

# Chronicle

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## Friends Celebrate Achievement of Medical Library's 150,000th Volume



Mark Hay

*T. Mark Hodges, director of the Medical Center Library (left) and Dr. William Darby, president of Friends of the Library, admire Govard Bidloo's Anatomia Humani Corporis, published in 1685, which Dr. Darby presented in behalf of the Friends at the spring meeting.*

CODEFRIDI BIDLOO.  
Medicinx Doctoris & Chirurgi.

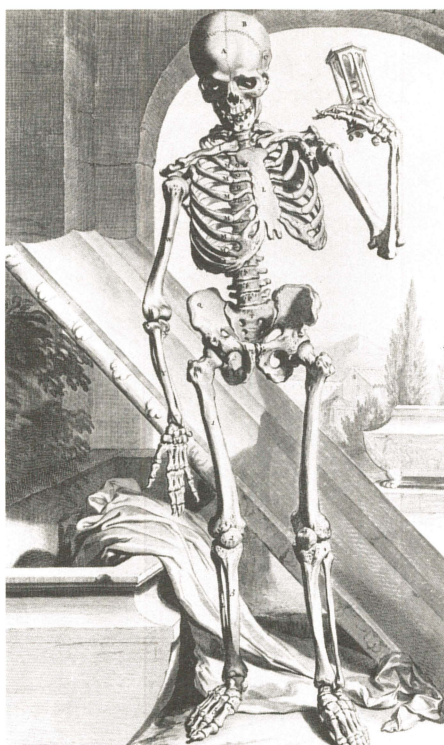
# ANATOMIA HUMANI CORPORIS,



The 150,000th volume in the Medical Center Library's collection is a rare anatomical atlas entitled *Anatomia Humani Corporis* by Govard or Godfried Bidloo (1649-1713). It was presented to T. Mark Hodges, director of the Medical Center Library, by Dr. William J. Darby, president of the Friends of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, at a meeting of the Friends on April 24, 1988.

Little is known of Bidloo's early life in Amsterdam. It is said that as a youth he was interested in literature and wrote plays. He did not, however, continue these pursuits, for by the age of twenty-one he was apprenticed to a surgeon and began the study of anatomy at The Hague under Frederik Ruysch (1638-1731). Bidloo served in the army of William, Prince of Orange, who later became King William III of England on his marriage to Mary II, daughter of James II. Bidloo became William's personal physician and accompanied him to England in 1688. His care of William was controversial because he often prescribed what would please the King rather than what was good for him. Needless to say, Bidloo remained the King's favorite physician. In 1685, before he left Holland for England, Bidloo published a monumental anatomical atlas which he hoped would surpass Vesalius and all other previously published works on the subject of anatomy.

This work is a large folio volume, measuring 14 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 24 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches and weighing approximately eighteen pounds. The atlas contains 105 copper plate engravings. To ensure the absolute clarity of the engravings, the Latin text was printed on separate pages. The plates



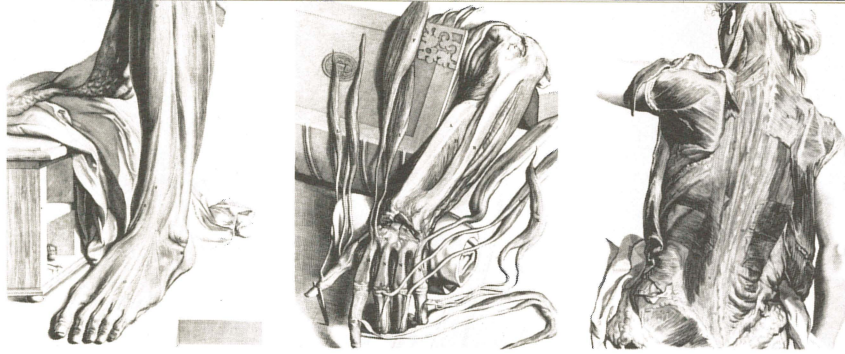
## Sesquimillenary at the Medical Center Library

Before Bidloo's *Anatomia Humani Corporis* (described in the article above) was presented as the 150,000th volume of the Medical Center Library, Director Mark Hodges spoke to the spring meeting of the Friends about the history and growth of the library.

He traced its origins to a donation of around 4,000 books in 1906. Growth of the collection was slow during the early years. It took forty years (1906-1946) for the collection to reach 50,000 volumes, and another thirty years passed before the collection reached 100,000 volumes. Mr. Hodges paid tribute to

his predecessors for their work in building up the collection: Eileen Roach Cunningham and Eleanor Steinke (who was present at the celebration).

The remaining 50,000 volumes were acquired during the last twelve years. Mr. Hodges acknowledged the support of the Medical Center Administration and the University Administration for this spurt in growth, but pointed out that many of the books acquired during this period (especially rare and historical items) had been donated by benefactors or purchased with money contributed to



*Illustrations of anatomical specimens for Bidloo's Anatomia were drawn by the talented Flemish artist Gerard de Lairese.*

portray anatomical specimens frequently described as the most beautiful anatomical plates of the Baroque era. The artist who drew the specimens was Gerard de Lairese, a Flemish portrait painter of considerable ability. The identity of the engraver of the plates is not known. They have been attributed to the great Dutch engraver Pieter van Gunst (1659-1724).

