

Friendscript

Stewart Named University Librarian

New dean has extensive Big Ten background

On May 16, Claire Stewart stepped into her role as the new Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, the 16th person and third woman to take on such duties in the University Library’s 150-plus years of existence.

Stewart, 50, returns to her family’s Illinois roots as she takes the helm of one of the largest public academic libraries in the U.S., considered one of the nation’s most esteemed repositories of knowledge.

“I feel incredibly honored, and I’m really, really humbled to have this opportunity,” she said.

Stewart most recently served as dean of libraries and professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2019–2023). Prior to that, she was Associate University Librarian for Research & Learning at the University of Minnesota Libraries (2015–19) and worked in various positions, including head of the Center for Scholarly Communication and Digital Curation, at Northwestern University Library (1993–2015). She earned a bachelor’s degree in English literature from St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1993 and a master’s degree in library and information science from Dominican University in River Forest in 1995.

Stewart was one of four finalists for the deanship, from which John Wilkin stepped away in 2022 after nearly a decade. The nationwide search concluded with the announcement in February of Stewart’s selection.

Building connections

Stewart began working in libraries right before starting her graduate studies, when she took a temp job at Northwestern University, one of the first in the nation to launch electronic reserves. “I think there was a luck of timing about this because that was before the Web had really taken hold,” Stewart recalled. As she enjoyed technology and was willing to step forward and try new things, the job opened up new pathways in digitization; once the Web launched within her first year, it also brought the opportunity to work with personnel from many sectors. “The interest in technology . . . [and] copyright law, those two things really gave me a chance to interact with people and, obviously, a lot in archives and special collections,” Stewart said.



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“I have admired your library my entire career.” Becoming the new University Librarian “is in so many ways a dream come true.”

—CLAIRE STEWART,
DEAN OF LIBRARIES AND
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN



Friendscript is a publication of the Office of Library Advancement, 1408 West Gregory Drive, Room 227, Urbana, IL 61801. Ideas and suggestions are always welcome and should be submitted to Heather Murphy at hmurphy@illinois.edu or (217) 333-3758.

The Office of Library Advancement garners interest and secures external funds from Illinois alumni and friends, provides visibility for the Library through its programs and events, and promotes the Library within the Illinois campus and the community-at-large.

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Editor's Note: In the "I Belonged Here" cover story (under "Ready to Go") in the Winter issue of Friendscript, we incorrectly cited University of Indiana as Alyssa Denneier's employer. Alyssa's employer is Indiana University. We regret the error.

Help the University Library reduce its carbon footprint. Contact Heather Murphy if you are interested in receiving future issues of *Friendscript* by e-mail.

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Berthier To Aid Library Events

Sara Berthier brings a certain *joie de vivre* to her role as the University Library's events administrator associate—perhaps not unexpectedly, as she hails from Paris, France.

"It's all about joy," she said in recounting why she relishes her work. "You're gathering people that are passionate about the same subjects."

Berthier will work collaboratively at Illinois to instigate and support Library events and exhibitions. The globe-trotter, who was raised in England and France, fused her academic background in economics and management with her longtime love of the arts. She brings eight years of experience to the newly created position: In London, Berthier interned at the Royal College of Art and in Paris at Sotheby's and CNN International, eventually serving as project manager at what is now known as Moderne Art Fair, where she helped showcase galleries from throughout Europe during the City of Light's annual art week.

Berthier (pronounced "Bur-T-A") translates that love to the Library's treasures. "I really connect with that energy" of rare objects and papers, she said. "We can showcase what the Library has to offer—and there is so much to offer.

"We have that mission . . . to bring that to people," she said, whether the audience is staff, faculty, students, donors, or the wider public. Her wide range of ideas includes historical displays, student art in the Orange Room, intimate donor receptions, virtual presentations, and even a 5K run on the Quad.

"I feel like my job [runs] from investitures to making it possible for animal ambassadors to attend events," she said. And that's fine with Berthier, who likes to emphasize the "events" part of her title. After all, "it's called an 'event' for a reason," she said. "It's celebratory."



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“So I had an unusual amount of contact across the library, and then outside of the library, at a really early stage in my career, which I think has set me up to have a pretty good well-rounded perspective on everything that impacts our lives and libraries,” she said.

