

RARE BOOK SCHOOL

114 Alderman Library · University of Virginia · Charlottesville, Virginia 22904-4103
www.rarebookschool.org · oldbooks@virginia.edu · 434-924-8851

November 2013

Dear Friends,

“History is not a *was*, but an *is*,” Shelby Foote once remarked. The novelist and Civil War historian was invoking his literary hero, William Faulkner, who famously declared, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past” (*Requiem for a Nun*). These observations seem to fly in the face of recent hand wringing about the current “crisis in the humanities.” How can the past have a present, much less a future, if libraries and archives are not vital places of inquiry, if the historical imagination is impoverished, if our intellectual and civic aspirations are blunted by the granite grind of dull utility?

While our history largely makes us who we are, it is perhaps our textual heritage that chiefly instructs us as to what we might most nobly wish to become. Bibliography and book history may reasonably claim to rank among the most humanistic of the disciplines that constitute the humanities (*studia humanitatis*), because we unremittingly seek to understand textual artifacts of many kinds—manuscripts, prints, letterpress-printed sheets, photographs, digital materials, and more—both in history and as constitutive elements of history. Such thoroughgoing study ineluctably leads us to close and sustained engagement, not only with the artifacts themselves, but also with the lives of men and women variously involved in textual production, transmission, and reception. The delightfully humanistic business of bibliography, then, is to discover “the human presence[s] in any recorded text” (D.F. McKenzie).

With the help of many friends, Rare Book School has had a landmark year. Our enthusiastic and able students learned a great deal from our world-class faculty’s 25 summer offerings at UVA and a fall course at the Morgan Library, as well as four summer courses at Yale and one at Penn—both new venues for our School. Aspiring students from around the globe submitted more than 700 applications, and more than 400 enrolled in RBS courses this year. I am proud to report that 58 of our students, almost 15%, attended on full scholarships. It is our hope that next year we will have sufficient funding to sponsor as many as 75 scholarship students.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William T. Buice III CHAIR
New York, New York

Robert A. Gross VICE-CHAIR
Storrs, Connecticut

Alice D. Schreyer SECRETARY
Chicago, Illinois

Joan M. Friedman TREASURER
Urbana, Illinois

Michael F. Suarez, S.J. PRESIDENT
Charlottesville, Virginia

Terry Belanger FOUNDING DIRECTOR
Charlottesville, Virginia

John Robinson Block
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

John T. Casteen III
Keswick, Virginia

Mary E. Crawford
San Mateo, California

John Crichton
San Francisco, California

Giovanni Favretti
New York, New York

Florence Fearington
New York, New York

Don Fry
Charlottesville, Virginia

James N. Green
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Edward R. Leahy
McLean, Virginia

Mary C. Schlosser
New York, New York

Arthur L. Schwarz
Scarsdale, New York

Carolyn L. Smith
New York, New York

Hans E. Tausig
New York, New York

Karin Wittenborg
Charlottesville, Virginia

Last October, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made an award of \$896,000 to fund the RBS-Mellon Fellows in Critical Bibliography for three years. Nearly 250 applications were tendered for 20 places, and the program is off to a marvelous start. I am delighted to announce that, in light of the success of the fellowship program thus far, the Mellon Foundation has recently awarded Rare Book School an additional \$783,000 to fund a second cohort (2014–16). This is a wonderful development for our School and, I trust, for the future of bibliographical learning in humanistic education and research.

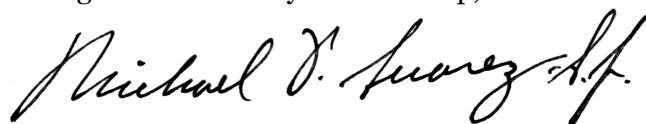
Phase Two of our ambitious renovation project, greatly enlarging and refurbishing our first-floor quarters in Alderman Library, was completed in time for our summer courses. Many generous benefactors pitched in to support this ambitious undertaking, so that we were able to raise the \$1M required. Because of the loyalty and largesse of our friends, we have not only met, but exceeded our Annual Fund goal for the fourth year in a row, and many new friends have joined our School.

Among our exciting new courses for 2014, Will Noel and Dot Porter will be teaching “The Medieval Manuscript in the Twenty-First Century” at Penn’s new Kislak Center for Special Collections. RBS will be returning to Yale this summer as well. We’ll also be at the Library Company of Philadelphia, a first for us, as Jim Green will teach “The History of the Book in America, c.1700–1830” in his home institution. In addition to many perennial favorites, Rare Book School is featuring new courses at the University of Virginia. Soren Edgren (Princeton) will be teaching “The History of the Book in China” as part of our initiative to bring a more global perspective to our offerings. Todd Pattison (Harvard), our instructor for “American Publishers’ Bookbindings, 1800–1900,” will be succeeding (but not re-placing) Sue Allen of most happy memory. In all, through the hard work of the School’s faculty and staff, we have added 21 new courses and three new locations since 2010—and there is more to come.

Rare Book School depends on your generosity to help us provide the highest quality intellectual and professional development opportunities for book historians and antiquarian booksellers, librarians and collectors, archivists and bibliographers. Knowing that the textual artifacts we study are indispensable embodiments of human aspiration and endeavor, we strive to advance understandings of the past and its uses for the present that are essential to the viability of our intellectual, cultural, and civic future.

Annual giving by the Friends of RBS strengthens and sustains our work of education, advocacy, and outreach. I ask you please to help us with a year-end gift. With your benevolence, Rare Book School will become a growing force for good in the humanities. Through your magnanimity, Rare Book School will continue to nourish and enrich the bibliographical community.

With great thanks for your kind help,



Michael F. Suarez, S.J.
Director, Rare Book School

University Professor, Professor of English,
& Hon. Curator of Special Collections,
University of Virginia
michael.suarez@virginia.edu