

# Doors

continued from page 1

shop in Drain where artist Mack Holman will restore the antiques.

Holman, a University alumnus, began work Monday on two of the four historic bronze grilles, which are normally attached by hinges to the east and west entrances of the library.

"These are one-of-a-kind doors, made specifically for the UO library," Holman said.

The 400-pound bronze, stainless steel and glass doors are embellished by the bronze grilles, but over the years pieces have fallen off from repeated use. They are part of the original building, designed by Ellis F. Lawrence, and are listed on the National Register of Historic Properties.

Holman and Facilities Services took down two of the grilles Monday, exposing the glass parts of the doors that are usually covered by the decorative pieces.

The building first opened in 1937, when University enrollment was about 3,100. Today, the library sees at least that many visitors every day, and the increased traffic has exposed the doors to more use than they were designed to withstand.

Knight Library Building Supervisor Andrew Bonamici said the doors have needed work for more than two years, while he and Facilities Services have been looking for money to repair them.

"I think we have an obligation to maintain (the doors)," Bonamici said.

Facilities Services, partially with the recommendation of Donald Peting, director of the University Historic Preservation Program, contracted Holman to complete the project.

In addition to the bronze work Holman will do on the grilles, Facilities Services will replace the doorstops with spring-loaded ones and replace the hinge bear-

ings that connect the grilles to the doors.

After the work is completed the glass behind the grilles will be easier to clean because of improved hinge facility, and the bronze on the frame of the door will not suffer as many dents from the door stops.

"I'm hoping that after doing this work they can go another 70 years without worrying about it," Holman said.

This is not the first time Holman has worked with the historic

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**Mack Holman  
university alumnus**

doors. In 1992, during the library's major renovation, he created castings of the doors so if damaged they could be replicated. He also donated his repair services in 1998 when one of the grilles cracked.

Before Holman first worked on the doors, the University faced the decision of whether to replace the doors with lower-maintenance, utilitarian ones or try to preserve the original ones.

"The University went the high route — there are a lot of universities that wouldn't go that route," Holman said.

All involved said they are pleased with the decision they made in 1992, and the doors can realistically last for many more years with proper preservation.

"There's no way we would ever take them away; they are an important part of the building," Bonamici said.

To prolong the life of the 150-pound grilles, Holman will weld together many small screws and

pins at the hinges. With fewer parts there will be less chance for bending and twisting.

"We're going to do a lot of work to make sure [the repairs] are not something the average library user will notice," Holman said of the welding he will perform.

To improve the overall aesthetic of the doors, Holman will remove the old patina, which is to copper as rust is to steel, and re-treat the doors with chemicals to create the original brown, dark brown and golden colors.

It will take about 60 hours of work per grille, though Holman is planning to take them down one or two at a time. The project should be completed in about three weeks and will not affect entrance to the library.

Since Holman left the University he has worked on bronze castings and repairs, and for the last two years he has shifted his concentration to producing original artwork.

A sculpture by Holman of a Native American woman holding a salmon is now a permanent fixture outside the University Museum of Natural History.

"We're hugely pleased, it's a magnificent sculpture," said Mel Aikens, director of the museum.

The sculpture was selected by the Oregon Commission for the Art as part of Oregon's Percent for Art program, for which legislation passed in 1975.

The sculpture will be dedicated on University Day, May 18.

"He's a wonderful artist in my estimation," Aikens said. "He's gone the extra distance for this sculpture. To a degree it's a gift from Mack."

Holman said it is nice to work on the library project, particularly because of his background with the doors. "I do have a concern for the preservation of the integrity of the art," Holman said. "You do need to be sensitive to the historic nature of the piece."

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