

## Endowed Special Collections: \$1 million

### Background

The Copley Library seeks \$1 million to develop **endowed special collections**. Copley Library's special collection began as a random collection of donations along with rare, fragile, or controversial material transferred from the library's general stacks.

After an intensive project to catalog its holdings, the special collection now exists as an accessible, representative collection of rare books, manuscripts, art, and ephemera. Its strengths include: California history; manuscripts and early printed books; American Franciscan history; fine press books and bookplates; and early 20th century postcards. But, without a funding source, these collections have little chance for further development.

### Objectives

Once only the province of scholars, universities are increasingly looking to special collections to provide students with firsthand experience, using rare books and manuscripts for original research. Because of the uniqueness of material held by these collections, special collections in libraries have become an important element in university teaching and research. Special collections supports classes and research in the humanities by providing, for example, opportunities for students to see and touch incunabula (books printed before 1501); to examine the beautiful bindings and typography of fine press books; or to study primary sources of local San Diego history. Increasingly there are also opportunities for students and faculty to engage in digital humanities projects using the unique books, manuscripts, and ephemera found in these collections.

### Impact

There are many ways that Copley Library and the University of San Diego can distinguish itself through the developing its special collections.

For example, with funding the library:

- Can build on the strength of the American Franciscan History Collection and its Catholic rare book collection. As one of the founding members of the Catholic Research Resources Alliance (CRRA), USD's Catholic rare books and manuscripts have a ready audience of international scholars whose research interests could be met through the collection's further development.
- Can use an endowment to enhance USD's California history collection. The university's history department contributes original research through graduate student theses, which has as its particular strength theses that document the history of San Diego. The local history revealed by these theses can help USD focus the acquisition of works by and about San Diego and will help the library to preserve local publications for future researchers.
- Can focus USD's collection of artists' books (books that are works of art) to better serve the university's book arts classes and to create an in-depth collection that will attract book art scholars.

### For More Information

**Theresa Byrd, EdD**

Dean

University Library

(619) 260-2370

[tsbyrd@sandiego.edu](mailto:tsbyrd@sandiego.edu)

[leadingchange.sandiego.edu](http://leadingchange.sandiego.edu)