The plates that illustrate Bidloo's *Anatomia* are original in pattern and artistic in design. They are distinguished by a dynamic union of naturalistic observation and dramatic Baroque composition. Unlike sixteenth-century Renaissance anatomical illustrations, which joined naturalism with classical compositions, these figures are vividly foreshortened and portray the pallor of death. The figures are presented as cadavers on a dissecting table. Unfortunately, from an anatomical standpoint the illustrations are not entirely accurate. Bidloo depended heavily on his illustrator, who was not an anatomist. De Lairese, the artist, used his drawing ability to cover his shortcomings as an anatomist. Eighty-three of the plates show the various parts of the body in progressive stages of dissection. De Lairese included great detail, even to depicting a large fly in one of the plates. Bidloo was a contemporary and friend of Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723), the Dutch scientist who invented the microscope. Among the plates in the *Anatomia*

are illustrations of magnified objects, skin and hair.

Bidloo's atlas was not well received when it was published. Many of the drawings were criticized, especially the last nineteen plates of skeletons, which were inaccurately drawn. Bidloo's text was considered "too short to be instructive."

Thirteen years after the publication of *Anatomia Humani Corporis*, English anatomist William Cowper purchased 300 sets of the original anatomical plates from Bidloo's Dutch publishers. Cowper greatly elaborated on Bidloo's text, adding over 700 notes on the plates. Cowper's *Anatomia* was an immediate success. A second edition was published in 1737 and a third in 1750. Bidloo was enraged by Cowper's use of his plates and published a pamphlet accusing Cowper of being a "highwayman."

The anatomic woodcut attained its height in the *Fabrica of Vesalius*, published in 1543. The seventeenth century was the great age of copperplate engraving. Anatomic illustration reached a high point of artistic perfection in the striking plates of Bidloo's *Anatomia*, 1685; however, Bidloo's plates did not surpass the woodcuts of Vesalius. The 1555 edition of *Vesalius*, a gift of Dr. Crawford Adams, was on display the afternoon of the meeting, also.

—Mary H. Teloh

the library by generous individuals.

Responding in behalf of the Medical Center, Dean John Chapman of the School of Medicine thanked the Friends for their gift and, in his remarks, drew a parallel between the development of information and the development of Third World countries. Malcolm Getz replied in behalf of the Heard Library and spoke of his vision of the future of the library as it moves ahead toward the acquisition of its 200,000th volume.

Following the ceremony, refreshments were served in the library. Friends and their guests were able to view a selection of rare and valuable works that have been acquired by the li-

brary over the years. Included were samples from the Nutrition Collection of Dr. E. Neige Todhunter; a 16th-century chemistry text from Germany (given in honor of Dr. Rudolph Kampmeier on his 90th birthday); an 1827 report on renal disease by Dr. Richard Bright (purchased by Vice-Chancellor Robinson); and a fine facsimile of a set of 17th-century oriental medical drawings (given in memory of Dr. Thomas Brittingham by Jean and Alexander Heard). The exhibit was prepared by Mary Teloh and Claire Kinyon of the Special Collections Department, assisted by honorary curators Dr. William J. Darby and Dr. Harry S. Shelley.



Mark Hay

*Professor Emeritus William T. Bandy (left) accepts a new edition of the works of Charles Baudelaire from Malcolm Getz, director of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library. Mr. Getz presented the gift in behalf of the Friends.*

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## *Bandy Center Marks 20th Anniversary*

Formal presentation of a splendid new French edition of the works of Charles Baudelaire marked the occasion at the twentieth anniversary celebration of the W.T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire Studies in the Library's Special Collections Department on March 18, 1988. Malcolm Getz, director of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, presented the work to Professor Emeritus William T. Bandy in behalf of the Friends of the Library.

The three volumes, each bound in blue leather and incised with a linear design, are housed in individual slipcases covered with blue and ecru marbled paper. They are profusely illustrated by the distinguished artist Leonor Fini. Earlier Friends gifts to the center,

Baudelaire's first work, the *Salon de 1845*, and a special edition of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*, were exhibited along with other items of interest from the collection.

The Baudelaire Studies Center, officially established at Vanderbilt University in 1968, is the inspiration of Professor Raymond Poggenburg in recognition of the life's work in Baudelaire research of Professor Emeritus William T. Bandy. Distinguished Professor Claude Pichois is director of the center. Remarks appropriate to the occasion were made by Barbara Bowen, chair of the Department of French and Italian; Professors Pichois, Poggenburg, and Bandy; and Director of the Library Malcolm Getz.

—Marice Wolfe

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### *Friends Membership 1988-89*

Mrs. Lynne Siesser, membership chairman, has announced the beginning of the 1988-89 membership campaign. Please respond positively and promptly when you receive your membership materials.

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