

UCSD Nobel Laureate Maria Goeppert Mayer to Appear on New U.S. Postal Service Stamp June 16

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UC San Diego Nobel Laureate and founding faculty member Maria Goeppert Mayer will appear on a new stamp issued Thursday, June 16, by the U.S. Postal Service. The stamp art combines images from UC San Diego's Mandeville Special Collections Library, and includes photographs of Mayer and her signature. The stamp is one in a series that honors Americans who have made extraordinary contributions to science.

Mayer was one of only two women to ever win the Nobel Prize in physics-the other was Marie Curie. Although Mayer forged a distinguished career before coming to UC San Diego, she did so in unpaid positions. UC San Diego was the first institution to offer her a regular faculty position, in the physics department, when she was 54. Mayer, who was a member of the UCSD faculty in the Department of Physics from 1960 to 1970, died in 1972.

Mayer's papers-which include correspondence, writings and lectures, research notebooks, photographs, and other materials-were donated to UC San Diego's Mandeville Special Collections Library after her death, along with the papers of her husband, UCSD chemical physicist Joseph Mayer. Her archive includes correspondence with physicists Edward Teller and Hans Jensen, at a time of great national and international turmoil (during and following WWII).

According to Lynda Claassen, director of UCSD's Mandeville Special Collections Library, the signature on the stamp is found in a book that Mayer used in her teaching. The stamp also includes a chart and a diagram illustrating properties of chemical elements and the model of the atomic nucleus that Mayer developed with Hans Jensen, with whom she shared the Nobel Prize in physics.

"The Mandeville Special Collections Library houses a substantial collection on 20th century science and science policy," said Claassen, "including the papers of some of the nation's most renowned scientists. We are thrilled to be playing a role in increasing awareness of Professor Mayer's significant accomplishments, at a time when few female scientists were working, let alone winning the Nobel Prize."

The Mandeville Special Collections Library is also the repository for the papers of world-renowned scientists and Nobel Laureates Francis Crick, Jonas Salk, Harold Urey, and Hannes Alfvén, said Claassen.

The Maria Goeppert Mayer stamp marks the second instance of a U.S. Postal Service stamp based on images from UCSD's Special Collections. In 2004, a commemorative postage stamp was issued marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Seuss, which was accompanied by the unveiling of a bronze sculpture at UCSD's Geisel Library. UCSD's flagship library (named for Theodor and Audrey Geisel) is the repository for the Dr. Seuss Collection (held in Mandeville Special Collections), which includes more than 10,000 items documenting Theodor Geisel's amazing creative legacy.

Ranked among the nation's top 20 public academic research libraries, the UC San Diego Libraries play an integral role in advancing and supporting the university's research, teaching, and public service missions. As the intellectual heart of the UC San Diego campus, the university libraries provide access to more than 7 million

digital and print volumes, journals, and multimedia materials to meet the knowledge and information needs of faculty, students, and members of the public. Each day, more than 7,300 patrons visit one of the UCSD libraries and more than 87,000 people access library resources through the UCSD Libraries main Web site.

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