WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN AUGUST, THE JEAN AND ALEXANDER HEARD LIBRARY UNVEILED A NEW LOOK TO STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND THOSE BEYOND THE CONFINES OF CAMPUS: SPECIFICALLY, A NEW LOGO AND A REDESIGN OF THE LIBRARY’S HOME-PAGE THAT USES “INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE”—THE ART AND TECHNIQUE OF DESIGNING AND BUILDING WEB PAGES THAT INTUITIVELY LEAD THE USER TO COMPLEX INFORMATION.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW LOGO WAS GUIDED TOWARD THE NEW TECHNOLOGICAL ORIENTATION IN LIBRARIES. HOWEVER, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO RETAIN SOME CONNECTION TO THE PAST, INHERENT IN THE WORD “ACORN,” THE NAME OF THE LIBRARY’S CATALOG, WHICH IS ALSO EMBLEMATIC OF VANDERBILT IN GENERAL. DONNA Pritchett, art director in the Office of Design and Publishing, was tapped to design the logo.

“The old ACORN logo had the elements of a Y and acorn shape (from the Vanderbilt logo known as the ‘Helvetia Orr’ inside the O),” says Pritchett. “Seeing that, I thought that I should continue to work with those elements in the new logo. The shape of the acorn in the Vanderbilt logo reminded me of a computer mouse, and at that point, the V took on the identity of an open book in my mind. The line that connects the mouse to the open book represents the coming together of the old and the new.”

The new logo even looks good on trucks. Here, clockwise from right, library budget officer Norman Nash joins James McCullough, Dewey James, and Michael Chandler of the Heard Library Messenger Service in appreciating the new design. The new logo is related to the previous acorn and “V” for Vanderbilt, is now symbolic of a computer mouse, and even looks good on trucks.

The new Web page was under design for many months, a collaborative effort between librarians and library technology staff, with some consulting on visual design by the University’s Creative Services Division. Usability studies were done prior to the redesign to aid in pinpointing the needs of those using the library home page.

“With the beginning of the academic year in August, the Jean and Alexander Heard Library unveiled a new look to students, faculty, staff, and those beyond the confines of campus: specifically, a new logo and a redesign of the library’s home-page that uses “information architecture”—the art and technique of designing and building Web pages that intuitively lead the user to complex information.”

The development of the new logo was guided toward the new technological orientation in libraries. However, it was important to retain some connection to the past, inherent in the word “ACORN,” the name of the library’s catalog, which is also emblematic of Vanderbilt in general. Donna Pritchett, art director in the Office of Design and Publishing, was tapped to design the logo.

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“We looked at each user category in an effort to picture our audi-
Grantrand Rice, A'01 and Fred Russell, A'27, L'27, two sons of the Vanderbilt tradition, have strong ties to each other, not only because of their alma mater, but also because of their careers, each having left his mark on the history of sports writing in the United States. Special Collections holds the manuscript and book collections of both writers and has loaned memorabilia from both collections to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio; the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana; and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in Nashville. Last November, William A. Harper, the author of How You Played the Game: The Life of Grantrand Rice, published by the University of Missouri Press, presented the following Gallery Talk on

Grantland Rice and Fred Russell, Two Gentlemen of Sport

WILLIAM A. HARPER, PURDUE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, KINESIOLOGY, AND LEISURE STUDIES

November 14, 1999

On Tuesday November 1, 1995, a little more than a year after Grantrand Rice’s passing, Fred Russell of the Nashville Banner, then nearly fifty years old, was awarded the first Sportsmanship Brotherhood award for sports writing in the Grantland Rice tradition. Mr. Russell was so honored on what would have been Rice’s 75th birthday. The luncheon was held at Toots Shor’s restaurant on 51st Street in New York City.

Mr. Russell’s award-winning column appeared in the Banner on June 10, 1955. His subject that day was a call to update the true meaning of sportsmanship. The gist of Mr. Russell’s observations was to issue a challenge to the growing preoccupation with “winning-at-all-costs” in American sport. Russell argued that without doubt, competition is at the core of sport. In team sports, for example, healthy competition instills a certain resolve to not let one’s teammates down, and to be unfail in pursuing a common goal. But all too often, noted Mr. Russell, winning is so important to the players, coaches, and fans alike, that the virtues associated with the well-played game go unnoticed. The “winners’ gloat” and round and whine. The true meaning of sport—that is, sportsmanship and fair play—is endangered. For Russell, whether we win or lose, sport is capable of some priceless teachings: respect for the rights of others, self-discipline, devotion to a goal or an ideal, and unselfishness. It was this appeal to the better side of Americans in 1955 that warranted Mr. Russell’s recognition as the recipient of the first Sportsmanship Brotherhood award for sports writing in the Grantland Rice tradition.

