



Photo by Mark Pynes

University Archivist Keith Richard catalogs 'pieces of history of the place as a living institution.'

# Archives preserve past through records, photos

By Mary Gross  
Of the Emerald

Once a year, Keith Richard, University archivist since 1972, finds time to clean off his desk. On a sunny July day, he squeezed the yearly ritual into his schedule, uncovering and sorting what he called "A lot of junk."

But the rest of his 15,000 square foot domain in Fenton Hall is cluttered with records, photos, trophies, posters, newspaper clippings and other memorabilia too important or valuable for the junkman to cart away.

Only 150 to 200 students utilize the archives per year, Richard says. Architects often study old photographs and blueprints to see how campus buildings were designed. Some journalism, Masters' and Ph.D. students research and write about archive materials. Some students use the archives as material for speeches.

But many students don't know the archives exist, Richard says.

"It's a nice place to come and visit, just to look around," he says. "The archives offer pieces of history of the place as a living institution."

Students who visit the archives are most fascinated with the old posters degrading freshmen, sports trophies and old-time University photographs. "I take so many of these things for granted because I see them every day," Richard says.

Two of his favorite archive treasures are the "Ten Commandments" imposed upon the misbehaving student body of 1883 by the faculty, and the radical reply of the students.

The commandments set 10 rules the faculty expected the student-body to abide by. They forbade drinking and smoking on or near campus — two pleasures which even the University president indulged in.

The students answered a month later with a printed message mocking each of the "Ten Commandments." Their first commandment read, "Thou shalt not enter any brewery or saloon for the father (University president) will hold him guilty that drinketh of his wine."

"The students haven't changed much," Richard says.

Richard rarely has time to stand around and admire his favorite archives. He is too busy with his job.

He spends 40 hours a week organizing records, preserving and repairing documents, collecting, discarding and helping others utilize the facilities as a reference point. He appreciates the variety in his work.

Richard, a graduate of the Oregon College of Education, received his Master of Science and Master of Library Science degrees at the University. He belongs to the honorary Society of Friars and several archivists' and historical organizations. He has a mind like a steel trap.

Deady Hall is interesting to Richard because it is the oldest University building and at one time was the only building on campus. In the days when women's dresses covered their ankles, the east stairway of Deady was strictly for females. The men used the west stairway, to prevent them from catching a glimpse of feminine ankles.

Traditionally, freshmen were harrassed by sophomores. In the twenties, campus posters warned frosh, "Verbant Babes of '28... prepare to meet your death."

The derogatory behavior towards freshmen ended when World War II vets came back to go to college.

"They were very mature and would not put up with pranks," Richard said.

A "dry zone" was drawn around the campus because more students were of drinking age, and school officials thought this was causing problems. From then until the 1960s, Max's was the nearest establishment serving beer "and was very popular," Richard says.

The present University budget crisis is an old Oregon story, he says.

"I asked University Pres. Paul Olum if he wanted to borrow one of Prince Lucian Campbell's (University president 1902-1924) speeches to read to the legislature. He wouldn't have to change the words!"



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