A LETTER TO THE FRIENDS

Dear Friends,

One of the more bemusing truths of life — of my life certainly — seems to be that the more interesting life is the less time we have to tell anyone about it. Whether they are called diaries or journals or scrapbooks, my many volumes of good intentions begin with a flourish only to falter under the weight of accumulated business, deadlines, or the claims of more pressing affairs. Correspondence with friends suffers a similar fate. Rather than composing one’s thoughts to accompany a long overdue letter, we finally give in — or up — and resort to the telephone, a short-term solution that quite often produces short-term results.

Thanks to The Flyleaf, Friends of Fondren Library doesn’t suffer from this common Post Modern problem. In paper and print, The Flyleaf takes time to celebrate our recent accomplishments (Daniel Boorstin’s lecture inaugurating the Friends of Fondren Lecture Series and our Homecoming Activities honoring Henry Jackson); it promotes upcoming events (our annual Rice Authors event in January and the Saturday Night gala in April, this year honoring Mr. and Mrs. Ben Woodson); most importantly, it recognizes past gifts of time and talent to the library and to Rice. To paraphrase Emily Dickinson, The Flyleaf “is our letter to the world that would not write to us.”

As the library moves forward into an exciting and challenging period, The Flyleaf will play an increasingly important role in informing Fondren Library’s many friends about our plans and hopes for the future.

Paper and print. It’s still the best remedy we know for ignorance, stress, doubt, and the tedium of a slow news day. In the coming year, may you enjoy many rewarding moments with these faithful companions ... and take time to catch up with your Friends.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Klein Shaw
President, Friends of Fondren Library

FONDREN LIBRARY

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present building was dedicated November 4, 1949, and rededicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library celebrated its half-millionth volume in 1965 and its one-millionth volume on April 22, 1979.

THE FRIENDS OF FONDREN LIBRARY

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members’ contributions and sponsorship of a program of memorials and honor gifts, secure gifts and bequests, and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that are needed to support teaching and research at the university.

THE FLYLEAF

Founded October 1950 and published quarterly by the Friends of Fondren Library - MS-44-F, Rice University, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas 77005-1892, The Flyleaf is a record of Fondren Library’s and Friends activities, and of the generosity of the library’s supporters.
Contents

Dating Daniel Boorstin: "I suppose it was just a love affair" .......................................................... Page 2
Boorstin on Boorstin .................................................. Page 5
Rare Documents Enrich Volume 8 of the Jefferson Davis Papers .................................................. Page 6
Friends of Fondren Library Hosts Families Weekend Coffee .......................................................... Page 7

Henry A. Jackson Honored at Homecoming .......................................................... Page 8
Friends of Fondren Library .................................................. Page 9
Gifts to Fondren Library .................................................. Page 10
News and Notes .......................................................... Page 14

Cover photograph is one of the eight reproductions of printer's mark that appear as stenciled designs on the wall of the Wright Reference Room in Fondren Library. This mark is part of a device used by John Fust and Peter Schoiffer. It first appeared on the Psalter of Mayence printed in 1457 and is distinguished as the first mark ever used on a printed book. The complete device consists of two shields suspended from a branch. For additional information on printer's marks, see the article, "On our Marks," by Cory Masiak in The Flyleaf, v. 40 no.1, Fall 1989.


Photographs by Texas Anderson, Betty Charles and Karen Rogers

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Events:

Dating Daniel Boorstin:
“*I suppose it was just a love affair*”

by Elizabeth Hutcheson Carrell

It is the spring of 1969 and I am attempting to prove that it is possible to stand in a room with no floor, in a building without walls, in a world without gravity, while I make clear-headed decisions about a future that seems dangerously close. Through a loudspeaker positioned uncomfortably close to my ear I hear the voices of Spiro Agnew, Henry Kissinger, H. Rapp Brown, and Abbie Hoffmann delivering a simultaneous assessment of the society in which I live. In the past four years I have made note of the following changes: I am no longer required to wear a skirt to dinner under pain of expulsion from my college; the Ivy League that never heard of us is now open to women; the social life of my generation has evolved from mixers, to rallies, to vigils, to street fights: a police action in Southeast Asia has turned into the biggest foreign policy debacle in my country’s history. And every man I know is looking for a way out.

