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Major Portion of Myers Book Collection To Be Auctioned at Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan University will hold an auction of about 11,000 books from the collection of the late Minor Myers jr., who died in 2003 after 14 years as president of the University.

The auction will be held in the Sheean Library beginning at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 17. Steven G. Struck will be the auctioneer.

Myers was a renowned collector with eclectic tastes and was featured in Nicholas Bisbanes' 2001 book, *Patience and Fortitude: A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places, and Book Culture*.

Following Myers' death, the University purchased his collection from his estate and moved all of the items into the Sheean Library where it was inventoried. All told, the collection comprised about 12,000 volumes.

According to Illinois Wesleyan Acting Provost Roger Schnaitter, the University's librarians have carefully considered which volumes would be appropriate to retain in the University's own Tate Archives & Special Collections in The Ames Library. Those titles fall into several areas — book arts, collectors, history, and reference, including a group of early printed books the oldest of which is dated 1496 and falls into the incunabula period of printing history; drama, with an emphasis on the 18th century; and social life and customs, mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries. The remainder will be part of the auction.

"In one of my last conversations with him, President Minor Myers reflected ruefully on his collecting habit," said Janet McNew, who was acting president when the collection was purchased. "He was, he said, still in the amassing stage. He had hoped to spend a long, delightful retirement filling in gaps in some areas, culling others, and generally organizing this life's work into what he hoped would become one of the best private book and music collections in the country."

The subjects of the books to be auctioned are varied, and the collection includes both original and boxed volumes. The books include multiple types of bindings, including leather and vellum.

Additional items to be auctioned will be postcards, stamps, LPs, scrapbooks, magazines, prints and illustrations, CDs, cassettes, videos, and more than 500 modern fiction first editions from another collection.

Information about the auction, including a searchable data base of all the items, is available at www.iwu.edu/auction. Sheean Library will be open for a preview of the auction materials on Thursday, Sept. 15, from 1-5 p.m.; Friday, Sept. 16, from 3-7 p.m.; and Saturday, Sept. 17, from 8-10:30 a.m.

