

Libbra

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Bequest of Passover Haggadot to the Library Presents ‘a Unique Portrait of the the Spiritual Biography of the Jewish People’

BY RACHEL ROSENBERG

STEPHEN DURCHSLAG’S FAMILY began teaching him to love Passover practically from birth, when they gave him the middle name of Pesach—the Hebrew word for the Jewish holiday. Throughout his childhood, his relatives would gather around a large table, each holding a Haggadah—the book that guides participants through the rituals of the holiday and tells the biblical story of the redemption of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.

“The evening was magical—a time of family support, warmth and tradition,” Durchslag, AM’14, recalled. “The Haggadah encapsulated it all.”

Those memories formed the foundation of what has become a decades-long intellectual labor of love. Since 1982, Durchslag has obtained more than 4,500 Passover Haggadot (the plural of Haggadah, or “the telling”) from across the world, with the oldest dating back more than five centuries. Now, he has established a

bequest that will leave the vast majority of this remarkable collection to the University of Chicago Library.

“The University of Chicago has been such an exciting place intellectually and so informative to me in all aspects of my Jewish scholarship,” said Durchslag. “It seemed to be a logical place to continue my legacy.”

Shortly before retiring in 2013 from a 46-year career as an attorney—having led the intellectual property department at Winston and Strawn LLP—Durchslag enrolled as a graduate student at UChicago’s Divinity School. He is planning to write a dissertation on parody Haggadot, created by writers to explore the political, economic and social conditions of their times. His studies inspired him to preserve his collection at UChicago

ABOVE: Stephen Durchslag holding the Moss Haggadah (*Shir haMaalot I’David*, 1987) by artist David Moss.

Photo by Fred Eckhouse, courtesy of Stephen Durchslag

Brenda L. Johnson to retire in November

Library Director and University Librarian Brenda L. Johnson has announced plans to retire, effective November 15.



Brenda L. Johnson

AN INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED LEADER in the field of library science, Johnson was first appointed to her role in 2015. The Library is central to the University's mission of academic and research excellence, and Johnson has led the Library in excelling in a changing environment, enhancing access to physical and digital collections and resources, advancing digital scholarship, extending the University's impact through local and global engagement, and cultivating an inclusive community.

Johnson has spearheaded efforts to empower faculty and students in their research, teaching, and learning by expanding research and development opportunities. She has overseen the launch of the Library's Center for Digital Scholarship, which enables faculty and students to explore new methodologies, analyze complex data, visualize theoretical and spatial relationships, and share and preserve research results. The Library has led the development and expansion of Knowledge@UChicago, the digital repository for preservation and sharing of the scholarly, creative, and administrative assets of the University. Johnson has introduced the provision of GIS (Geographic Information System) services through the hiring of a new GIS/Maps Librarian and the opening of a GIS Hub in the Crerar Library.

As a result of Johnson's successful oversight of development work during the recent campaign, the Library has launched the Hanna Holborn Gray Graduate Student Fellowship Program. This enables students to explore alternative scholarly careers in libraries and archives, to enhance their research skills, to plan and deliver instruction and to conduct digital scholarship. She has also expanded staff expertise in new and rapidly developing areas of librarianship through the launch of the Library Residency Program.

Under Johnson's leadership, the Library has prioritized cultivating an inclusive community as one of its six strategic directions and has established a Diversity & Inclusion Team to provide additional leadership and support to advance these directions.

Johnson and the Library have also taken a leading role in organizations and consortia that have benefited researchers locally, regionally, nationally, and worldwide. The Library is the home of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, participates in the HathiTrust, and the Ivy Plus Library Confederation's Web Archiving Program. Johnson is the chair of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) Library Director group and a member of the Chicago Collections Consortium Board of Directors, the Library and Archives Advisory Board to the HistoryMakers, and the Freedom of Information Archive Advisory Board. In her role as past chair of the Open Library Environment (OLE) Board of Directors, she has led University of Chicago Library staff members and colleagues at partner institutions in the development of an open-source, community-based library management system that is being used at research libraries in the United States and Europe.

Before joining the University, Johnson served as the Ruth Lilly Dean of University Libraries at Indiana University, Bloomington; University Librarian at the University of California, Santa Barbara; and Associate University Librarian for Public Services at the University of Michigan.

A national search will be conducted to identify Johnson's successor.