Without warning I find myself living through history, a place where I am supposed to feel at home, centered, and at ease, but where (these days) I feel mainly at sea and mostly at odds. I suppose it’s like riding a whale. I’d rather get a feel for it some other way.

It occurs to me that perhaps the best way to do that is to redefine history: history is not an open sea populated by Leviathans with a taste for the present, but a reservoir of recorded fact, guarded by engineers with gauges and checklists. Or it could be graduate school, a place where people take control of the present by seizing control of the past.

Now if anyone had told me then that I would spend ten years in the belly of that whale, I might have backed off and taken a long look at banking, or plastics. But call me crazy. I started reading Daniel Boorstin instead.

Sometimes we look back on a life-changing circumstance and find that we can recount with the kind of clarity denied us in ordinary times, every detail that preceded this revealing event. I was in the reading room of the Margaret Clapp Library at Wellesley College, trying to salvage the remains of a sociology paper, when I fell into his arms. The book was a black hardback with gold lettering, made distinguished by the quiet dignity of its proportions. (For a slow reader, it appeared to be about a five-hour read.) It was called *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream.*

Like my generation, this book had emerged from a post-war innocence that favored the simplicity of a polarized world. Our enemies were cleverly concealed, but instantly recognizable. They were Marxists disguised as foreign service officers. They were the “entertainment industry.” They were the news of the day. And all along, side by side with this threat, another had grown barely visible and then surpassed it. Daniel Boorstin was writing about this second self, the one that nobody knew — because it had never been exposed at a Senate hearing. On the other hand, it was the Senate hearing.

It was also fabricated news-gathering, phony press conferences, disinformation, the image of an oversized refrigerator — the rise of the pseudo-event. It was shadow at the expense of substance. (If Jefferson spoke of grounding his country in principles, his successors spoke of “creating a favorable image abroad.”) Only eight years had passed since the publication of this book. But it didn’t take much discernment to see that the image of the country in which we lived had become an image that verged on despair. Was that because the image had lost touch with the life-giving properties of the original? Was it because we had become the victims of our own illusions, our own dependence on things that had become at once contradictory and impossible?

I didn’t linger long over any of these questions. Nor did I forget them. I filed them away with the kind of care we reserve for a thought that seems both bold and familiar, as if it has been sitting on the edge of our consciousness like a sledge hammer waiting for an invitation to make itself felt.

When I next encountered Daniel Boorstin I was deep into my first week in graduate school. To be more precise I was sitting between two big shouldered men in a seminar room that seemed to dwarf my capacities, when my newly Pulitzered professor sat down, lit a cigarette, and fixed his eyes on my face. “Miss Hutcheson,” he began, (making use of the pet name that signified the immediacy of our rapport), “would you explain...
the thesis behind Yehoshua Arieli’s *Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology* to this class?" (There’d been a thesis? It had taken me fifteen minutes just to take a stab at his name.) I won’t drag you through the rest of it — how the minutes became hours, my life flashed before me, I willed this man into an early academic grave. It’s enough to say that, in the end, my answer sounded something like this. “Could it be that — in this country — some of us are born to be joiners, while the rest of us are born to be loners?”

“That’s very weak,” he shot back. “I agree,” I replied, hoping to get off with a light sentence by owning up to my incompetence.

After class he made a point of seeking me out. “Next week we’ll be reading Daniel Boorstin’s *The Americans*. I hope to find you better prepared,” he warned me in a voice that mingled skepticism with disappointment. “Me too!” I sobbed, making a break for the door.

Unwittingly, he had handed me the key I needed to gain access to my own potential. Daniel Boorstin. Thank God he was back! That week we shared our deepest secrets. I admitted that I was shy, scared, frightened, and not very smart. He told me about Joiners, Boosters, and Upstarts, how Americans pitched in and compromised, how they didn’t think too much about ideology, but thought a lot about the main chance — how they got in it for themselves, but, even so, how everything worked out in the end. “Consensus,” he said. “That’s the word you’ll want to use.”