Much has happened in sport between mid-century and now. My own students, when asked if things are better in sport now than 50 years ago, enthusiastically and oh-so-naively answer “yes, of course they are.” But what should haunt us all about Fred Russell’s 1955 column is the description of his times sounds much like ours.

And his call for reimplimenting sportsmanship in its fullest sense seems to be no less a matter of necessity today as it was then, maybe even more so now than then. I want to make a simple but important point that is nicely illustrated in Fred Russell’s award-winning column. There is a lesson here and there that can serve to explain just why those two gentlemen of sport—Rice and Russell—achieved so much, why we revere and honor them, and why it is necessary for us all to carry forward what they stood so tall for. The lesson is that we have made progress in sports when we use the standards of tangible progress to assess progress on the intangibles.

Progress and Technology

Just at the time Fred Russell was entering the profession of sports writing (1929) and Grantrand Rice was the dean of them, some thoughtful writers were questioning the assumption that there was a necessary connection between technological progress and the progress of civilization as a whole, especially in the moral, artistic, or intellectual senses.

For example, Lewis Mumford thought that the chief problem of life in general was that “many people think not only that mechanical progress is a positive aid to human improvement—which is true—but that mechanical progress is the equivalent of human improvement—which turns out to be sheer nonsense.” Aldous Huxley said just that “because we use a hundred and ten times as much coal as our ancestors, we believe ourselves a hundred and ten times better intellectually, morally, spiritually.

In other words, it is mostly an illusion to believe that technological progress necessarily means human improvement. It is my opinion that since the 1920s and 1930s, in elevating our technical wizardry to the extent that we have done, we are so busy, distracted, and have so little time that we have lost sight of what the technical developments and products were meant for originally. We then idolize the tangibles of technical production and indiscriminate consumption—sheer abundance itself—instead of finding ways to improve and sustain the quality of our intangible human character.

Unless each generation is reminded of this danger over and over again we forget what Ralph Waldo Emerson told us nearly 150 years ago that “character is higher than intellect.” If we return to the world of sport, it seems that we perpetually fall prey to the same misnomer of the intellectual over character formation. As in the larger world, we cultivate the tangibles—the technically produced and consumed sporting goods, services, promotions, organizations, networks, and businesses—over the intangibles—the satisfying of basic individual human needs, hopes, and dreams. This is the mistake that my students make when they argue so passionately that sport today is better than yesterday. What they mean, I think, is that we are technically more sophisticated today than yes-terday. I usually grant them this, but when I switch the criteria for progress to human character in sport, they are far less sure of themselves.

Today, as compared to 70 years ago, we have more sports, quicker travel times, better equipment, better rules—more technology. More technology—the intangibles—does not mean that we are any more successful than previous generations when confronted with the terribly important need to nurture such ideas and ideals as social responsibility, moral values, basic virtuous conduct, and simple character education—the intangibles.

It is a fair question to ask ourselves, over the last couple of generations in particular, has the most recent technological sporting genius done more to decivilize than to civi- lize? To some extent, I think it has. When we modernize reduce the mean- ing of sports and athletics to little more than the obsessive pursuit of records and of winning, we assume self-righteousness that sports’ greatest good is the stimulation and vindication of the theory of technological progress; and when we exaggerate the compo- nent of human engineering to an art form and measurement to four and twenty decimal places, then we have accomplished what the poet William Carlos Williams once said we eventually would: “They’ve got it down to a science, where there’s nothing to it anymore.”

Because in sport we are so single-minded in our hot pursuit of velocities, human engineering, and medals, we have created something so large and popular and so beyond anyone’s imagining that it is nearly all that we can do in sport—such as we can do in sport—and dignify ourselves and our lives and our nation.

When we learn things, master a difficult skill, and play the game well—such as we can do in sport—we are more likely to be better in sport. Much has happened in sport: sports competition instills a certain resolve to not let one’s teammates down, and to be unfail in pursuing a common goal.

But now and even worse, look what’s happening to the high school boys soccer Seasonal Tournament play has produced the follow- ing:

1997: An apparent bad referee call ignited a team temper tantrum that resulted in four players being ejected, additional police being summoned to the field beyond those already assigned to the tournament, the ejected players having to be physically escorted to the bus, and angry arguments between the team members and the officials after the game.

