



WARREN N. CORDELL, 1913-1980

Warren N. Cordell, Friend of the Library and donor of the internationally-known Warren N. and Suzanne B. Cordell Collection of Rare and Early Dictionaries, died in Highland Park, Illinois, on January 5, 1980. He was 66.

A native of Terre Haute, Dr. Cordell graduated from Indiana State University in 1933, majoring in physics and mathematics. He did post-graduate work in statistics and business administration at the University of Chicago from 1938 to 1942.

In 1937, Dr. Cordell joined the A.C. Nielsen Company, the Chicago-based (now Northbrook, Illinois) pioneer marketing research organization. In his 41 years with the Nielsen Company, Cordell played a major roll in the firm's rapid growth. In 1947, he was named vice-president and chief statistical officer of the company. He was also the Nielsen Company's liaison man with Washington for forty years. He retired in August, 1978.

Dr. Cordell was a member of the Business Statistics Committee of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the Census Advisory Committee of the American Marketing Association and served in a similar capacity for the American Statistical Association. He was a member of the Treasury-Internal Revenue Service Statistical Advisory Committee. Among Dr. Cordell's many professional affiliations were: American Marketing Association, American Statistical Association, American Association of Public Opinion Research, Association for Computing Machinery, Operations Research Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In 1968, Indiana State University selected Warren Cordell to be the recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his achievements in an outstanding career and significant contributions to his community, state, and nation. Six years later, at the dedication of the new Cunningham Memorial Library, the University conferred on Cordell the honorary degree Doctor of Letters.

In 1969, Warren Cordell made the first of four major gifts of dictionaries to Indiana State University. By the time of his death, he had donated almost 3,500 separate titles or more than 4,000 volumes to the Cordell Collection of Rare and Early Dictionaries.

For all his success in the business world, Warren Cordell was perhaps best known as a book collector. Certainly, he will be long remembered for his considerable contribution to the advancement of learning, namely, the Cordell Collection of Rare and Early



WARREN N. CORDELL

CORDELL RECEPTION

Warren Cordell was to have been honored at a Friends-sponsored reception in the Cunningham Memorial Library this spring. With the approval of the Cordell family, the Friends has decided to hold a reception to honor Dr. Cordell's memory and to recognize his great contributions to his alma mater and to the world of scholarship. Mrs. Suzanne Cordell and her four children, Robert, Barbara, Warren, Jr., and Jeanne Cordell Shafer, plan to attend the reception, which has been scheduled for Sunday, March 23, in Room B-45 at the Cunningham Memorial Library. The reception will begin at 3 p.m. A brief program is planned, which will include tours of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, in which the Cordell Collection is housed. Refreshments will be served. Members and their guests are cordially invited.

Dictionaries. This magnificent collection constitutes perhaps the richest and most accessible resource for the study of lexicography in the West.

Warren Cordell sought not only to build the finest collection of western language dictionaries but also to promote its use. To this end he was instrumental in the founding of the Dictionary Society of North America, based at Indiana State University. He served as president of the DSNA from 1977 to 1979 and honorary chairman until his death. In recognition of his distinguished contributions to the Society and to the field of lexicography, the Society recently published *Papers on Lexicography in Honor of Warren N. Cordell*, edited by J. E. Congleton, J. Edward Gates, and Donald Hobar.

Warren Cordell is survived by his wife, Suzanne, and their four children: Robert Cordell of Austin, Texas; Dr. Barbara Cordell of San Francisco, California; Warren Cordell, Jr., of Stanford, California; and Jeanne Cordell Shafer of Springfield, Vermont. There are three grandchildren.