One week later I returned with my position in hand (there would be no more flailing about, looking for words after he had popped the question.) “Miss Hutcheson, after reading this book, you agree that we may fairly label Daniel Boorstin a “consensus” historian in contrast to his neo-revisionist Progressive predecessors who focused almost exclusively on confrontation and inequality?” (My God!) In spite of the fact that I am the shyest human being I have ever known, I rose to my feet, walked to the front of the classroom, and wrote the word “consensus” on the chalk board (which I then underlined twice.)

“Personally I don’t believe in labelling historians of Dr. Boorstin’s calibre. Although the word obtains a certain resonance when it is attached to his work, it by no means tells the whole story. As early as *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*, and again in *The Genius of American Politics*, but most particularly in *The Image* we can see that he is gravitating toward a subtle reading of the national character based on the idea that Americans would rather make money together than lose it in a fight. But does that make him a “consensus” historian? Let’s think of him in comparison to Louis Hartz. In *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Hartz argues that....” By now everyone looked scared. In another hour I had the room to myself. Four months later he gave me the “A” I deserved. The next year I left to get married.

A smart woman would have cut herself off from this whole painful business and made much of the pleasures of furnishing her nest. But as I have already admitted, I was not particularly smart. On the other hand I was dogged. In between babies, book fairs, carpools, volunteer work, and the business of launching my husband in his career, I used to sneak back to Austin so I could drop in on a class. Let’s be honest — I peeked out of the driveway at six A.M. so I could be back by seven that night. I consumed seventeen hundred hamburgers at the Cottonwood Motel outside LaGrange. I wept when I left my children. Then I wept when I left my work. Eight and half months pregnant with my third child, I defended my dissertation which had to do with the first generation of college educated women in this country. (No wonder they were such wrecks. Someone forgot to tell them it couldn’t be done.) “It’s a boy!” they shouted approvingly at the hospital. “No, it’s a book,” I replied, gazing into my husband’s eyes with the kind of tenderness we reserved for these special occasions.

Unfortunately, my timing was very bad. In fact by the time I finished this arduous passage there were probably about four million unemployed Ph.D.’s looking for work in a market that generated three jobs a year. In the meantime I had all the mobility of a queen bee forcibly confined to her hive. In order to keep up in my field I used to recite little history jingles to my children on car trips. Let’s say it wasn’t the career I had planned. But even so it had its own small rewards. One of them was keeping track of Daniel Boorstin. When he was appointed Librarian of Congress, I cheered. When he insisted that he could still write books while he supervised five thousand employees and a ninety-six million dollar budget, I said Write on! When *The Discoverers* was named a Book of the Month Club selection, I worried. (Had Boorstin sold out?) But when he began to top best-seller lists I penetrated the secret of his success. Just as he had once made me feel brilliant, beautiful, and composed, so he now made the public at large feel smarter than they had ever felt before. We were a nation of geniuses who read books the size of the Chicago phone directory...and understood them.

When the Friends of Fondren Library began casting about for a speaker to kick off the fall, when they spoke of finding someone with a big reputation in the humanities, someone who loved libraries and wrote books, someone who could draw a crowd on a Sunday afternoon and
maybe even get us a little press ...well, it occurred to me that maybe the time had come to get honest about this relationship.

"I think we should ask Daniel Boorstin." My heart was in my throat.

"Did he go to Rice?" Their eyes narrowed into something that resembled a glare.

"Harvard," I put in quietly.

"Think about it," I remarked in an insinuating voice. "The Parkman, the Bancroft, the Pulitzer, the Phi Beta Kappa award for distinguished service to the Humanities, Librarian Emeritus of Congress, a Double-First at Oxford...."

"All right," someone broke in, "I move we appoint a committee to explore his credentials."

"Second. I'm outa here."

They'd bought it.

As we closed in on the appointed day (September 18), I noticed that the fall air generated an unexpected rush of feelings. It was the first day of school (before school got hard). No, it was Christmas Eve and you had the most presents. It was the professor telling you he'd decided against an oral exam. It was anticipation mixed with relief.

"I'm going to cover this event for the Flyleaf," I told my husband, smoothing the wrinkles out the brocade sheath I had selected to wear.

"Are you?" He was reading last month's *Field and Stream*.

"Yes. Why do you ask?" My eyebrows converged.

"Because you hadn't mentioned it before."