Those early days at Northwestern imprinted a certain mindset, and Stewart has worked to expand the ties between technology and scholarly research. “It was clear . . . every part of our work was going to eventually be impacted by this,” she said. These days, in addition to job-related duties, Stewart chairs the Board of Governors for HathiTrust, which preserves more than 17 million digitized items, the largest such collection managed by academic and research libraries; serves on the steering committees for the Big Ten Academic Alliance’s BIG Collection and Geospatial Data projects; and belongs to the American Council of Learned Societies’ Commission on Fostering and Sustaining Diverse Digital Scholarship.

The mindset comprises a deep understanding of the interfaces linking libraries, staff, and constituents. “One of the things I love the most about this profession and the work we do is how pervasive it is,” Stewart said. “Everything has an information component.” That opportunity—as well as obligation—to connect to every academic discipline is “enormously challenging,” she said, as well as “really interesting and exciting.”

Stewart points to another responsibility she takes seriously—attending to the well-being of everyone involved. “That first circle for me,” she said, “is making sure that the library is a healthy, diverse, supportive environment.” She believes people do their best work if they believe and see that their work has value, “if they have some ability to influence the work they do.” Conversely, she wants to provide a physical, social, technical, and information environment that allows patrons to best achieve their learning goals and create new knowledge. All of these components present an opportunity, as Stewart puts it, “to do good.”

Challenges at Illinois

While Stewart was not looking for a professional change when the Illinois job opened up, its lure was compelling.

“I have admired your library my entire career,” Stewart wrote to her future Illinois colleagues before permanently arriving on campus. Becoming the new University Librarian “is in so many ways a dream come true.”

Calling Illinois “one of the most renowned, well-respected, leading library organizations in the country,” Stewart says that reputation goes well beyond its collection size (currently at more than 14 million volumes). She lauds the campus’s reputation for leadership, excellence, research orientation of its faculty, and the important role Illinois plays in the Big Ten. With that in mind, “I wanted to see if . . . I was the person who could help make sure that Illinois was able to continue to lead and contribute at that level,” she said.

The Illinois deanship marks the first time that Stewart has worked at an institution that hosts a library and information science school, as well as some departmental libraries—such as International and

Dean Details

Beyond University Librarian Claire Stewart’s impressive résumé lie some less weighty—but no less interesting—details:

- Raised in Evanston, Illinois, along with five brothers (her parents still live there)
- Met husband Christopher Stewart—librarian, teacher, poet—in graduate school
- Counts *Jane Eyre* as favorite novel
- Rates chocolate cake as best doughnut flavor
- Enjoys gardening, knitting, baking, hiking
- Loves libraries and library architecture
- Likes dogs (has two) but also cats
- Wrote to her Illinois colleagues prior to her arrival: “Although I can be as formal and dignified as a leadership position like this deserves and requires, my natural state is more casual, and I like nothing better than a chance to chat and laugh and get to know people.”

Area Studies—with which she did not have prior experience. That excites her, in addition to the massive Library Building Project, which mirrors similar major renovation work she undertook at both Nebraska and Minnesota.

While the Library’s space transformations will take much of Stewart’s immediate focus, she also looks to sustain Illinois’ attention to open educational resources, bolster student success, and ensure that the Library remains at the forefront of the profession.

A component that particularly pleases Stewart is getting to know Library supporters. “I’m actually astonished at the number of people who have reached out to me since my announcement,” she said. “There’s a very strong connection to this Library that . . . is pretty striking. So I’m looking forward to getting to know them . . . and understanding why they’re passionate about the libraries.”

“I’m really looking forward to being a part of this community because it’s so vibrant in every way—the Library community, the Champaign-Urbana community,” Stewart said. “It just seems like it has a really fantastic vibe. And I can’t wait to be a part of it.”

Travels With Charlie

Donation offers look at student life in the '70s



Charlie, a Chicago media professional, in 2018

Shakespeare folios. Administrative documents. Nazi propaganda maps. And Charlie Meyerson's chemistry notes.

Such is the range of University Library collections, which cover tons of topics and mountains of material, all gathered in the belief that knowledge is power, evidence is key, and accessibility helps nurture wisdom and discernment.

At the University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives, archivists work to preserve just that—UI student life and culture—from the earliest days to the present. So one can imagine the surge of excitement that accompanied a donation in April 2022 of the life and times of Charlie Meyerson '77 MEDIA, MS '78 MEDIA.