**The inaugural
Hanna Holborn Gray
Graduate Student
Fellows.**

**FRONT ROW
FROM LEFT:**
Kevin Irakoze,
Ariadne Argyros,
Cristina Yumi
Sakamoto, and Juno
Yingzhi Dong.

**BACK ROW
FROM LEFT:**
May Peterson,
Aneesah Ettress,
and Carlos Cisneros.

Photo by Rob Hart

Photo by Jason Smith

FROM THE DIRECTOR

CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE TOMORROW

This year has been a time of deep reflection and consideration of our past and how we will shape our future.

Throughout 2020-21, we are marking 50 years of the Joseph Regenstein Library, exploring our history as well as our impact today and vision for tomorrow. During this Spring Quarter, we are focusing on the future of the Library and taking this moment to highlight our Strategic Directions and our aim to build an organization that cultivates and values diversity, recognizing the strength that it brings to our community.

The University of Chicago Library is committed to enabling all members of the University to fully access our world-class resources and to ensuring our spaces and services are welcoming and inclusive. We recognize that different backgrounds and perspectives are the building blocks that make rigorous inquiry possible.

In early 2020, the Library established a Diversity and Inclusion Team (DIT), drawn from staff in order to encourage their peers to be part of open and honest discussion and actively seek viewpoints beyond their own. The DIT is also making recommendations on how the Library's collections, services, and programs could be enhanced and developed for greater diversity. In the past year, the DIT and other groups at the Library have supported and led activities that increase awareness and understanding of diversity amongst staff, including the creation of an Inclusive Language Toolkit, facilitation of an anti-racist reading group, and recommendations of books and resources that enable learning and self-reflection.

As part of the University's Giving Tuesday campaign in December, the Library raised funds in support of a Diversity and Inclusion Graduate Student Fellow. With generous support from alumni, friends, and staff, the Library will be able to recruit a graduate student to assist the DIT and their activities. The Fellow will also use this time to create a project informed by their own field of study that will help foster diversity and inclusion in the Library.

The Library sits at the heart of the University and can play a central role in empowering our academic community. If you have been inspired by the Library's commitment to be a place where all individuals are valued and activities and programs nurture a flourishing, diverse, and inclusive community, we welcome your support of the Library's Annual Fund. Your contribution will help expand and strengthen the Library's collections, services, and programs aimed to inspire and encourage diversity and inclusion. Thank you so much, in advance.

give.uchicago.edu/library



Photo by John Zich

Brenda L. Johnson
Library Director and University Librarian

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brenda L. Johnson
Library Director and University Librarian

The Library's Innovative Response to COVID-19

Protecting the health and safety of the University of Chicago community while sustaining access to our extensive collections, programs, and services has been at the core of the Library's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DURING A YEAR OF CHANGING CONDITIONS, the Library has repeatedly innovated, successfully operating remotely and on-site as a hub for intellectual discovery and rigorous learning, in alignment with University operating plans and in response to our campus community's needs.

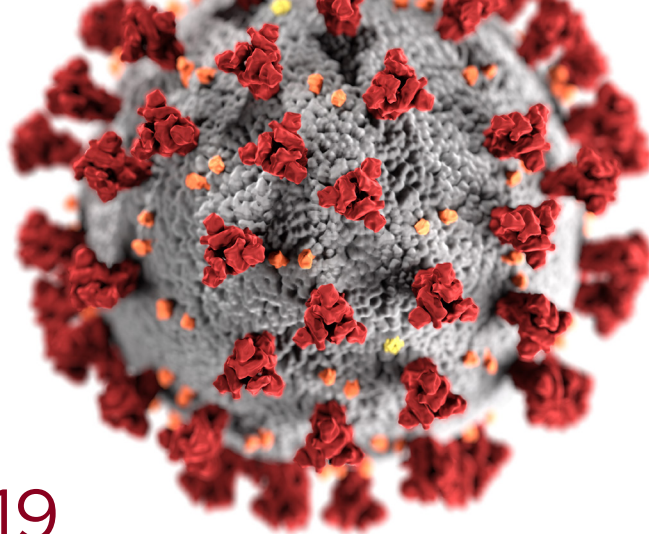
All divisions of the University have been facing unprecedented and evolving challenges since March 12, 2020, when President Zimmer and Provost Lee announced the University would fully transition to remote teaching for the Spring 2020 Quarter. On March 20, all Library buildings were temporarily closed. The Library's aim since this time has been to encourage experimentation, collaboration, diversity, and bold thinking to meet the needs of an ever-changing academic environment. Following the announcement, Library staff swiftly pivoted to providing UChicago faculty, students, and staff with online access to 5.4 million electronic books; over 220,000 electronic journals and newspaper titles; 1,372 databases; and 1,100 streaming videos. Library subject specialists shifted to a more centralized role as the representative of the Library to disciplines and departments, anchored by the enhanced Ask a Librarian email and chat service. Requests for online instruction increased as well.