My scalp turned cold. Had anyone asked me to cover this event for the Flyleaf? NO. Had I somehow assumed that they wanted me to cover this event for the Flyleaf? Yes. Was I wrong? Again, yes. *What agony.*

I went over the last three articles I had written for this publication line by line, in minute detail. (*Toads Topple Owls in Uncanny Set-to; Authors’ Reception a Yauber; The Future of Fascist Architecture: Fondren to Host Three Day Symposium*)

Had I offended delicate sensibilities? Run off a major donor? Lost sight of my vulnerability as an outsider? And there it was. Only an owl could do justice to this event. I'd been passed over in favor of somebody else.

Looking back on it now, it seems to me that it was a very good thing that I did not interview Daniel Boorstin in the privacy of his hotel room, that I did not in fact suggest to Mrs. Boorstin that she take a walk on the 610 Loop, and that I did not have the opportunity to try out the line I had worked on for months: "Surely, like most historians, you agree that boundaries exist to be violated." A friend tells me that the quickest way to end any passion is to consummate it. On those grounds alone, it would seem that, in this case, my editor did me a very large favor and also saved me from making a fool of myself.

Imagine my surprise when two months later I found a message on my recorder. "Where's your article?" "What article? I left a message on her machine." "The one about Boorstin." "What article about Boorstin?" "The one you were supposed to be writing." "When?" "Now." "But I didn't take any notes. I thought you didn't like me. And I'm not very smart." There was a long pause on the machine. "Just write what you remember," she sighed.

"I see..." I punched 'stop' and replayed her message once more. "What they want is a sort of Proustian retrospective on the last twenty-five years of my life. The images began to fuse and fade. I was twenty-one when we met. Twenty-two when he saved my reputation from disgrace. I knew him before I knew my own children, my own potential, my own capacity for mistakes.

From an old interview I remembered this line:

"How did history gain the upper hand in your affections, Dr. Boorstin?"

"I suppose it was just a love affair. How does a love affair begin?"

I sat down and began to reconstruct it.
Boorstin on Boorstin

On September 18 Daniel Boorstin, Librarian Emeritus of Congress, addressed the public in a lecture delivered in the Stude Concert Hall. The event was sponsored by Friends of Fondren Library and Fondren Library.

In his remarks, which he titled Heroes of the Unexpected, Dr. Boorstin revealed his preference for "a large canvas." The author of The Americans is now closing in on the third volume of his second trilogy, this one devoted to a study of world history, literature, science, and the arts. Having explored the landscape of discovery and creation in two earlier works, he is now on the trail of "the seekers," men and women who look for meanings that transcend natural phenomena and the data assembled by science.

One of the pleasures of his craft, Professor Boorstin observed, has been learning that history always incorporates an element of the unexpected and that it is quite often this element which leads men in the direction of their most productive discoveries. Dr. Boorstin's newest book, Cleopatra's Nose, Essays on the Unexpected, takes its title from Pascal's remark: "Cleopatra's nose, had it been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed." Essays on the Unexpected was published last month by Random House, as Dr. Boorstin turned eighty.

What follows is a random review of Dr. Boorstin's remarks, made over a lifetime devoted to the study of history.

On being an amateur: "All the positions I've taken on from which I've made my living, are activities for which I was never properly trained in the conventional sense of the word.... If you've not been trained in the ruts you don't have to be very smart to stay out of them, and you don't worry about discontinuities. ...An amateur is really a lover. And the best reason to write is because you love what you're doing; you can't help it."

On history as literature: "One of my earliest hopes was to be a writer. And it's still my hope to be a writer when I grow up. I'm working at it, and, I hope, getting better. ...Writing is my vocation, whatever my other occupations have been."

On pluralism: "William James divided people into two categories 'the tough minded and the tender minded.' I note a different distinction — 'the single-minded and the many-minded.' I dislike single explanations of anything, including the meaning of truth. The thing that interests me most is the varied, unpredictable contrasts of human nature and civilization."

On the American past: "Our land was a land with a very thin layer of history on which the geography always showed through."

And finally: "As a great historian once said, history should teach us not what to do tomorrow but how to be wiser forever."

After Dr. Boorstin's address, patrons of Friends of Fondren gathered at the home of Bill and Diana Hobby for dinner with our distinguished guest.
Rice University has sponsored and Fondren Library housed The Papers of Jefferson Davis since the project was launched by Dr. Frank E. Vandiver in 1964. Since then eight volumes have drawn on Davis' correspondence, speeches, and writings to chronicle his eventful life from 1808 through 1862; an additional seven volumes will complete the edition.