1998: A senior team captain spit in a referee’s face because he felt the game was not being called correctly. Later, the players and fans that lost the tournament cursed, screamed, and argued with officials, tournament organizers, and arguing coaches.

1999: In the first game of the sectionals a fight broke out on the field, and consumed sporting goods, services, promotions and networks—above his head in the universal symbol of vulgarity, all the while yelling at the official as he stormed off the field. Then he shoved the assistant coach over a bench to the ground. In the second game, two players were ejected for fighting and unsportsmanlike con- duct. In the third game, a coach was ejected for arguing a call and throwing objects onto the field of play. Then, a parent, angered by the refereeing, dimmed the lights, ran onto the field and assaulted the game officials.

Now that’s just at the high school level.

Because in sport we are so single-minded in our hot pursuit of velocities, human engineering, and medals, we have created something so large and popular and so beyond anyone’s imagining that it is nearly all that we can do in sport—such as we can do in sport—and dignify ourselves and our lives and our nation.

Don’t get me started on my first hand accounts of hellish behavior in age group athletic experience. Let me give you but one illustrative example from my own small city of Lafayette, Indiana. Last November, William A. Harper, the author of How You Played the Game: The Life of Grantrand Rice, published by the University of Missouri Press, presented the following Gallery Talk on
a four-door sport utility vehicles, palmcorders, rollerblades, and CD players for cars—arranging us. No wonder all the great intellectual concepts such as monothemism and using the zero in arithmetic come from pastoral societies where herdsmen sit around all night with nothing to do except...  

The right and good reaction to sins, character flaws, and ethical lapses is not to scoff at the misconduct, but to prod the collectivity toward better conduct. That’s what sets Grantland Rice and Fred Russell, apart, for their praddig was at least prodigious even if it wasn’t always contagious. What really matters athletically, these two gentlemen of sport thought, are the eligibility possibilities available in sport and athletic competition: the tests, the challenges, the work ethic, the loyalty, the friendships, the overcoming, the luck, the fair play possibilities, the poetic moments of justice, the dramatic, and romantic turns sport experiences can take.  

Or even the humor. Remember Fred Russell’s wholly imagined character named Stagnant, who was said to have made his home in a hammock under a bridge spanning the Cumberland River... Stagnant. Stagnant’s method for rendering a prediction (which was about as good as the way most sports previsions are figured out) was to read what the dandelions spell out when dropped into a steaming cauldron of equal parts hyena milk and donkeysweat.  

As you well know, our two gentlemen of sport paid just as much attention to the intangibles, to the more abstracted ethical and value issues of right conduct, more attention, than they did to the tangible. This they did against the philo-sophical direction of this entire century, where it is increasingly diffi-cult to keep our eyes on such abstract matters. P. J. O’Rourke, of Rolling Stone, recently pointed out that the concrete is winning out over the abstract: “It’s just that it’s hard for us to pay attention to abstract mat-ters when we have so many concrete matters—cellular phones, ski boats, salad shooters, pasta-making machines, our two gentlemen of sport paid just as much attention to the intangibles, to the more abstracted ethical and value issues of right conduct, more attention, than they did to the tangible. This they did against the philo-sophical direction of this entire century, where it is increasingly diffi-cult to keep our eyes on such abstract matters. P. J. O’Rourke, of Rolling Stone, recently pointed out that the concrete is winning out over the abstract: “It’s just that it’s hard for us to pay attention to abstract matters when we have so many concrete matters—cellular phones, ski boats, salad shooters, pasta-making machines, sport after generation that: that, is in the end, sport is about telling our story over and over again, each time with different characters, different plots, and different endings but always with the same enduring vision of attempted greatness.

“Heroes Writing About the Heroic”  

As we come to the end of this millennium, we have tamed, even somewhat dominated matter, and made it conform to our wishes. We have diligently pursued the goal of making things more comfortable and convenient. And to our credit, we have succeeded in many ways. But this success has its dangers too. Besides the difficult problem of discovering too late unforeseen consequences of our emerging tech-nologies, there is the impact that such a pursuit has on the character of the people themselves, on all of us.  

