

UCSD Eleanor Roosevelt College dedication draws gifts, memorabilia from community

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The dedication of Eleanor Roosevelt College at the University of California, San Diego earlier this year has drawn inquiries from near and far from Americans wishing to donate to the college gifts and other memorabilia related to Eleanor Roosevelt.

"We are gratified by the response to the college's new name and are especially pleased that so many people in the community view the college as an appropriate repository for works of art and memorabilia related to Mrs. Roosevelt," said Ann Craig, provost of Eleanor Roosevelt College. "It is our pleasure to receive materials such as pictures, documents, and artifacts that can help us educate our students about Mrs. Roosevelt's life and work, and might provide source materials for scholarly inquiry as well."

Gifts have included an original portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt, drawn in sepia tone using a charcoal-dust technique, by artist Ruth Valleau of La Jolla. Valleau, former head of the illustration laboratory at the UCSD School of Medicine and a long-time resident of San Diego, still has a vivid memory of hearing Eleanor Roosevelt speak in San Diego in 1956. Subsequently, she was inspired to draw the portrait because of her lifelong veneration of Mrs. Roosevelt.

News of the dedication of Eleanor Roosevelt College also stirred the interest of William D. Eppes, a resident of New York, Birmingham, and La Jolla, who has donated his personal collection of Eleanor Roosevelt memorabilia to the college archives in honor of Mrs. Roosevelt and his mother, the late Mrs. Talmadge DeWitte Eppes. The collection includes a Christmas card signed by Mrs. Roosevelt, as well as commemorative posters, brochures, and news clippings relating to various events, and numerous books by and about her. Mrs. Eppes was an acquaintance and sometime correspondent of Mrs. Roosevelt.

Mr. Eppes serves on the Honorary Committee of the Eleanor Roosevelt Monument Fund in New York, where a statue of Mrs. Roosevelt by Penelope Jencks will soon become the focal point of the Eleanor Roosevelt Monument in Riverside Park at 72nd Street. Eppes also played an important role in arranging for New York University to mount a commemorative plaque on the building at Washington Square, where Mrs. Roosevelt resided for many years.

At the January dedication ceremonies for the college, which featured First Lady Hillary Clinton as keynote speaker, a bronze bust of Mrs. Roosevelt by sculptor Rose Shechet Miller was also presented to the college by the United Nations Association of San Diego County and Sami and Marie Bandak. According to Miller, the sculpture was intended to express "the aspect of that great lady that sparked her work...during her husband's presidency, but also more particularly, her own work in the United Nations. Her compassion, her strength, and determination are among the qualities that people see in this portrait. It is this period of her life that I have shown, and I call the sculpture 'First Lady of the World.'"

Members of the community wishing to donate materials to the college's Eleanor Roosevelt Archive, should contact Barbara Blomgren, (619) 534-2233.

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