge, the library is in the process of upgrading its servers and adding "new bells and whistles" to the catalog, says Interim Library Director Jill Jack. "We're trying to make the online catalog more robust, adding more reviews to book listings, and introducing reviews for videos, so that a user can see a clip and a review before borrowing a movie."

The library is also adding content to its webpage, providing more links to its subject databases "so that students aren't just blindly Googling a topic," Jack says. Meanwhile, Archives Assistant Sara Pitcher '07 continues to enhance the library's digital archives, recently adding aerial photos of campus and a photo collection showing campus buildings over the years. ■



▲ Pulitzer Prize-winning reporters Roy Gutman (left) and Steve Wick talked about William Shirer's impact on their own careers and on the subject of wartime journalism.

painful episode in their long relationship. Although the two were not able to heal their friendship completely, Cuthbertson noted, his recent contacts with Murrow's son and Shirer's daughter, living near each other in Massachusetts, may lead to a meeting between the descendents of the two giants of journalism.

Confronting the challenges of wartime reporting

Two Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists were on hand to discuss the complex topic of "Ethics and the Role of Foreign Correspondents," using Shirer's wartime experiences as a case history that presents ongoing questions and lessons for

contemporary reporters.

Newsday Deputy Long Island Editor Steve Wick, who has become a familiar face at Stewart Memorial Library as he has used the Shirer Archives to research an upcoming book on Shirer's years in Berlin, described Shirer as "one of the most fascinating men of the century" – and one who, fortunately, "saved everything." Shirer's coverage of the Nazi regime led Wick to ask, "What are the journalist's choices and responsibilities? When Shirer saw what was happening, what did he do?" By the time Shirer came to Berlin in 1934, Wick said, "it was apparent that the war on the Jews was underway." Shirer attended official Nazi press conferences and was embedded with the invading

German army as it moved across Europe.

Given his situation – at a time when journalists were being expelled from Germany on a weekly basis – Shirer had two choices: Either stay and write as much as he could without getting expelled, or simply leave.

Wick has found evidence that Shirer provided personal support for a handful of Jews with whom he came into contact, and he was one of two journalists who refused to report the Nazi propaganda line that England was about to fall to the Germans – a stance that forced his eventual departure from Berlin in 1940. At the same time, Wick noted, Shirer, along with every other journalist in Germany, missed the

most important story of his era – Hitler's Final Solution. Wick credits Shirer with destroying evidence that would have endangered his sources in Germany, then secreting out of the country a treasure trove of diaries and papers that have proved invaluable in recreating and understanding the Nazi regime.

McClatchy Washington Bureau Foreign Editor Roy Gutman, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993 for his reporting on ethnic cleansing during the Kosovo War, talked about the importance of Shirer's perspective for his own work as a foreign correspondent. Gutman said he was "absolutely enthralled" by Shirer's book, "The Nightmare Years," detailing events in Europe from 1930 to 1940. The book "was written with refreshing candor, with no airs or pomposity, and describes daily journalism and the limits of journalism." Shirer realized the value of street reporting and dealt daily with the issue: Where do you draw the line as a journalist in wartime?

"Shirer acknowledged that journalists in Berlin got many things wrong," Gutman related. "Hitler was spellbinding, and many were carried away by him, including Shirer at times." Reflecting on Shirer's experience, Gutman said that great journalists look for the things that are not being said – the gaps in the story. "What about the concentration camps?" he asked. "Shirer all but ignored this as he told the story of the great geopolitical events of his day. He made his choices – ones that allowed him to stay. But why didn't he reflect on this in his later memoirs?" These are questions that suggest the conflicts Shirer faced – and continue to haunt journalists today. ■

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