

# Centennial Moments

PRESENTED BY THE HERITAGE ROOM, DEL E. WEBB MEMORIAL LIBRARY

## Small beginnings

From a small shelf in the registrar's office in 1907, the University libraries have come a long way. The humble beginning in the early days of the College of Medical Evangelists (the precursor of Loma Linda University) has given way to multiple buildings in various locations.

Technology, access to information, and buildings that house the collections may have changed during that 99-year interval, but behind all this change there has always been the academic imperative to provide for the information needs of student, faculty, and staff—the library as the “heart” of the educational endeavor.

During the years, the most visible library changes have taken place in location, as growth outstripped the quarters provided. From that small shelf in the registrar's office, the library moved to Assembly Hall (the former sanitarium recreational building) in 1908. The next move was to the new North Laboratory (no longer in existence) in 1911, where the library occupied nearly one-fourth of the first floor with enough space for a reading room, book stacks, and a work area.

Seven years later the library had outgrown that location and was moved to a larger space in the same building. When Burden Hall was built in 1934, the library, again bursting at the seams, moved to the bottom floor. In the years to come, the library gradually grew into the surrounding small rooms and



then upstairs into the assembly hall where book stacks were located.

The first building dedicated entirely for library use was built in 1953. It was named the Vernier-Radcliffe Library after Dr. Jean Vernier-Radcliffe, who gave a liberal gift in honor of her deceased husband.

This was a proper library consisting of 22,000-square-feet, five levels of stacks, and a large reading room with the reference collection on shelves around the perimeter of the room and sturdy oak tables for study purposes. Various departments (cataloging, serials, acquisitions, and historical records) had their own rooms.

Libraries are dynamic entities and the need for more room to house a growing collection became apparent as the century progressed into the 1970s. The need was again met by a generous gift, this time from the Del E. Webb Foundation. The new four-story library, which opened the summer of 1981, was

named the Del E. Webb Memorial Library.

Today its 54,609 square feet houses the book collection, current journals, study areas, and departmental offices, while the Vernier-Radcliffe Memorial Wing contains the department of archives and special collections, the bound journal stacks, and the faculty reading/board room.

A Medical Center library was added in the 1980s. It went through an evolution, over a 20-year period, including a location change to Coleman Pavilion and being renamed the Jesse Library. It is now an active partner in the University libraries system. The East Campus Library, located in the Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Institute, opened in 2005.

Digitization may change how information is accessed and shared in the 21st century, but one thing is certain—change is inevitable. The next chapter on the University libraries is being written even now!