Preservation Consultant Tells UD Water-Damaged Books Can be Saved
DAYTON, Ohio, January 12, 1988--A nationally recognized expert in the salvage and preservation of water-damaged books and documents has told University of Dayton officials that a high-tech freeze-drying process can be used to restore most of the faculty's books and notes damaged in a Dec. 22 fire that gutted St. Joseph Hall on campus.

"Most of the materials are in very, very good shape," said Eric G. Lundquist, president of Document Reprocessors, a San Francisco-based company that has salvaged hundreds of thousands of books and documents since 1982 with seven 45-foot-long mobile vacuum chamber drying units that travel to fires and floods around the country.

After touring St. Joseph Hall where cranes are still lifting out water- and smoke-damaged material and visiting an industrial-sized freezer at I Supply Company in Fairborn where 350 crates of frozen material are being stored, Lundquist placed a $20,000 to $25,000 price tag on the salvage operation. Moisture can slowly be removed from the material within eight to 10 days, he said.

Document Reprocessors is one of three companies that has bid on the preservation job, according to Francis Lazarus, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who is spearheading the project. Haztran, of Grand Rapids, Minn., and American Freeze-Dry, Inc., of Audubon, N.J., are also in the running for the contract. An official decision is expected this week.

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In the meantime, UD President Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., has appointed a four-person committee to make recommendations about reconstruction of the 103-year-old historic building. Besides Lazarus, the committee consists of Brother Bernard Ploeger, S.M., vice president for administration; Brother Joseph Stander, S.M., provost and vice president for academic affairs; and Robert Rotterman, Jr., director of facilities management. The group expects to issue a preliminary report in early February.

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