

MARTIN SCHMITT, Curator of Special Collections at the University of Oregon, passed away after a long battle against cancer on 22 November 1978. Many members of the Society of American Archivists will remember him as the recipient of the 1975 Waldo Gifford Leland Prize for the *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the University of Oregon Library*. This volume is one of the most comprehensive and detailed catalogs of literary and historical manuscripts ever published.

Schmitt was a graduate of the University of Illinois, earning a bachelors degree in journalism in 1938 and a bachelors degree in library science in 1939. His first professional position was as a librarian at Eureka College, in Illinois. When World War II started, he entered the U.S. Army and was assigned to the Army and Navy Staff College in Washington, D.C., as a librarian. There he met Dee Brown, a fellow librarian, and the two eventually authored several books on the West together.

Schmitt's interest in western history caused him to journey to the West after the end of the war. His first position was at the University of Idaho library, where he remained for one year. Continuing his writing in western history and interest in the original sources available for historic research, he spent the summer of 1947 travelling throughout the West in search of photographs of the pioneer period. During his journey he was hired as the first Curator of Special Collections at the University of Oregon. He commenced his career at the university on 1 September 1947.

He served on many thesis and dissertation committees at the university, seeing to it that the manuscript collection was serving a scholarly purpose. The students who worked under his tutelage never failed to appreciate Martin Schmitt's wise counsel, unselfish interest, and criticism of their work. Many of these compositions have found their way into published monographs and books.

Schmitt publicized the holdings of the collections so that scholars nationally and internationally would know what was available for research—the papers of a businessman, lawyer, or doctor; diaries and letters of pioneers; original manuscripts of literary people including Sir Winston Churchill and Dame Agatha Christie, as well as the agents of writers; politicians and other office holders. Not content with the material from notables, he sought out the papers of the less eminent as he felt these materials were valuable to the scholar in his research. Under his guidance the university's manuscript collection grew from several hundred pieces to over one million.

Never losing sight of the basic fact that the history of the West was locked in attics and basements in the West, he traveled widely to solicit manuscripts and photographs. In one instance he received word that one county in Oregon was dumping all their records into a landfill. Schmitt rented a truck and drove to the county seat and the landfill, loaded the truck with the records, and returned to Eugene. These items, the original historical record of that county, are a valuable source for historical research and have been used innumerable times. On another occasion he drove to a nearby community and rescued from the elements the original manuscript and related materials for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Whether Schmitt was in the East, the South, or on the Pacific Coast collecting manuscripts, he was always aware that in the homes, barns, publishing houses, or businesses of the individuals he was visiting, the fruit of historic research was residing.

His contributions to the profession rest in his unswerving interest in collecting, writing, and editing, as well as seeing that the materials collected were properly accessioned so that scholars would be able to make efficient use of the collections. He set a high standard for himself and for those who worked with him and under his guidance. He anticipated the future when he collected neglected materials; and he found that they were of use to students of history, journalism, speech, English, and other disciplines within and without the university. Through his efforts the profession was well represented in Oregon and everywhere he visited. For him the profession demanded the very best in any undertaking.

K. KEITH RICHARD, *Eugene, Oregon*

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ELIZABETH HAMER KEGAN, President of the Society of American Archivists, 1975–76, died of a heart attack on 9 March 1979. The news reached *The American Archivist* just as this issue went to press. A full account of her contributions to the profession will appear in a later issue.