

January 31, 2017

Dear Friend of the Library:

W. Franklin Barron '52 recently offered W&L a \$50,000 challenge gift to help make much-needed improvements to a key area of Leyburn Library – the lower lobby. I wanted you, as a Friend of the Library, to be among the first to know about this exciting opportunity.

The lower lobby—located one floor below the main level and accessed by a large curving staircase—is one of the most used areas of the library. It is the entry point to the stacks, to Northern Auditorium, and to Special Collections. Yet the lower lobby is more than a pathway to sought-after destinations; it is a popular study spot for students and a reception area for events in the auditorium and Special Collections.

This key area has not been updated since Leyburn Library opened in 1979. The exposed brick walls, dim lighting, and '70s-era furniture give the space a “basement” ambience. The limited electrical capacity in its study areas is inadequate for a 21st-century learning environment. And the dark, dated, and uninviting exhibit area at the entrance to Special Collections does not entice visitors to examine the materials on display or encourage further exploration of the extraordinary resources that lie just beyond the lobby. In short, it's time to make improvements.

The full budget for the first phase of renovations is \$123,000. In response to Mr. Barron's challenge gift, the university has appropriated internal funds and donations to cover almost all the costs. The Friends of the Library Board is now turning to the full membership to raise the final \$10,000 needed to start this summer on the first phase of renovations. The Friends are the strongest supporters of Leyburn Library, and, quite simply, this project will not be completed without the Friends' leadership.

On the back of this letter you will find additional details about the current state of the lobby and the potential improvements you can help make possible through this first phase of renovations. This challenge gift presents a great opportunity to elevate the quality of Leyburn Library in a way that will be immediately evident to visitors and the campus community alike. I thank you for past support of the library, and I hope you will consider supporting this project. I am confident you will be gratified by the results we achieve together.

Since we hope to begin the work this summer, we aim to complete the fundraising phase by March 15. A strong early response from Friends of the Library is essential to our success, and I hope you will be a part of it.

With thanks and excitement,

John Tombarge
University Librarian

P.S. Please make your check to Washington and Lee University and indicate “Friends of the Library” in the memo line. Mail it to: Washington and Lee University, Development Building, 204 W. Washington Street, Lexington, VA 24450.

Phase I Renovations to the Lower Lobby in Leyburn Library

Current Challenges

- The Special Collections exhibit/entry area is dark and uninviting, and does not signal to campus the vibrant, dynamic, and accessible nature of the Special Collections resources that lie just beyond the lobby. In addition, solid doors visually cut the Special Collections area off from the rest of the lobby.
- Study areas in the lobby are not equipped for laptop use. Because electrical outlets are scarce, students use extension cords to reach them, creating an eyesore and a hazard.
- The “conversation pit” beneath the staircase, while popular with students for quiet studying or light conversation during the daytime, is underutilized at night because inadequate lighting makes it dark and inhospitable.
- The dated, worn look of the lower lobby is inadequate considering its high profile. As the only reception area in the library, the lower lobby regularly hosts receptions for lectures, luncheons, and Board of Trustee meetings. In addition, prospective students and their parents gather each day in the lower lobby prior to the admissions presentation in Northern Auditorium and again to start their campus tour.

Planned Phase I Improvements

- Bright overhead lighting throughout the lower lobby.
- Enhanced entry/display area for Special Collections, including museum-quality protective lighting to draw attention to exhibitions and new doors with glass panels that will allow visitors to glimpse activities inside Special Collections even when entrance doors are closed.
- Paint, new carpet, and a lighter, brighter ceiling to replace the current dark wood ceiling will modernize the lower lobby and provide an appearance more consistent with the main floor of the library as well as the renovated Northern Auditorium.
- Many more electrical outlets and greatly enhanced connectivity throughout the space.

A Note on Phase II

Phase II is planned for summer of 2018 and will include new furniture for the entire space and new display cases. The university anticipates covering most of the costs of Phase II through its regular budgeting process.

How To Make Your Gift

Please make your check payable to Washington and Lee University and indicate “Friends of the Library” in the memo line. Mail it to:

Washington and Lee University
Development Building
204 W. Washington St
Lexington, VA 24450

Credit card gifts can be made via our website at support.wlu.edu/giveonline. For your gift designation choose “other” and type in “Friends of the Library.”

You may also **call** the development office at (540) 458-8420 to make a credit card gift.

Please make your gift today. Fundraising must be complete by March 15!