



Friends of the Wade

The Marion E. Wade Center Wheaton College

Funding the Online Catalog

The Wade Center raises funds on a regular basis for various projects that fall outside our day-to-day operating budget. Some examples are the *Martha's Table* hospitality fund that honors the memory of Martha Kilby, the 2000 acquisition from Sotheby's



auction house of Dorothy L. Sayers papers, and the Wheaton Class of '61 museum additions. Over the years, Friends of the Wade have helped bring these special

projects into being, some of you giving over and above your usual contributions to the general fund (which remain an essential portion of our usual operating budget). We are deeply grateful for your support.

In examining the needs of the Wade Center, we have recognized that our most pressing need is to convert our current in-house database of our holdings to an online public access catalog, an endeavor that will extend far beyond our basic operating costs, and will therefore require a special fundraising effort. For about a year now, the staff of the Wade Center has been working to develop a plan for creating an online catalog. After much research and consultation, we have determined what we need to do and what resources we will need to do it. However, while the value of our special projects is usually self-evident, the re-cataloging project is a behind-the-scenes

need whose significance may not be as easily recognized without some explanation of the archival and technological context.

Since the Wade Center's founding in 1965, it has gained a global reputation for its unparalleled research collection. Over time, however, budget limitations prevented us from keeping pace with the developments in user access to archival collections. While libraries and archives around the world have transitioned from card catalog drawers to computerized catalogs to globally available online catalogs, the Wade Center's listings largely remain accessible by staff only. Our guests are entirely dependent on the availability of an archivist, a particular challenge when more than one researcher is using the collection at a time. Visitors and researchers are unable to access descriptive records of most of our holdings online, a hindrance to public users. In today's educational and research environment, whatever is not discoverable electronically increasingly goes unused.

Not only is our current catalog system unavailable to researchers directly, the software is also experiencing data corruption that requires increasing maintenance, which is difficult to provide since the manufacturer no longer supports this software. Although data is backed up, it will become irretrievable for a significant period if the catalog database crashes, seriously disrupting our services. For instance, many people travel long distances to use our facility, and the risk is growing that

"I became my own only when I gave myself to Another."

—C.S. Lewis



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I am often asked for recommendations of books on one or more of the Wade authors. One that I routinely suggest on C.S. Lewis is Paul L. Holmer's book *C.S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought*. I highlight Holmer's book here because almost as often as I suggest it I find that the reader has never heard of it. This is most unfortunate because of the many books that have been written on Lewis up to the present time, Holmer's book, written over thirty years ago, remains one of the most intelligent to date.

In his preface, Holmer explains that the book represents the discharge of a "debt incurred during the early days of World War II." He had sent an "angry and impetuous" letter to Lewis and in response got a lengthy one in return "so full of charity and plain wisdom," he writes, "that it made at least this then frustrated and distraught student see very clearly how tangled his own life actually was." Holmer goes on to say that over the years the more he read and reread Lewis the more interesting and more profound he found Lewis's thinking. This conviction led him to write *C.S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought*, a first-rate exploration and explication of Lewis's profundity by a first-rate philosophical theologian. Though the book is out of print, any efforts to secure a copy will be more than repaid in the reading.

WITH ALL GOOD WISHES,



Did You Know?

The Wade Center website (www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter) is one of the best ways to find out time-sensitive information about our new museum displays, book groups, and special events. We have now also set up a Wade Center Facebook page and an RSS feed, both of which allow you to be notified directly of Wade news and events, such as the upcoming visit of writer Will Vaus, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 14, 2010. He will sign his book *The Hidden Story of Narnia* and teach on C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Keep abreast of this and other news by joining our Facebook page or using our RSS feed. **W**



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we may be unable to identify relevant materials for them in the event of a software failure during their stay.

In light of the inadequacy and instability of our current cataloging method, the Wade Center intends to hire two short-term consultants: a professional cataloger, and a paraprofessional staff assistant, to describe our existing collections in MARC format, the industry standard for global access through library catalogs. Once existing collections are cataloged, we expect that permanent members of the archival staff will be trained to carry on with the cataloging of new acquisitions. We estimate the project will take 2 ½ years, costing approximately \$150,000. Therefore, in order to begin the venture, we need to raise \$75,000 to cover the expenses for the first year (personnel, equipment, and fees), with the remaining \$75,000 spread over the next year and a half.

We are particularly pleased to begin this effort with the generous support of an anonymous donor who has committed a \$50,000 gift to be matched. This person's confidence in the Wade Center's mission and his or her understanding of the importance of updated catalog technology to that mission are a great encouragement to us, and we hope to you as well.