The pursuit of comfort and convenience is not an index of supe-riority. Such a single-minded goal weakens our inner constitu-tions and has a questionable impact on our individual and collective character. Florida Scott-Maxwell, the writer and playwright, said that we are all to some extent tested in this life: “Suddenly I won-der—is all hardness justified because we are so slow in realizing that life was meant to be heroic? That life’s aim and justification, and we poor fools have for centuries been trying to make it convenient, manageable, pliant to our will.”  

Such heroism means what the dictionaries tell us it means: having a “nobility of purpose.” In our modern times it is increasingly diffi-cult to find positive, noble, and worthy goals. Hence, inertia sets in where there is a lapse in initiative and a failure to make a concerted effort toward accomplishing anything. When everything is done for the good of oneself, it can hardly be called sport for themselves. As a result, and according to the historian Barbara Tuchman, there is a fracture in national, even global character.  

One huge antdote for the loss of a moral sense to life as a whole is the multiplication of opportunities for experiences that do not debase humanity, but dignify it. When we learn things, master a difficult skill, and play the game well—as such as we can do in sport—we dignify ourselves and our lives and our nation. The biologist and philosopher Leon Kass argued that to make progress toward human improvement, we absolutely must encounter necessity and dificult. That’s what living means. And what we truly respect are people who somehow raise themselves up to a level beyond the mundane by their own efforts. What we should be celebrating continually is the effort the best of us make to achieve something noble, something fine, and something that reaches beyond in the heroic sense.  

Our two gentlemen of sport are two exam-ples of such heroes. For the duration of their lifetimes they have been ever on the lookout for what was noble in this earthly making of their craft over the years, they too produced a body of work that is truly noble. Heroes writing about the heroic. Grantland Rice and Fred Russell both verify what D. H. Lawrence meant when he taught us the following: “Pay homage to a hero, and you yourself become heroic.”  

Let’s return to that November day in 1955 when Fred Russell received the much-deserved Sportmanship Brotherhood award for writing in the Grantland Rice tradition. This was truly a big event for both “Freddie” and “Granny.” In a telegram Mr. Russell received that day, the writer, Gene Fowler, congratulated Freddie with the follow-ing tribute:  

Very happy indeed that you are receiving the Grantland Rice award. The best newspaper writing appears in the sports pages of America and the finest friendships are formed among the sports reporters. The field of sport is one of the few places left in this age of strife and prejudice and vengeance where men can respect and like another without flattery or fear or because of self-interest. In sports, unlike politics, a man does not last long if he hits below the belt or kicks a fellow who is down or helpless.  

Granny’s legacy was also acknowledged that day in 1955. Sportswriter Leonid Lewin covered the award ceremony. In part, here’s what he had to say about Grantland Rice:  

I didn’t know Granny too well. Casually, you might say. I doubt if he ever knew my name. Actually, I can recall about a half-dozen times, at the most, that I wound up in the same group with him. But I always came away with the feeling that I was a lot better for it. It was like spending an enjoyable evening with an old friend... . No, it wasn’t exactly like that. There’s more to it... . Maybe I can’t express it in the proper words. But the feeling I’ve been trying to express is the same one you get after leaving a house of God... . You feel relieved at being spiritually cleansed.  

Lewin ended his remarks by echoing John Kieran’s observation on Rice that “No man who ever knew him is not better for knowing him.” And today, I say to you Mr. Fred Russell, that the same can be said of you.
November 14, 1999

Commissioner of the Southeastern Conference and former Director of Athletics at Vanderbilt

Roy Kramer and Fred Russell

HOW great it is for Sara Jo and me to be in Nashville on this memorable afternoon, and in particular, to be with so many friends in the Heard Library. But most of all it is wonderful to be present to hear the remarks of Professor Harper as he describes so well the intermingling of the two gentlemen who have perhaps had the most impact of any upon the interest, the mystique, the love, the comedy and, most of all, the emotions that are the world of sport. For these two men were able to catch in the beautiful words of the English language so many wonderful moments that have been forever enshrined in our memories. They wrote about almost every possible sporting event—from the betting window at Churchill Downs to the smell of azaleas at Augusta, and even to the taste of a hot dog at Sulphur Dell Park on a warm summer afternoon.

More than 50 years ago this fall, a young man enrolled as a freshman in a small college in East Tennessee and took a freshman English composition course. My instructor was a lady of about 60 (who, I thought at the time, was extremely senior) who had a special interest in those of us who thought we were athletes. She knew so well that the thing I was most interested in was was the use of the English language.

