A Priceless Gift

University of Dayton

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Local businessman gives two rare books to the University of Dayton following an exhibit featuring samples from his collection.

Local businessman and rare book collector Stuart Rose donated two rare books to the University of Dayton Roesch Library: a rare "He" version of the 1611 King James Bible and a version of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* featuring illustrations by Salvador Dali.
Rose presented the books to the library Nov. 9 at the closing reception of the "Imprints and Impressions: Milestones in Human Progress" exhibit, which featured 49 books from Rose's rare book collection and attracted more than 8,000 visitors.

The gift came as a surprise to Kathleen Webb, dean of University Libraries, who called the books wonderful treasures.

"The King James Bible is a major addition to our collection of rare bibles, and the Dali-illustrated Alice in Wonderland is a favorite of many who viewed the exhibit," she said. "We are already considering an exhibit of the complete set of Dali illustrations during the coming year."

Both books will be housed in the University's Archives and Special Collections space in Albert Emanuel and available for viewing by appointment.

Rose presented the Bible to Webb, whom he called "the hardest-working librarian in America" and Alice's Adventures in Wonderland saying "it's in much better hands with UD than with me. The University of Dayton is a special university that's special to this town."

"Never in more than 20 years of book collecting have I ever seen a university work so well together to put on an exhibition that will hopefully inspire students to have great accomplishments in their lives," Rose added.

The first printing of the King James Version of the Bible contained a printing error in Ruth 3:15 that reads "and he went into the citie," while speaking of Ruth. Fewer than 200 original printings of the 1611 edition are known to exist, and of those, fewer than 50 are complete "He" variants, according to Christian publishing house Thomas Nelson.

The Dali-illustrated Alice, published in 1969, includes a four-color etching of Alice on the cover and 12 illustrations — one for each chapter. The dreamlike paintings include the familiar characters of Alice, the White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, the Mock Turtle and the Queen of Hearts alongside many of Dali's signature touches — a melting watch, butterflies, bifurcated crutches and objects out of proportion to one another.

Webb called the exhibit featuring a sample of Rose's books "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our campus and the Dayton community to see some of the most important works in history up close."

Faculty selected the books in the display from Rose's private collection of 3,000 books. The exhibit featured first editions, manuscripts, galley proofs, papyri and presentation copies of some of the world's best-known books — from The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn to Homer and Plato.
Rose began collecting in 1992 with a first-edition *Tarzan* by Edgar Rice Burroughs, followed by books from Mark Twain, Charles Dickens and his rarest book — a Shakespeare First Folio.

"I like to tell people I've been filling in the blanks ever since," he said.

His fascination with the books comes from his curiosity. "It's a field that keeps you learning, keeps you on your toes," he said. "I get to learn about science. I get to learn about religion. I get to learn about literature and on and on and on."

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