Dayton Columnist and Author Roz Young Donates Prized Books to University of Dayton

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DAYTON COLUMNIST AND AUTHOR ROZ YOUNG DONATES PRIZED BOOKS TO UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

DAYTON, Ohio — The University of Dayton has received more than 200 books — many with a focus on Dayton history — from the library of Roz Young, beloved Dayton Daily News columnist, author and educator, who died Aug. 18 at the age of 92.

Young's affection for the University prompted her to donate the books, many autographed by the authors, according to Nancy Stork, director of development operations at UD.

"She knew the University of Dayton would take good care of her books," Stork said. "My trunk was full (of her books). My back seat was full. I don't think we could have slipped another book in there. We literally had my car loaded clear to the ceiling."

Young, who received an honorary doctor of letters degree from UD in 1994, took a special interest in UD's history. In 1997, she wrote a series of eight columns on UD’s beginnings, based on Father Leo Meyer's 13 Years at Nazareth by the Rev. John Graves, S.M.

As an author, Young wrote more than a dozen books, including textbooks, fiction for young adults, histories and biographies.

Some books, such as Twelve Seconds to the Moon: A Story of the Wright Brothers by Young and Catharine Fitzgerald, can now be found in UD's library archives.

"Milton Caniff, an author in his own right and the creator of such comic strips as Terry & the Pirates and Steve Canyon, not only signed the book, but he also added a lovely illustration on the book's flyleaf," said Heidi Gauder, coordinator for instruction for Roesch Library on campus.

"The donation of books reflects Roz's broad interests in Dayton history, literature, grammar and the Irish. Much of the collection is Dayton-related — biographies about Dayton leaders, books by local authors, stories of local interest and, of course, books by Roz herself."

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For 30 years, Young taught English, Latin, German and journalism at various high schools, mostly at Wilbur Wright and Stivers high schools, before becoming a newspaper columnist in 1970.

"Roz Young has enchanted us with her words, revealing to us the depth and breadth of our humanity," read her UD honorary degree citation. "With books such as those on Orville and Wilbur Wright and on 'Boss' Kettering, she has made us mindful of this city's and this country's inventive past. ...And in her writing, whether it be an industrial giant or a small (relatively speaking) brown-and-orange tabby, Roz Young has invested in us, her readers."

Devoted readers of Young's weekly Saturday column in the Dayton Daily News knew she could take others to task for grammatical lapses. It's no surprise the collection includes such reference books as the Oxford Companion to the English Language and H.W. Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage.

In an interview this summer with Frank Pauer, friend, former colleague and art director of the University of Dayton Quarterly, she expressed amazement at the scope of her book collection. Most of the books were donated before her death.

"Someone wrote me the other day and asked where he could get a copy of (Oliver Farrar) Emerson's The History of the English Language. I told him I didn't know. Now, I know why. I gave it to you. Great Scott! For heaven's sake, look at all that stuff. I'm impressed. I didn't know I had all those books," she said.

Young, who named William Shakespeare as the greatest writer in the English language, offered some advice to young writers. "Persevere. If they learn everything that's in that collection and make it a part of their lives, they will become great writers."

For more information on the collection, visit the Roesch Library on UD's campus or call Heidi Gauder at (937) 229-4259.

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For media interviews about the collection, contact Nancy Stork at (937) 229-2459 and Heidi Gauder at (937) 229-4259.