But she did understand my love of the game. So, after one rather boring class session, she called to me her desk and handed me a very small book with a blue paper cover entitled, ‘I’ll Go Quietly.’ As I began to read those poetic lines written so many years ago in his beloved Nashville Biscuit, I was first introduced to Fred Russell—the tales, the jokes, the artful descriptions of hundreds of sporting events, and most of all, an appreciation for the people whom he knew so intimately and who had played the game. Thus is it that I am deeply indebted to share in this special moment in time as we honor the world of Fred Russell and the blessings he has bestowed on us as he painted the world of sport for us in his writings.

And what a world that is! I would offer that it’s really three worlds. First, there’s Freddie’s world, for that was always the very endearing title bestowed on him by his wonderful partner of so many years, the gracious Kay. Freddie’s world is that devotion to his family, his beloved daughters, his grandchildren, and all of those who knew him best. The second world I’d call just Fred’s world. That’s the world of laughter and twinking eyes as he unfolded a favorite joke to one of his friends—like Cotton Clark, or perhaps the much-beloved and second-guessed athletic director at Vanderbilt during our coaching days, Roy Kramer.

But it is the world of practical jokes that none of us can ever forget: the famous Stetson hat story, the lady in the old Brown Derby Hotel in Louisville; the drunken official and Chancellor Heard at a cocktail party at Fred’s house before the Tennessee-Vanderbilt game and many more too numerous to mention or, perhaps, not in good discretion to tell. What a legacy it is—to make people laugh. That truly is the legacy of Fred Russell’s world.

But it is the third world that we celebrate today on this very special occasion—the world of Fred’s typewriter and the matchless ability to catch for all time the unmatchable emotion of hundreds of sporting events, and most of all, an appreciation for the people...and the blessing he has bestowed on us as he painted the world of sport for us in his writings.
Hugh Davis Graham knows Federal documents. The author of *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1991, he finds that original source material made available through Federal depository libraries is key to his research. As the coauthor of *Violence in America*, published in 1969 when he was staff historian to President Johnson’s national commission on violence, he has written some of the government materials found at the Heard Library.

But even government information sent to a Federal depository library like Vanderbilt’s is not free. The thousands of physical items received each year must be labeled, shelved, bound, and maintained for users by library staff and student workers. As more of the GPO’s products become available only in electronic formats, Government Information Services at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library must continue to maintain, update, and fund more ways to provide access to these important materials.

Your gift to the Library helps make resources like these available to students and faculty at Vanderbilt. For more information, please contact Elaine Galeski, library development officer, at 615-343-4701.

Retirees Learn to Surf the Web

This past July, many retirees learned to surf the Internet at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library—surf the Internet, that is, during “A World of Information—A Library on your Desktop” led by University Librarian Paul Gherman and other library staff in the new electronic classroom. Internet sources on topics as diverse as health care, investing, travel, genealogy, and e-commerce were presented to a class of interested and grateful digital age neophytes.

“Beyond the Web content to retinues,” says Gherman. “I jumped at the chance when Silvine called. Retirees are sometimes reluctant to use new technology, since they did not grow up in the Internet age like most of our students. But once they get even a small taste of the richness of information to their health needs or their Internet age一样 long as we wish to teach.”

Harry Ransom, BA’43, and professor of political science, emeritus, signed up for the course in order to catch up with his wife’s expertise on the Web. “We have a home computer, and my wife, Nancy, is rather good at using it; I’m not, so I thought I would sign up for the course. It brought to my attention the enormous amount of information that is out there on the Internet, but I was delighted to learn how much is available from the library’s subscrip-

NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONAL LIBRARIES

Wolfe Honored at Friends Annual Dinner

Miracle Wolfe, longtime director of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library at Vanderbilt University, was honored at the 27th annual dinner of the Friends of the Library at the University Club on November 2. Her accomplishments were celebrated by Friends, library faculty, and students, who enjoyed a sumptuous dinner followed by a performance of the famous Canterbury Tales, accompanied by an unbound set of plates, each signed by artist Elisabeth Frink. The volumes are currently on display in Special Collections.

Marie Wolfe greets Canterbury Tales. Her work was also on display at the 27th annual dinner of the Friends of the Library on November 2. This year’s event, titled “Gone Off Up North,” featured author and humorist Roy Blount Jr., BA’63, as speaker.

Wolfe, who retired in October from her position as University archivist and head of Special Collections, began work at the library in 1969. During her years at the library, she has been involved with the Friends of the Library organization at the Heard Library since its founding in 1974.

