

## NEWS

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### **\$1 million gift to University of Texas Libraries is largest single grant in its history**

AUSTIN, Texas—The University of Texas Libraries has received the largest single gift in its history, a \$1 million grant from University of Texas at Austin alumnus Jan J. Roberts, who has established an endowment in honor of her late husband, Richard T. “Dick” Roberts.

The endowment will upgrade and maintain the Fine Arts Library facility, acquire new library materials and support readings or lectures by renowned playwrights, poets, composers and authors.

The reading room at the Fine Arts Library will be named The Richard T. and Jan J. Roberts Reading Room.



Roberts, an avid traveler and philanthropist, credits her husband with opening her eyes to the world outside tiny Hunt, Texas, the Hill Country town where she grew up.

In the early 1970s, a friend asked to sponsor Jan Roberts as a docent for the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, an experience she says played a major role in the development of her interest in the arts.

“I began to audit art history classes to learn more about the works we were presenting to visitors,” says Roberts. “The impression made on me by the studies encouraged my desire to travel to museums where I could experience first hand what I had only seen previously in books. I’ve since been traveling pole to pole, visiting museums and libraries and growing ever fonder of the arts.

“We love to read, so the house was always full of books,” Roberts says. “The written word provides an entrée into worlds we might not otherwise experience, so the support of a library dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the arts and culture seemed a natural beneficiary of our gratitude. I see the endowment as an honor to my husband’s legacy and a way that others can benefit from his interests as I have.”

Roberts’s husband was not the only influence on her developing worldview. Roberts describes her father-in-law, Colonel Leo Bond Roberts, as playing a part as well.

“Colonel Roberts was exposed to many cultures in his travels,” says Roberts, “The stories he told further piqued my curiosity and desire to travel.”

A collection of Ethiopian weapons collected by Colonel Roberts on an expedition permitted by Emperor Haile Selassie and recently donated by Roberts is displayed in the Fine Arts Library.

“The university is grateful to Jan Roberts for her remarkable generosity,” says University of Texas at Austin President William Powers Jr. “Her gift will transform and elevate our Fine Arts Library, making it an even greater center for reading, scholarship, and public events. Jan has said that The University of Texas at Austin introduced her to the arts and inspired her lifelong passion for the visual experience. This gift will inspire others for generations to come.”

The Fine Arts Library is one of 12 libraries in the University of Texas Libraries system. The library contains the collections for art, music, theater and dance, and supports research and teaching in the College of Fine Arts. Its collections include about 300,000 books and musical scores, 900 serial subscriptions, 4,000 videocassettes and discs, 1,000 DVDs, 6,200 reels of microfilm and 24,000 microfiche. The library also houses The Historical Music Recordings Collection, an archive of nearly 200,000 audio recordings in a variety of formats, one of the largest such archives in the United States.

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