Once the Wade Center's materials are cataloged and these records are available online, we envision the global access will allow our exceptional resources to be better utilized. Visiting scholars will arrive more prepared, and able to use their time most effectively. Teachers, students, and families at all levels of interest will readily find materials to enrich their experience of these authors' great works. With support from parties who value the Wade Center's mission, our extraordinary collections will be more widely available than ever. Please consider making a financial contribution to the cataloging project. If you would like to learn more, contact Director Chris Mitchell or Associate Director Marjorie Mead at wade@wheaton.edu or 630-752-5908. Thank you for valuing the work of the Wade Center. **W**

Up Close

A Q&A with Dr. Lee Ryken

You came on the Wade Steering Committee in 1992. Are there any observations about the role of the Steering Committee that you would like to share with Friends of the Wade?

The Steering Committee aims to be the voice of the Friends of the Wade as a group—saying what the rank and file members of the Friends would want to say if they themselves could be present at the two annual meetings. Although the Steering Committee is advisory in nature, it nonetheless helps the directors and staff members of the Center reach decisions. The committee also functions as an encouraging cheering section for the people whose daily lives are invested at the Wade Center.

You joined the Wheaton College English Department faculty in 1968, shortly after the Wade Center was started. Please describe your background and interests.

My position at the college is Professor of English. I have mainly but not exclusively taught courses in English literature, including survey of British literature, Milton, Shakespeare, the seventeenth century, and the Bible as literature. My publishing and speaking career has grown out of my teaching and been an extension of it. Within the combination of activities that I have described, it is evident late in my career (though not at every point during my career) that my publishing has been my main contribution to the Kingdom. It has made the world my classroom.

What do you see the Wade Center contributing to the English Department and to the College as a whole?

To answer that question, I need only ponder what I do by virtue of having the Wade Center a block from



my office as compared to what my life would be like without the Wade Center. The Wade Center offers a “distinctive” to the English Department at Wheaton. When prospective students and their parents visit with me, I always mention the Wade Center as part of our identity as a department. Even though I rarely use the archives myself, the Wade is nonetheless a constant part of my identity as an English professor at Wheaton. In fact, the presence of the Wade Center on campus gives me a certain identity and stature in the broader world of literary scholarship.

You collaborated on two books with the Wade Center’s Associate Director Marjorie Mead: *A Reader’s Guide Through the Wardrobe* and *A Reader’s Guide to Caspian*. What interested you in writing these books?

Being able to publish on the Narnian stories and to do so with my former student Marj Mead has been one of the unexpected joys of my Wheaton career. I do not remember how the venture started, but co-authoring those two books with Marj was a gift of providence. The books played to the strengths of both Marj and me. In my case, it enabled me to conduct a literary analysis of specific literary texts, which is what I do best.

What is your favorite book by a Wade author?

I belong to a minority of readers who know the scholarly books of the Wade authors better than their fictional works. I first encountered those books in graduate school and my very early years of teaching, in both instances when I was forging my own theory of literature and literary criticism. Within those parameters, I know the literary criticism of C.S. Lewis best. In fact, when I compile the indexes of my books on literature, C.S. Lewis regularly emerges as one of the two authors from whom I quote the most (Northrop Frye being the other). Many, many Lewis books and essays have been landmarks in my teaching and writing on literary topics. It is really hard to choose a favorite! Nonetheless, if a gun is being held to my head, I will choose Lewis’s book *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, with *Paradise Lost* being the literary text on which I wrote my dissertation and for which I use the Lewis book as a required textbook when I teach the poem. **W**

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Highlights

Movie Props on Display

The Wade Center has a selection of artifacts on loan from Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, and Walden Media that were used as props in the film adaptations of *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005), and *Prince Caspian* (2008). The loan agreement will last for three years, and is in reciprocation for the loan of artifacts from the Wade Center's holdings now on a five-year tour with *Narnia: The Exhibition*. Items include: messenger bags used by Peter and Edmund Pevensie, the sword and dagger of Nikabrik the dwarf, a Telmarine helmet and face mask, a candleholder used by Lucy Pevensie, the warrant of arrest for Mr. Tumnus, and other items. These movie props have just been placed on display in the central display case (gift of the Class of '61) and one of the wall cases. We hope that you can stop in to enjoy the beauty and craftsmanship of these artifacts. **W**



Archivist Laura Schmidt unpacks the shipment of selected props from the Narnia films.