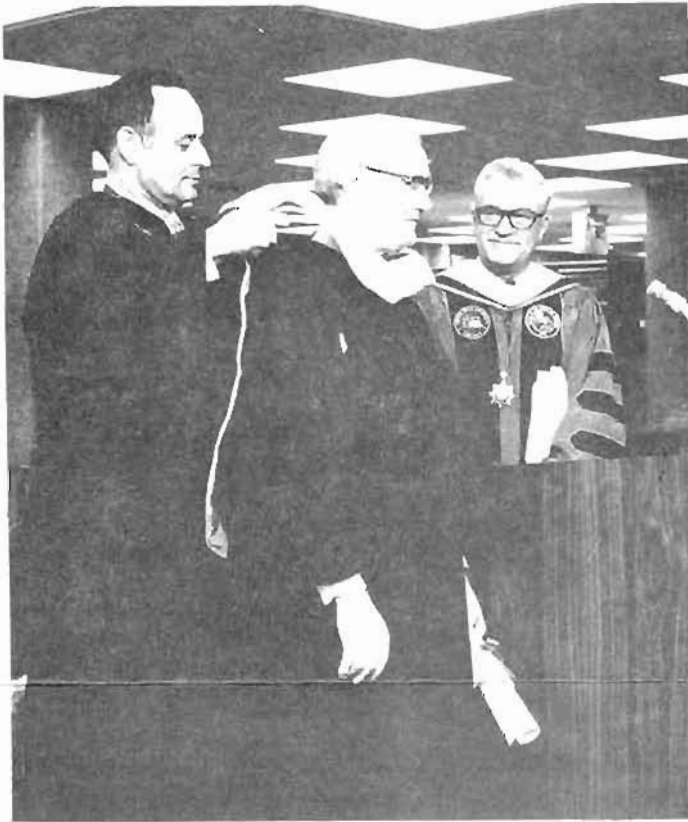
THE CORDELL COLLECTION

Warren Cordell began collecting dictionaries more than twenty years ago. He believed strongly that dictionaries were very important to the preservation of much of human knowledge. He was also fascinated by words and their meanings. His success in the business world enabled him to indulge his life-long love affair with words. In his free time he took great delight in browsing through old dictionaries, studying not only the definitions but also the prefaces and other preliminary material to learn more about how the lexicographer practiced his art. He often said that this hobby enabled him to give his figuring brain cells a rest, as he was chief statistical officer as well as vice president of A.C. Nielsen Company. Though he gave more than 4,000 dictionary volumes to his alma mater, he kept another 2,500 or so at his home in Highland Park, Illinois. He had to have near him a few dictionaries with which to pass many a pleasant hour.

Warren Cordell seldom did anything half-heartedly. Once he began collecting dictionaries, he did so aggressively. In no time he was a confirmed bibliomaniac. Soon dictionaries and quite a few non-dictionaries began arriving at his home almost daily. His family, friends, and business associates began wondering what had possessed an otherwise practical, clear-headed business man to invest so much money and energy into collecting old dictionaries. If you have one good dictionary, you have them all, or so many believe. To the bibliomaniac, of course, Pascal's famous *pensée* is all the justification necessary: *Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point*. Nevertheless, Cordell could hardly ignore the feelings of his family, especially his wife, Suzanne. After all, he seemed to be transforming the family's beautiful home into one large library. Often the family had to negotiate around boxes and stacks of books, awaiting shelving. To win his family over, Cordell set about passing on the collecting bug to his wife and children. This highly contagious bug soon took hold of Mrs. Cordell, who became a distinguished collector in her own right, especially of fine illustrated books. She now possesses one of the finest private collections in the nation of fore-edge paintings (books whose fore-edges are decorated with paintings, often of a pastoral scene.)

Cordell's decision to donate his collection to Indiana State University was prompted by a traumatic experience, best related in his own words:

The books were kept on bookshelves from floor to ceiling in our basement. A flash flood from a cloudburst began pouring into our basement at a frightening rate. The storm had cut off our electricity and in the dark we rescued what books we could from the lower shelves. I lost about 200 books of which only 40 were dictionaries. This experience made me realize that I had a social responsibility as custodian of these old scholarly works. When I thought they were all going to be destroyed in the flood, I felt guilty of depriving future scholars of their heritage to these rare books. I began looking for a safer home for the Collection the following week, hopefully at a university library where they would have a chance to serve a useful scholarly purpose. (From Cordell's foreword to the Cordell STC, p. x.)



Library dedication, 8 March 1974. Left to right: Dr. Maurice K. Townsend, Dr. Warren Cordell, and Dr. Alan C. Rankin.

The Friends of the Cunningham Memorial Library Newsletter is issued quarterly (September, December, March, and June), free of charge to members. Address inquiries to: Editor, c/o Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana 47809.

Editor Robert K. O'Neill

The first gift, consisting of some 500 titles, was made in December, 1969. By the time of his death, Warren Cordell had donated almost 3,500 separate titles or more than 4,000 volumes to the Collection. For its part, the University added more than 1,500 titles, aided greatly by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in the amount of \$66,500. The Cordell Collection presently constitutes perhaps the richest and most accessible resource for the study of lexicography in the West. It represents virtually the entire spectrum of Western lexicography from the manuscript period to the present day with emphasis on Renaissance and pre-1900 English language dictionaries. The Collection also includes a sizeable representation of non-Western language dictionaries. In certain areas, particularly English and American lexicography, the Collection is unmatched anywhere. For example, the Collection includes more than 200 different editions of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* and every known edition of Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary*. Many items in the collection are unique; that is, the Cordell copy is the only recorded copy of a particular title or edition in the world. More recently, the scope of the Collection has been broadened to include not only the finished product of the lexicographer's art but also the raw material from which that art was crafted. This was made possible by the acquisition of the papers of Dr. Mitford Mathews, the distinguished University of Chicago scholar and dean of American lexicographers. The Mathews papers are to be the first in what is hoped a succession of similar acquisitions to enhance the study of lexicography at Indiana State University. Needless to say, the contribution made by the Cordell Collection to the field of lexicography in particular and to the world of scholarship in general is difficult to exaggerate.