When Volume 8 appeared in December, few knew that some of its most engaging letters came very close to not being included. These imperiled letters are part of a collection of 124 items, dating from 1832 to 1889, that once belonged to Jefferson Hayes-Davis, Jefferson Davis' grandson and an enthusiastic supporter of the Davis project. Since then his collection has passed to succeeding generations and by 1991 was owned by a descendant who, impressed by the vaulting value of the documents, decided to offer them to an auction house for sale.

Dismayed at the likely dispersal of such an important cache of Davis material and realizing that the letters could not be used without permission of the new owners, who could choose to remain anonymous, the editors turned to their board of directors. The board, presided over by Frank Vandiver and numbering among its members Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby, Dean Allen J. Matusow, Dr. John B. Boles, Dr. S. W. Higginbotham, Percival T. Beacroft, Jr., Elbert R. Hilliard, and Bertram Hayes-Davis, resolved that every effort would be made to keep the collection intact and available to scholars.

Elbert Hilliard, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, supported by Bertram Hayes-Davis, Davis' great-great-grandson, felt that the State Archives would be a particularly suitable place for the collection. Mississippi governor Kirk Fordice shared their vision. Once the letters were evaluated and a price agreed upon, there ensued a quest for funding. With the support of the Mississippi legislature, the archives purchased the Jefferson Davis and Family Papers belonging to the Estate of Adele Hayes-Davis Davis. Barbara Palmer Webb, widow of Davis' great-grandson Joel A. Webb, then contributed another set of family letters. Believed to be the last sizable collections of Davis materials remaining in private hands, this acquisition has made the Mississippi Department of Archives and History one of the premier repositories of Davis and allied family papers.

The editors of the Davis Papers, who had catalogued both collections, safeguarded some of the originals, and acted as intermediaries in the initial transactions, breathed a collective sigh, delighted that these valuable documents would appear in Volume 8 as well as subsequent volumes.

What is so special about these letters that the editors felt that Volume 8 would be significantly weakened by their omission? Fourteen of them were written by Varina Howell Davis to her husband during the summer of 1862, when Richmond was threatened by Union forces and she and her children were sent to Raleigh, North Carolina, for safety. They are intensely personal, revealing

Jefferson and Varina Davis in Montreal, 1867
(Library of Congress)
much of the couple’s relationship and the pain of separation. On June 3 she lamented: “The vision of your beloved form wandering in our nursery among the empty beds is too much for me. This separation must terminate soon, for I really suffer in health, as well as heart.”

Parted again in December 1862, when Davis was touring the western theater, Mrs. Davis, a woman of keen intellect and strong opinions, wrote of battles and generals and politics. Probably referring to Joseph E. Johnston, whom Davis found difficult, she warned: “I hear every day of Genl — disaffection to you and if he receives ‘honorably in his front’ all his wounds, he does not disdain to give them in others rear -- take care of him.”

Also printed in Volume 8 are two letters from Joseph E. Davis, Davis’ eldest brother and lifelong mentor. In addition to recounting the devastation of their adjoining Mississippi plantations by Union raids, Joseph Davis commiserated with the president, who faced endless problems in the Confederate capital. In mid-June he wrote: “I have just recd. . . . your letters of March and April from which I see the ‘Sea of troubles’ that surround you, I hope my dear Brother you may surmount them all, the mean spirit that is found in Congress and by most of those that are disappointed in their applications for favors.”

These brief extracts give only a hint of the rare glimpses the letters offer into the personal life and thoughts of people experiencing extraordinary times. We rejoice that these collections are now available both to the editors of the Davis Papers and to researchers at the Mississippi Archives. That there is a marked increase of interest in the subjects of these letters was borne out at a meeting of the Southern Historical Association, where a scholar arrived with homemade bumper stickers that read “HONK if you are NOT writing a biography of Jefferson Davis”!

The Papers of Jefferson Davis are available through the Marketing Department of the Louisiana State University Press, P.O. Box 25053, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70894-5053.

