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## For Immediate Release

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*Locals and  
Central  
Films*

October 12, 1994

**Contact:** Vito Trifiletti (309) 556-3181**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A work by the renowned French painter-lithographer Henri Toulouse-Lautrec is on display, along with 27 posters and 34 Japanese prints, at Illinois Wesleyan University's School of Art. The exhibit of the John Talbot Gernon collection of posters and prints in the Merwin and Wakeley Galleries, including the Toulouse-Lautrec lithograph *Jane Avril*, *Jardin de Paris* (1893), a 49 x 35 1/2 inch print, runs to Oct. 26.

According to Minor Myers jr., president of Illinois Wesleyan University, "One of the rarest pieces in the collection is the Toulouse-Lautrec lithograph." Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) was physically deformed since youth as the result of accidents and delicate health. He produced *Jane Avril* two years after he began working in lithography, and about one year after he met the dance hall star. "If other poster designers used bright colors and happy faces, Toulouse-Lautrec used more muted colors and a sadder face to suggest his friend's inner thoughts as she performed her famous cancan," said Myers.

The posters--which are in the Merwin Gallery--are original hand drawn lithographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Lithographs are made through a time-consuming process of etching a flat surfaced stone and "pressing" an image--one color at a time--onto paper using acids, oils and inks.

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Many of the posters are large theatrical advertisements for plays, musicals, and melodramas, such as *Ambassadeurs Duclerc tous les Jours* (1890s), which measures 50 x 37 inches, and was done from five separate stones, the same size as the poster. Another piece, which uses bright colors in a "swirling art nouveau design," is *Zdenka Cerny: The Greatest Bohemian Violoncellist*, a 42 1/2 x 43 inch print by Alphonse Mucha. Mucha was a Czech lithographer, who worked in Paris and later lectured at the Art Institute in Chicago. While in Chicago, he met the Cerny family, whose daughters became musical prodigies. Mucha's poster was prepared to promote a European tour by Zdenka Cerny, but the tour was canceled due to the outbreak of World War I and the original posters were never used.

The Wakeley Gallery features Gernon's collection of Japanese woodblock prints. Sir Edward Heath, former prime minister of Britain, recently visited campus as the Mellon Visiting Fellow in Politics, Art, and Music. While Heath was on campus he taught a class on the history of Japanese woodblock prints, using the Gernon collection as an example.

Ann Murakishi, associate professor of art, explained, "Japanese prints are largely a product of the 19th century, the same period which gave rise to photography. Japanese prints with their roots in ancient art forms . . . capture in an instant a feeling, a glimpse, of human insight, which may have been impossible for the early photographer to even imagine." One of the best known masters of Japanese woodblock prints was Ichiryusai Hiroshige (1797-1858). Some of his prints were produced singly, but many were created as part

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of a series of titles. Several of these series are represented in the Gernon collection. The *Famous Places in the Eastern Capital* series by Hiroshige, "catch the possibilities of the medium," said Myers. "A viewer is treated to dramatic and unusual views of places and light. Prints of actors and ladies, both popular genres, likewise brief moments of gesture, facial expression or a sideways glance."

John Talbot Gernon, class of 1925, presented this collection of lithographic posters and Japanese woodblock prints to Illinois Wesleyan University in 1992. Gernon spent his childhood in Bloomington, attending IWU before he went on to medical school at the University of Illinois. He was a retired urologist in Evanston, Ill., before his death on Feb. 18, 1994. At the age of 89, he continued to collect porcelain, paintings, posters, coins, furniture and mystery books. Gernon donated volumes of books to IWU in addition to his art contributions.

*The John Talbot Gernon Collection will be on display until  
Wednesday, Oct. 26.*

**Gallery hours are:**

**Mon.-Fri. 12-4 p.m., Tues. evening 7-9 p.m., Sat. and Sun. 1-4 p.m.**

*Admission is free and open to the public.*

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