When visitors browse through Meyerson's memorabilia, they enter a world that sharply contrasts the current college experience. Rather than crisp notes typed into a laptop, they see furiously scribbled jottings, adorned by doodles and brightened with variously colored ink. In place of instant digital snapshots, they see photos that took time to develop and unveil their secrets. They see radio transcripts of news from long-past days and images of a typewriter, rotary phone, and Swiss Miss. But mostly what they see is a classic rendering of the student experience across the ages—the struggles

and triumphs, passions and humors perennially embraced by youth as they undertake the journey of discovering who they are.

Filling the gap

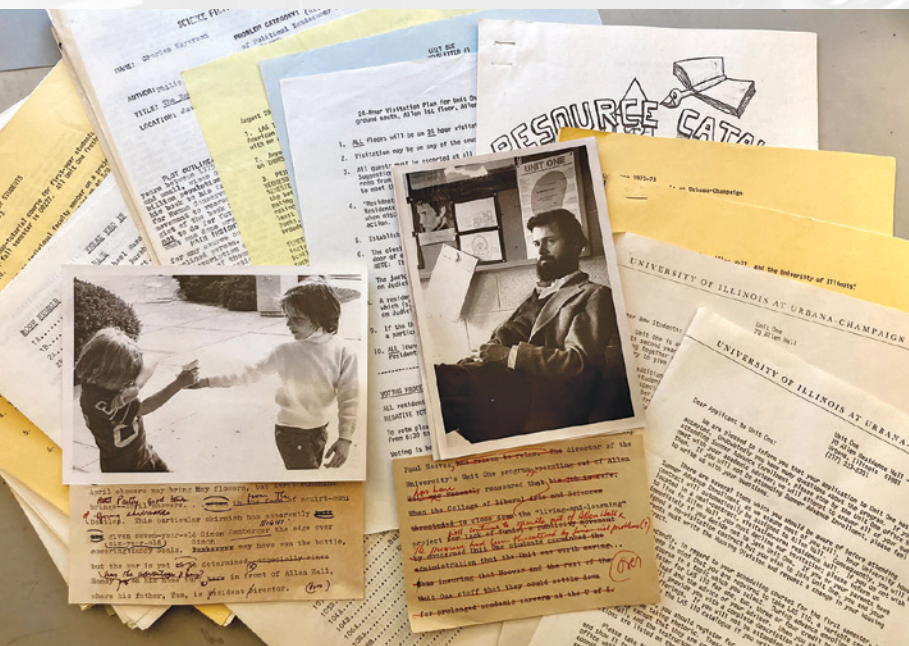
"I think [these items] really get to what it was like being a student here, those little things that you don't think [of]," such as tickets and club fliers, said Ellen Swain, MS '95 LIS, Student Life and Culture's head archivist. "When they're all put together, they tell a story of a life here in college. And that's really fascinating for genealogists and scholars and academics and anybody who uses archives who is trying to understand . . . what it was like here and in . . . a specific time."

"All the good things that have happened in my life . . . I can trace back to being on the campus of the University of Illinois," Meyerson told *Friendscript*. And in that light—and in having no more perfect repository than the place where it all began for him—the award-winning Chicago journalist donated three cubic feet of papers, paraphernalia, photos, and perusings to SLCA.

Meyerson's donation consists of two series. One covers his life as a student, including such items as notes from nearly every course he took, programs from student organizations, and more than 250 photos. Of special interest are Meyerson's documentation of life at Unit One, a pilot living-learning program at Allen Hall, and transcripts from his long stint at WPGU, the student-run radio station housed then in Weston Hall's basement. The completeness of the materials, as well as the accompanying photographs and instructor comments, makes the Meyerson donation particularly unique.

The donation's other component comprises materials from Meyerson's professional radio career, with scripts from WMRO, WAUR, and WXRT programs from 1977 to 1989.

The radio transcripts provide an additional boon to archives users. Lisa Romero, MS '89 LIS, head of the College of Media's Communications Library, has worked closely with Swain in handling Meyerson's materials. "One of the challenges that I face is in . . . helping [students] make the transition from academia to the industry," she said at a Meyerson presentation last fall when his collection was exhibited on campus. "They always want real-world



A sampling of Meyerson's donated materials which now reside in the Student Life and Culture Archives at Illinois



Charlie, the journalism student, in 1975

examples” that underscore the significance and relevance of what they are doing in the classroom.

