

UCSD libraries receive major gift

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UCSD LIBRARIES RECEIVE MAJOR GIFT

Audrey S. Geisel has given a substantial gift to the University of California, San Diego Libraries. In keeping with the donor's wishes, the full amount of the gift will not be disclosed.

In recognition of the gift, UCSD's architecturally unique University Library will be named Geisel Library in honor of Audrey and her late husband Theodor Seuss Geisel, the world renowned children's book author who wrote as Dr. Seuss.

"The UCSD Library is so right for Ted," Audrey explained. "First, because literacy has always been our primary interest. If we could conquer illiteracy, many of the other causes we support to sustain people -- the abused, the homeless, and the need for remedial education -- would, to some extent, disappear. The Library is the symbol of our commitment.

"And the UCSD Library is especially suited for that role. The first time Ted saw the form of that building he said to me 'If I had turned my thoughts toward designing a building, it might have looked strangely similar to this.'"

UCSD Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson said of the gift, "Audrey and Ted Geisel shared a love of learning, of words spoken and written, of ideas and of books. This gift is a wonderful and fitting testimony to their spirit." Referring to the library's stunning architecture, he continued, "UCSD's University Library, like the Geisel legacy, is unique. It is art and knowledge brought together in a way that beckons curious and hungry minds. The fit is perfect. The library is the center of UCSD's life; it is well named as Geisel Library."

A native of Chicago, Illinois, and a graduate of Indiana University, Audrey married Theodor in 1968 and has been a longtime resident of La Jolla, California.

The President of Dr. Seuss Enterprises, Audrey is credited with shepherding the expansion of the Dr. Seuss literary works into an array of new communication enterprises. Through business affiliations with major production companies and creative artists, Audrey has made the Seuss characters and stories available in feature films, animation, CD-ROMS, videos, and even light opera. She has overseen the creation of a Dr. Seuss clothing line and handles world approval rights for all uses of the Seuss name and materials.

The author of 47 books as Dr. Seuss, and numerous others as Theo LeSieg and other pseudonyms, Theodor Geisel also authored 10 television specials; a feature movie; tracts on the environment; plus ideas for ballets, musicals and poems.

According to UCSD Librarian Gerald R. Lowell, "This magnificent gift will be used to increase access to scholarly information -- through both print and electronic resources. It will also enhance our information literacy

program, through which students acquire the skills to access and use information successfully, while at UCSD and throughout a lifetime of learning."

Three years ago Audrey named UCSD the beneficiary of a \$2.3 million collection of original material from the estate of her late husband. That donation contained drawings, sketches, notebooks, books, tapes, records and memorabilia generally dating from the early 1970s through the early 1990s. Substantial other material has been added to the collection since that time; UCSD's Dr. Seuss Collection now reflects the breadth of his creative work throughout his entire career.

Audrey's involvement in the community spans numerous charities and organizations, including the National Hospice Foundation; Charter 100; San Diego Zoological Society; Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation; Mental Health Association; Voices for Children; March of Dimes; the Ida Green Cancer Center; San Diego Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; La Jolla Playhouse; Old Globe Theatre, and Mingei International Museum: She has been awarded the Sixth Annual Humanitarian Award from San Diego Hospice and the UCSD Chancellor's Associates Distinguished Service Medal.

At UCSD, Audrey serves on the Board of Visitors of the School of Medicine; the Cancer Center Board; is a Community Advisor to the UCSD Medical Center Auxiliary; and is a member of the Chancellor's Associates Silver Circle.

As the only major research library south of Los Angeles, the UCSD Libraries hold more than two million items and accommodate over one million users each year, including numerous San Diego residents and businesses.

Editor's Note: Photo available upon request.

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