The more than 200 different editions of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* in the Cordell Collection.

CORDELL FELLOWSHIP IN LEXICOGRAPHY

In recognition of Warren Cordell's significant contributions to the field of lexicography, Indiana State University has established the Warren N. Cordell Fellowship in Lexicography. The first fellowship will be made available for the 1980-81 academic year. Recipients of the Fellowship will work towards the degree of Master of Arts in English with Specialization in Lexicography, a recently approved program established to provide professional preparation for dictionary making, historical or critical research on dictionaries, or instruction of students in dictionary use.

To start the Cordell Fellowship, the President's Associates, of which Warren Cordell was a Charter Member, has generously offered to fund the Fellowship for two years. But if the Fellowship is to continue indefinitely, a substantial endowment will be needed. Contributions in any amount are therefore invited. Please send these tax-deductible contributions to:

The Warren N. Cordell Fellowship in Lexicography

ISU Foundation

Alumni Center

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana 47809

Applications for the Cordell Fellowship in 1980-81 are also invited. Applications and supporting material should be submitted by May 12, 1980. For further information, please write to:

Professor Edward Gates

Department of English

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana 47809



THE CORDELL ROOM: Portion of the English Language Dictionary holdings.

IN MEMORIAM

The unexpected death of Warren Cordell, the victim of a heart attack, has left those fortunate enough to have known him with a deep sense of personal loss. Our thoughts naturally turn first to his family. Of all the honors and titles conferred upon him, none meant more to Warren Cordell than husband and father. As difficult as it may seem, he sometimes tired of talking about business and books. But he seemed never to tire of talking about his family: about his wife, Suzanne, and her collecting interests and work at the Art Institute in Chicago; about his children . . . Robert, and his work on computers and particularly word processors for IBM; Barbara, and her cancer research at the University of California Medical School; Warren, Jr., and his computer consulting business in the San Francisco area; and Jeanne, and her art work and her trials and joys of building a new home in Vermont and helping her husband, Michael, get his new dentistry practice started and flourishing. And, of course, there were the grandchildren.

Warren's passing will also be deeply mourned by his many friends in the book world — antiquarian bookdealers, collectors, librarians, bibliographers, lexicographers, and other bibliophiles with whom he passed countless hours sharing news, anecdotes, and knowledge. He greatly valued their friendships, as they did his. Their feeling is perhaps best expressed by Donald Fraser, a London bookdealer and close personal friend of Warren Cordell for more than a decade:

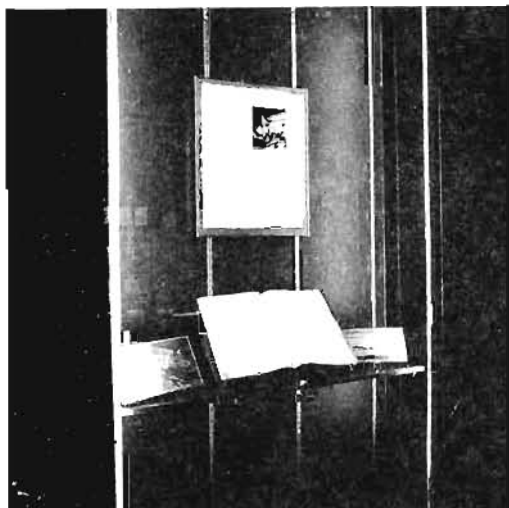
"He (Cordell) was, as you say, a fine human being, being in every respect generous, warm-hearted and loyal, as well as out-going and friendly to all. A truly great citizen in whichever country he passed a little of his time. I miss him greatly and know that he will be sadly missed not only by his immediate family but a large circle of friends and acquaintances. If all men were like him the world would have few problems."

I can do no better than echo Mr. Fraser's sentiments.

— Robert K. O'Neill



MAIN READING ROOM: Portion of the Foreign Language Dictionary holdings.



MAIN READING ROOM: Display of Calliergis' *Etymologicum Magnum Graecum* (Venice, 1499). Gift of A.C. Nielsen, Jr.

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