Events:

Friends of Fondren Library Hosts Families Weekend Coffee

by Karen Hess Rogers

The weather was less than ideal. The rain kept falling. The temperatures were in the upper seventies. The hour had been changed from 9:00 A.M. to 8:15 A.M. Nevertheless, on October 8, 125 parents, grandparents, students and siblings made their way to Alice Pratt Brown Hall for a pre-assembly coffee sponsored by the Friends of Fondren Library. Parents and family from such distant states as Minnesota, Tennessee, Illinois and Washington mingled with Texas families from such cities as Dallas, Seguin and San Antonio.

Parents of freshman, Shion Hung of Sid Richardson College, Jen-Lih and Angelo Hung from Beaverton, Oregon.
Henry A. Jackson Honored at Homecoming

Henry A. Jackson, '37, travelled to Houston from Aztec, New Mexico on November 5 to receive the Friends of Fondren Library award. Introduced by board member Karen Rogers, Mr. Jackson was recognized as a great friend of Rice and of the Fondren Library. In accepting the award he encouraged other alumni and friends of Rice to support the library as a way of supporting all areas of scholarship.

Roxanne Shaw, president of the Friends, presented Mr. Jackson with a framed certificate. The Friends placed four books in the collection in his honor, and his name appears on a plaque in the Sara Lane Lounge on the fourth floor of Fondren Library.

Members enjoying breakfast buffet

Karen Rogers and Henry Jackson

Henry Jackson, his cousin Lucille Dashiell, and Tom Eubank, who discovered that he and Mrs. Dashiel are cousins
We welcome the following new members.

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- Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth T. White

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- Ms. Micaela L. Tucker
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In addition, the following have upgraded their membership in the Friends.

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*The Friends of Fondren Library is most grateful to these new Friends for their interest and to the Friends of longer standing for their support and for renewing their commitments.*
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The Flyleaf Page 10
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News and Notes....

. Friends of Fondren Library to Honor Authors
Members of the Friends, Rice Alumni, faculty, and staff who had books published in 1994 will be honored on Wednesday, January 25, 1995. If you know of a Rice-affiliated author published in 1994, please call the Friends’ office, 713-285-5157, or send the information regarding the author and book to Rice University; Friends of Fondren Library - MS 44-F; 6100 Main Street; Houston TX 77005-1892.

. Friends’ Great Books Club The Friends of Fondren Library Great Books Club, in March 1995, will begin the first series of the Great Books with works by Chekhov, Aristotle, Plato, Conrad, Kant, Marx, Freud, Rousseau, Darwin, Shakespeare, Hume, Tocqueville, Simmel, and Sophocles. The series may be ordered by calling 1-800-222-5870 from 8:00 A.M. to 4:45 P.M. central time. For further information concerning the Friends’ club, call Drs. John Belmont and Nancy Glass, 723-2226 at night.

. Gift Membership The Friends of Fondren Library is offering a guest membership of $25 for one year. Members of the Friends may give this to non-members. Guest members may check out two books at any given time. For more information please call the office at 285-5157.

. Friends to Hold Book Sale Chairmen Texas Anderson, Oscar D. Graham II, and Lee Chatham Seureau announce that the Friends of Fondren Library will hold a book sale in 1995. Books may be delivered to Star Motors, 7000 Old Katy Rd. Porters are available to help unload cars.
MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of Fondren Library is open to everyone. It is not an alumni organization. Membership contributions are as follows:

Recent Alumni (1-5 years since graduation from Rice) ......................... $10
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Sponsor ................................................................................................ $100
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Benefactor .......................................................................................... $500
Library Fellow .................................................................................. $1,000

Members of the Friends receive The Flyleaf and invitations to special programs and events sponsored by the Friends. Members who are not already faculty or staff of the university receive library privileges. A maximum of four books may be checked out for a period of 28 days, and a photo ID is required. Members must be at least 18. Checks for membership contributions should be made out to the Friends of Fondren Library and mailed to Rice University, Friends of Fondren Library MS 44-F, 6100 Main Street, Houston, Texas, 77005-1892, along with your preferred name and address listing and home and business phone numbers. Under Internal Revenue Service Guidelines the estimated value of the benefits received is not substantial; therefore the full amount of your gift is a deductible contribution. Contributions also help to meet the Brown Foundation Challenge Grant.

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