In preparation for the Autumn 2020 Quarter, academic leaders, faculty, public health experts, and staff across campus carefully planned for an innovative hybrid model, which provided a layered approach for the resumption of virtual and on-campus programs and operations. Brenda L. Johnson, Library Director and University Librarian, sat on several campus COVID committees and worked to solicit faculty and administrative priorities for services and

feedback on plans as they took shape. As a critical partner for campus research and a vital hub for campus identity, the Library convened a COVID Services Strategy Group to facilitate the transition, safety protocols, logistical planning, and communications for the safe resumption of spaces and services for research. In accordance with the University's Health Pact, the Library's policies and procedures were developed in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reflected community needs. Proposed plans were also discussed with several student groups to understand their perspectives and priorities, including the Library Student Advisory Group (LSAG).

The Autumn Quarter's hybrid model was designed to be a flexible, phased approach so that we could stand at the ready to adapt or halt our in-person services and access to Library spaces as the campus or state situation changed. While the Library's bookstacks temporarily remain closed to browsing by patrons, more than 40% of the Library's print collections have been made available online through the HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service. Other print materials can be requested and picked up by reservation using the Paging & Pickup service, which the Library began offering in mid-June. The Library also launched a program to offer quiet, individual study spaces on an online reservation-only basis.

We are proud to continue the research and education at the heart of the University of Chicago's distinctive academic community. As the effects of COVID-19 evolve and vaccination distribution plans roll out, we look towards a continued staggered return to campus. We will not only plan to restore those services that were either fully or partially closed during the pandemic, but also to consider continuing services created during the pandemic that have been successful.



AT A GLANCE:

Library COVID-19 Response Services & Usage

24,886

Paging & Pickup requests

64% by graduate students

12% by College students

17% by faculty, academic appointees, and postdoctoral scholars

Between 6/15/2020 and 1/31/2021

12,037

Study seats reserved in Regenstein, Mansueto, and Crerar

72% reserved by College students

25% reserved by graduate students

3% reserved by faculty, academic appointees, and postdoctoral scholars

Between 9/30/2020 and 1/31/2021

5,854

Scan & Deliver service requests

scans of articles and books chapters from the Library's own collection

5,724

Interlibrary Loan requests of physical items

4,536

Requests for copies or scans from other libraries

Between 9/27/2020 and 1/31/21

Over 40%

of the Library's print collection has been made available online through the **HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service**



Photo by Tom Rossiter

Sara Paretsky's 50 Years with Regenstein Library

BY VICKI ANTON, *Assistant Director of Development*



Sara Paretsky

Photo by Steven Gross

INTERNATIONAL BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, University of Chicago alumna, Library Society donor, and Hyde Park resident Sara Paretsky thinks of Regenstein as her local library. Renowned for transforming the mystery novel through her creation of the female private detective V. I. Warshawski, Paretsky describes the Third Floor of the Joseph Regenstein Library as her “home away from home.”

Paretsky, AM'69, MBA'77, PhD'77, reports having read “about every crime fiction novel” in Regenstein’s collection while preparing for her doctoral orals. She routinely turns to the Library’s extensive and “utterly accessible” collections to conduct research for her current writing. Browsing the open stacks is a beloved part of her process. She likes the feeling of “being in a quiet medieval monastery” as she sits at one of the long tables along the stacks’ perimeter. *[Editor’s Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library is currently offering limited on-site services by reservation to current UChicago students, faculty, and staff only. Paretsky understands this need and “longingly awaits” the moment when she and other*

alumni can return to Regenstein.]