“So, of course, the materials that Charlie has donated—the interviews, the transcripts, and all of those things—really fill such a large gap in our efforts to help these students connect the dots.”

Romero points out that Meyerson’s documents assist not only students in journalism, advertising, and media studies, but those in history “who understand the significance of the media.” And once the materials are digitized, they can be shared with an even broader audience.

Catching the bug early

The fascination with collecting things started early for Meyerson, who also holds vast assortments of comic books, science fiction, toys, and games. His first published document was a fan letter he wrote to a comics magazine at age 9. Influenced by his parents (both in the news business), early experiences with school and local publications, and comic-book heroes Clark Kent and Peter Parker (also newsmen, as one recalls), “I had a pretty good idea I was going to go into journalism” in college, Meyerson said.

“I got the bug early,” he said. “The idea of seeing my words on the printed page and having those words distributed to other people in other places was compelling.

“I somehow got this idea that things I did, things I had, things I wrote would be of interest to the future.”

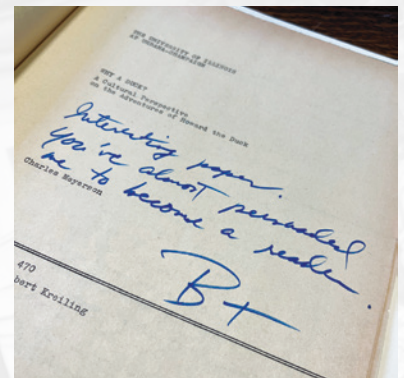
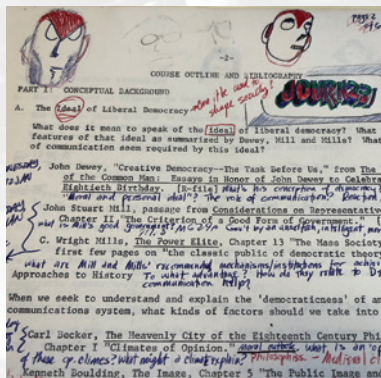
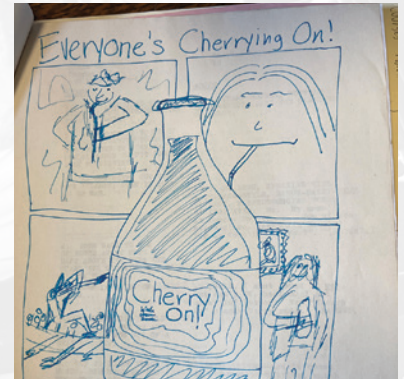
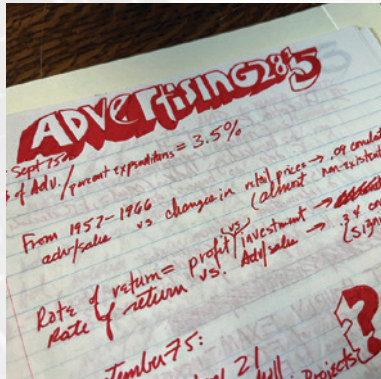
That insight was music to the ears of Swain, who learned of Meyerson’s holdings when she and Laura Haber, ’90 LAS, MA ’97 ED, director of Unit One, sent out a call seeking items and memories to commemorate the unit’s 50th anniversary in 2021. From there, more items kept coming as Meyerson responded, “Oh, do I have records because I loved my time there.” (Indeed, one of the donated items is a Unit One documentary he created while in college).

“All the good things that have happened in my life . . . I can trace back to being on the campus of the University of Illinois.”

Meyerson thrived in the experiential environment of Unit One, the professional training ground available at WPGU, and a journalism curriculum that demanded students take courses across a wide range of fields—from Reporting I to computer science to the environment. Postgraduation, he forged an illustrious and innovative presence in Chicago media, including working at WXRT, developing the Chicago Tribune’s early online presence, and helping to establish Rivet Radio and ChicagoPublicSquare.com. The Illini Media Alumni Hall of Famer credits the U of I with leading him to his wife (via a job reference from a college friend) and providing him with a strong academic and professional background that prepped him to cover wide-ranging news stories.