Wolfe’s sense of style and good taste will be put to use after retirement as she pursues an interest in the culinary arts and catering.
The Jean and Alexander Heard Library is grateful for the generosity of its Friends and other benefactors who provided gifts to the library or any of its divisions during the 1999-2000 fiscal year (July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000). Contributions included unrestricted gifts, donations for particular purposes, memorial and commemorative gifts, and bequests.

Owen Graduate School of Management students are using a local area wireless network this fall, a move that propels the school even further in the forefront of technology. Brent Mai, director of the Walker Management Library at the Owen School, had to ensure that Owen students and faculty would be able to access the information they would need from the library in this kind of setting.

“Every other library on campus will be joining that wireless world soon,” says Mai, “but at the moment, Walker is on the cutting edge of technology use, and we’ll have to continue to do more.”
We are also grateful to the following individuals who have contributed their personal papers or libraries or have documented bequests benefiting the library.

Thomas B. Brumbaugh
Eleanor Jones Burt
Linda Carter
Mrs. Enrico Carsey Jr.
Ann Jenalie Cook Calhoun
Robert Y. Drake Jr.
Anna and Walter T. Durham
John Egerton
William D. Epps
Dorothy Ruth Parks Evans
Sam M. Fleming*
Kathleen Harris
Barbara and H. Roger King
Anne and Deirdre L. Walker
J. Robert Nelson
Betty and Franklin Parker
Robert J. Sudderth Jr.
Joan Ackler Wright*
 Often, in conducting research for articles and novels, writer Marc Stengel, treasurer of the Friends of the Library, finds, to put it simply, that one thing leads to another.

"The Diffusionists Have Landed," his cover story in the January 2000 *Atlantic Monthly*, came about as a result of research he is currently conducting for a historical novel. "To extend a filmmaking metaphor, the diffusionist material came from the cutting room floor," says Stengel. "In my search for verisimilitude for my novel, I found myself immersed in this material, and it was just too good to waste." Stengel’s interest in diffusionist scholarship—the claim that explorers from around the world discovered and traveled throughout America before Columbus—is indirectly related to his interest in Welsh and Arthurian studies. Quite by accident, he stumbled upon the outlandish claim that a sword found in Kentucky and inscribed in Welsh, may have belonged to one of two Arthurs who lived centuries apart and who supposedly emigrated to North America. This is a far cry, of course, from Stengel’s studies at Vanderbilt with Emerson Brown, professor of English, emeritus, who first planted the seeds for his interest in the legend of Arthur. Nevertheless, it provided him with an exotic anecdote for introducing readers to the larger controversy of pre-Columbian contact with the Americas.

Stengel enjoys following the thread of ideas. In the early ’90s he produced a show for ESPN in which he specialized in the history of famous firearms. "It allowed me to bring together several disciplines, telling the story of a problem being solved," says Stengel, "and it was appropriate to other fields beyond firearms. In fact, it had nothing to do with the ultimate use of the firearm and everything to do with the creative mind at work. For instance, John Browning, whose invention of the Automatic Colt Pistol, the military’s Colt .45, refined the concept of repeating fire, which has everything to do with the car you’re driving—reciprocating motion—or even something as mundane as the lockset in a door."

Stengel’s continued interest in historical arms extends to attending “swordfighting school” where he is researching the martial arts of the west, a very refined and specific tradition practiced during the dark ages in Europe, although they are largely unknown or misrepresented today. What’s his stake in all this? “To resurrect what is lost,” he answers. “When things in the world at large are lost, I get very melancholy. By nature, I’m a packrat, and I guess I project that same view onto other fields.”

A quotation at the top of Stengel’s business card reads in French ‘Droit devant soi on ne peut pas aller bien loin,’ literally ‘one can never go very far travelling straight ahead.’ "I thank Antoine de St. Exupery for letting me steal his sentiment," says Stengel, "which I understand as an invitation to ‘wander forth.’” And to that end, the Jean and Alexander Heard Library and the Friends play an important role.

“I make excuses to spend time in this library, a great deal more than when I was an undergraduate," Stengel laughs. “The library is essentially a meeting ground. To use an old pre-Roman term from Gaul, it’s the temenon, the sacred grove, where all important things happen. And with the Friends, you don’t even have to make your way into the stacks. They associate events around this grove so that you know by coming here that you’ll encounter a topic that satisfies your appetite for knowledge.”

Editor’s note: This is the first in an occasional series of profiles of Friends of the Library.