Paretsky’s history at Regenstein Library goes back to its earliest days. She was a graduate student when the Reg was dedicated on October 31, 1970. Having so many books under one roof was wonderful, Paretsky explained, and the new centralized library quickly began filling the role of a “great student union” on campus. After graduating from the University in 1977, she made the decision to stay in Chicago because “having access to the [city’s] libraries and human knowledge” was a priority. In recent years, although she fondly remembers the time when she was “a demon with the card catalog,” she has built her skills using the online catalog and values the help of the University of Chicago Library’s Ask a Librarian service.

In addition to the vital role it plays in her work, the Regenstein Library holds a special place in Paretsky’s heart because it is where she fell in love with her late husband, Professor Courtenay Wright, who pursued a 50-year career in physics at the University of Chicago. In 1970, Paretsky met Wright through a coworker when she worked as a secretary in the University’s Department of Political Science. The two

were dating and had plans to have lunch in between Wright’s scientific research at the Enrico Fermi Institute and Paretsky’s thesis research in Regenstein. They were to meet in the lobby of the Reg. Paretsky was running late for the date and remembers walking down the stairs to find the “debonair guy” looking for her. His face was “so stricken” while thinking that she had stood him up that she thought, “He must really want to be with me.” From that moment, she knew she was in love.

The vital roles Regenstein has played in Paretsky’s life as a graduate student and an author have left her certain of the importance of the Library to the University and of the vital benefits libraries and their staffs provide to society as a whole. “A university is a place where we cherish and encourage thought. A university cannot be a major intellectual center without its library. Take away the library and you have taken away the university,” Paretsky states. “Libraries like Regenstein protect our access to the word, and now more than ever we don’t want to narrow the number of voices we can read and learn from.”

“Libraries like Regenstein protect our access to the word, and now more than ever we don’t want to narrow the number of voices we can read and learn from.”

SARA PARETSKY, AM'69, MBA'77, PHD'77

Library’s Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, where they will be accessible to future generations of scholars, students and the Jewish community.

Durchslag is also bequeathing funds to support the care, curation, study, exhibition and expansion of the collection.

“Stephen Durchslag’s exceptionally generous and very substantial bequest includes the largest known collection of Haggadot in private hands,” said Brenda L. Johnson, Library Director and University Librarian. “It will be a treasure trove for faculty, students and visiting researchers seeking to explore Jewish religion, history and culture and will significantly enhance our important academic collection in Jewish studies. We could not be more pleased that he has chosen us as the right home for his collection.”

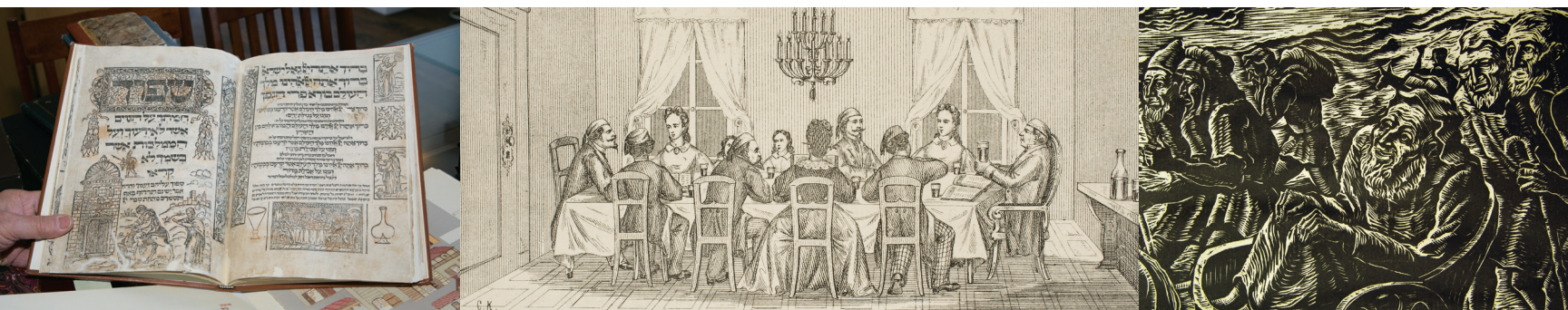
Recited at the Passover feast (Seder), the Haggadah is meant to encourage reflection and commentary on the meaning of the Exodus story and liberation from oppression. It can explore the theme of freedom through many facets, including labor, housing or the basic desire for a better life.

in 1546 in Venice, for example, responds to the demands of the Counter-Reformation.