“It’s a dream fulfilled for me,” Meyerson said of SLCA’s interest in his collection. “I think it’s important . . . to help those who come after us have a sense of what we did and why we did it and how we did it. So I think it’s wonderful.”

And the sheer volume of Meyerson’s materials provides more than just a rendition of what happened when. It offers a sort of travelogue, a revelation of a young mind opening. “If you look at these records,” Swain said, “Charlie’s personality comes out, you know, just right out at you. He’s just a really, really interesting guy. And it’s interesting to see how all of his experiences at the U of I have really shaped what he’s done in his career.”



Library Is Looking For

Find more Library Is Looking For items online at library.illinois.edu/friends/library-is-looking-for.

To fund one of these items or to ask for additional titles in an area of interest, call (217) 333-5682 or email friends@library.illinois.edu.

\$500 for a Chess Board and Puzzles for the **Communications Library**. Students use libraries for a variety of reasons. In an effort to create a welcoming and relaxing environment for patrons, the Communications Library wants to set up a chessboard and provide jigsaw puzzles of media/educational themes (e.g., Star Wars films, Marvel Comics, Superheroes, world flags, map of the world, historical films, etc.). Jigsaw puzzles have become very popular with Communication Library patrons (most 1000-piece puzzles are completed within a week!) with patrons requesting more puzzles and access to a chessboard.

\$960 for Educational Foundations

(2023), an authoritative state-of-the-field mapping of the foundational disciplines—philosophical, historical, sociological, policy, economic, and legal—detailing the ideas, methods, theories, and approaches that each contributes to the field of education. This six-volume item is sought by the **Social Sciences, Health and Education Library**.

\$975 for *A Thing Well Begun is Half Done (Nicaragua Canal)* (1899), part political cartoon, part persuasive map promoting the construction of the Nicaragua Canal and late 19th century U.S. expansionism. The item pictures President William McKinley, with sleeves rolled up and pickaxe in hand, standing astride the landscape, ready to start hacking an intercontinental pathway across Central America. Nearby, Uncle Sam holds a handful of helpful tools, with his message at the bottom: “Finish the canal, McKinley, and make our national expansion complete in your first administration.” Expansionist interests are reflected with the inclusion of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Alaska, the Philippines, and Hawaii. Support of the Nicaragua Canal eventually lost out to the construction of the Panama Canal; the **Map Library** would not like to lose out on owning this item.

\$1,000 to support Stress-Free Finals Week in the **Communications Library**. In the past, our Stress-Free Finals Week event has become very popular with students who use the Communications Library. From 10-3 during finals week, the Library provides, cookies, tea, and coffee for students. For approximately \$200/semester, the Library is able to make a warm and caring connection with students at a time during the semester when their lives can be extremely stressful.

\$1,700 for *College Blue Book* (2023 ebook edition), a six-volume set covering nearly 12,000 institutions of higher learning, occupational and technical schools, and distance

learning programs in the U.S. and Canada. The **Social Sciences, Health and Education Library** would like researchers and students to be able to consult this comprehensive guide to help locate and compare degree programs—particularly those of an emerging nature—offered by academic institutions.

\$3,000 for *Maneuver Sketch Fort Sheridan and Vicinity* (1926), a unique piece of Illinois and U.S. history detailing training for the 2nd Infantry Regiment in Spring 1926 at the facility. The item measures 37 inches in width by 26 ½ inches in height and includes penciled notes on blueprint paper. Fort Sheridan, located just north of Chicago, was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1982. The **Map Library** would like to scan this piece and add it to its new digital collection of 1920s maps.

\$3,200 for *Angling in Troubled Waters* (1899), a rare and vividly colored piece by the renowned British artist Frederick W. Rose, a monumental figure in the field of satirical and persuasive maps. Rose portrays Europe on the brink of the 20th century, with the predatory interests of various nations, drawn as personages, depicted as they “angle” or fish for external conquest. Four European powers particularly stand out—France, England, Tsarist Russia, and the Ottoman Empire—while the entire map bursts with detailed references to current events and presciently forecasts the turmoil of the early 20th century. Unusual in that it has never been folded, this article stands as a signature piece for any collection; the **Map Library** believes it would add a great deal to its trove of World War I maps.