Also among Durchslag’s treasures is a lithographic manuscript of the Deventer Haggadah, published in Holland in 1940. At their Seder, a group of young Jews preparing to emigrate to the Land of Israel used the Haggadah, which features a map of where they planned to settle and farm. This copy was saved from destruction by the Nazis when it was mailed out of Holland before the German occupation.

“The Durchslag collection is impressive for its scope and depth, containing Haggadot from the incunabular period of Western printing to modern and contemporary works,” said Elizabeth Frengel, Curator of Rare Books at the University of Chicago Library. “The range of Haggadot hold important evidence about traditional iconography and printing and illustrating practices.”

The collection also contains more personal connections for Durchslag: One Haggadah protesting sexual exploitation was written by his daughter, Rachel Durchslag, AM’05, an alum of



LEFT: Haggadah published in Mantua in 1568 (photo by Fred Eckhouse, courtesy of Stephen Durchslag). CENTER: Illustration of a Seder dinner from an 1867 Haggadah printed in Livorno, Italy (from the collection of Stephen P. Durchslag). RIGHT: Detail from a woodcut illustration from a Haggadah illustrated by Jacob Steinhardt, 1923 (from the collection of Stephen P. Durchslag).

For celebrations in his own household, Durchslag typically makes copies of pages from his rare Haggadot as supplements for the main Haggadah used at the dinner table and *Seder: The Order of Retelling*, by his partner Annette Turow. This year, he planned an online Seder focusing on refugees in the United States and Africa.

Durchslag’s collection holds immense scholarly value, containing Haggadah texts in 31 languages—from medieval Italian, Hebrew and Yiddish to Marathi, Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Tat, spoken by the Jewish community in the remote Caucasus Mountains.

“His collection also includes commentaries representing multiple Jewish theological traditions as well as a wide range of modern secular interpretations, from socialists and Israeli kibbutzim,” said Paul Mendes-Flohr, the Dorothy Grant Maclear Professor Emeritus of Modern Jewish History and Thought. “The Durchslag Haggadah collection may thus be said to represent a unique portrait of the spiritual biography of the Jewish people.”

The earliest Haggadah in Durchslag’s collection, printed in 1485, was published as part of a larger prayer book in Soncino, near Milan, Italy, and documents the rites of the region. Other copies from across the centuries offer scholars a way to trace the development of literary innovations, and to examine the tensions of life in the Jewish diaspora. A Haggadah published

the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.

Several other members of the family also attended the University of Chicago. Durchslag’s parents, Elizabeth (Betty) Durchslag, PhB’29, and Milton L. Durchslag, PhB’28, JD’30, got married on campus. His father and uncle, Harold Durchslag, PhB’32, JD’34, both received scholarships that allowed them to attend the University of Chicago Law School during the Depression. Stephen Durchslag stewards the Harold and Milton Durchslag Endowment Fund, which provides scholarships and loans to Law School students. When Stephen married his former wife, Ruth Mayer, they established a scholarship fund for the Divinity School to support the study of Judaism.

“My family has long ties to the University of Chicago on many levels in terms of scholarship and care,” Durchslag said. By leaving his collection to the University of Chicago Library, he intends “this bequest will allow a legacy that will continue to breathe in future generations.”

Durchslag’s bequest will also include financial support for a number of programs at the University of Chicago Library, including the organization, cataloging and preservation of the books in the Haggadot collection; an endowed curatorship in Jewish Studies; an endowed collections fund for Jewish Studies focusing on Haggadot and similar materials in Jewish Studies; and an endowed fellowship to support visiting researchers coming to the Library to consult materials in the Durchslag Collection.



thank you

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Rachel Rosenberg *Director of Communications*

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

INNOVATION ON A GRAND SCALE:

Revisiting Regenstein Library at 50

THE OPENING OF THE JOSEPH REGENSTEIN LIBRARY IN 1970 was a transformative moment in the academic history of the University of Chicago. As we mark Regenstein's 50th anniversary in 2020-21, learn about the history of the Library in an article by Daniel Meyer, Director of Special Collections and University Archivist, at <http://bit.ly/RegGrand>.



Architectural drawing (photograph copy) of the Joseph Regenstein Library. 1965. Architect: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Walter Netsch. University of Chicago Photographic Archive, apf2-06138, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.