\$4,500 for *An Irgun Modified Map of Palestine and the Middle East* (1939), an Arab-centric map of the region issued by the British following the 1936-39 Arab revolt in Palestine—with no mention of the Jewish population that resided there. In response, the Zionist group Irgun replaced what was a calendar on the map with a posted-on note accusing Britain of duplicity because of the White Paper of 1939. The **Map Library** seeks this extremely rare item, of which no other copies—either with the original calendar or substituted note—are known.

\$5,000 to support the Image of Research Competitions hosted by the **Scholarly Commons**. The annual multidisciplinary event, open to graduate and undergraduate students, showcases images that represent the entrants’ research in concrete or abstract form. This year is the 11th anniversary of the Image of Research. Contributions of any amount are welcome and would provide funding for cash prizes and reception costs. Please visit grad.illinois.edu/news/congratulations-2023-image-research-winners to view stunning imagery from the 2023 Image of Research.

Thank You

The following donors have adopted these items previously featured in Friendscript:

- ◆ **Jonathan Buchbinder** for *A Helicopter Journey* and *Tunison's New Bird's Eye View Map of the Holy Land from Latest Authorities* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Roger Clark** for *USA Agricultural Regions and Industrial Centres* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Susan Dickman** for שמ"י"ם למדינת ישראל שנת [Second Year of the State of Israel] in memory of her husband Marvin Dickman (Map Library)
- ◆ **Paul Garcy** for *Map of the Canadian Pacific Railway The Minneapolis St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway The Duluth South Shore and Atlantic Railway The Spokane International Railway and Connections Poole Bros 1926* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Steven Ignots** for *Map of the Illinois, Iowa, & Minnesota Railway, Chicago Southern Ry., Southern Indiana Railway, and the Chicago, Indianapolis and Evansville R.R.* (Map Library)

- ◆ **Uriel Kitron** for *Native Tribes of North America and the Caribbean 1996* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Philip Martin** for *Reference Map: Prisoner of War and Internee Camps in the Far East* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Susan Ross** for *The Democracy! Suite* (Music and Performing Arts Library)
- ◆ **Marilyn Steenwyk** for *Map of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway and Connections 1885* (Map Library)

We would like to bring our readers' attention to an error in the Winter 2022–23 issue of *Friendscript*. We thanked Tom Strayer for *Map of the Lakes and Drives Adjacent to the Wisconsin Central Lines* (Map Library). We regret this error. The correct appreciation is as follows:

- ◆ **Tom Strayer** for *Map Showing the Eastern Portion of the Union Pacific Railroad and its Connections* (Map Library)



We encourage you to visit the Library's online calendar at go.library.illinois.edu/calendar for the most up-to-date information about events.

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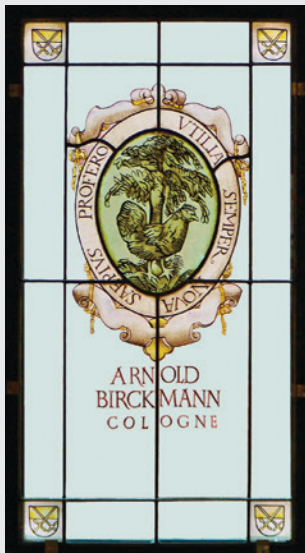
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The Arnold Birckmann window, one of four installed above the grand staircases of the Main Library, has been named in honor of Kevin and Anne Maxwell Class of 1979. The University Library is grateful to these Library Friends and Illinois alumni.

Birckmann was an international publishing figure operating in London and on the continent, often as a trader rather than a printer. He traded at the sign of the Fattened Hen, which appears in front of a tree in the mark. Around it is a Latin

motto, translated as, "I am always bringing forth useful and often new things."

For more information about window dedications, visit library.illinois.edu/friends/window-dedication.



Bird's-eye View, showing from left to right: Auditorium, Lincoln Hall, and Women's Buildings.
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ARCHIVES, SERIES 89/2/25

The University of Illinois Archives has launched a newsletter! *Out of the Vault* shares news about exhibitions, programs, projects, new acquisitions, services, and work they do on a daily basis to preserve, make available, and steward documentary evidence of UIUC, and its role in society. Read the inaugural issue: bit.ly/42kbpy2
Subscribe: bit.ly/3LrskZ1