

# Koren 100

*Koren Library, 1950–1969*



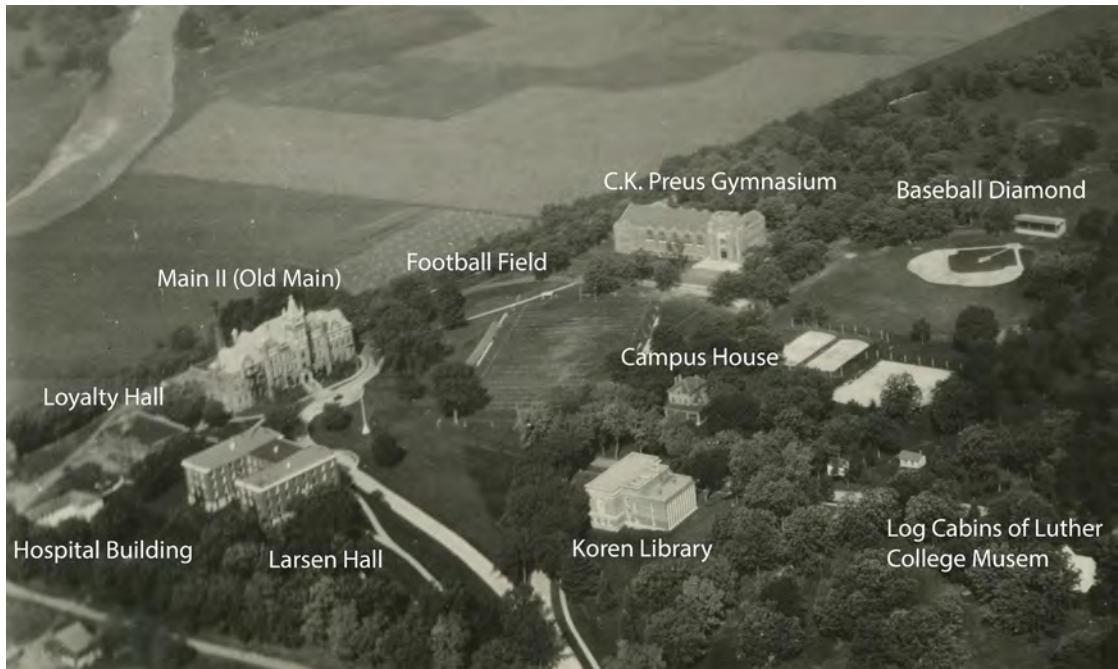
*Koren exterior, undated.*

## Introduction

When 1950 rolled around, Luther College and Koren Library were bursting at the seams thanks to a growing student population and expanding faculty. Luther College was not alone in this growth, as postwar enrollment in colleges and universities increased substantially across the country. The G.I. Bill of 1944 enabled greater numbers of retired servicemen and servicewomen to afford a college education. The National Defense Act of 1958, passed after the launch of *Sputnik*, made student loans widely available through the Department of Education, further boosting college enrollments.<sup>1</sup> Future students were ensured by the postwar baby boom; there would be more than enough young people to take advantage of educational opportunities into the 1960s and 1970s.

Not only was the student body growing, the students themselves were changing. The college began recruiting students from outside its historical demographic, including Black students and Catholic students.<sup>2</sup> With growing youth activism across the nation and a world more closely connected through television and radio, new ideas, perspectives, and ways of doing things would come into the so-called Luther Bubble. The entire community grappled with these changes, some more successfully than others. Luther College needed a place for everyone at the table—literally, in the case of the crowded Koren Library.

It was certainly a memorable time to be at Luther College, turbulent as it may have been. In this issue of *Koren 100*, we will examine the history of Koren Library from 1951 to 1969. The first half will cover the history of the Koren and Luther College during the era. The second half will be a compilation of Luther community memories of being in Koren Library.



*Aerial photo of Luther College Campus, 1926 (labels by Hayley Jackson)*

**The expansion of Luther College is evident when you compare aerial photos of campus from 1926 and 1952. It would continue to grow throughout the 1950s and 1960s.**



*Aerial photo of Luther College Campus, 1952 (labels by Hayley Jackson)*

## Build It, Because They're Already Here: Luther in the 1950s

The 1950s were a period of expansion on Luther's campus. The Great Depression and World War II had overshadowed much of the 1930s and 1940s, and limited funding minimized developments of Luther's physical campus.<sup>3</sup> A pattern of fluctuating enrollment existed during the early part of the 1950s; while increasing numbers of men came to Luther in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the student population began to drop by 1951 as they volunteered for service in Korea. Still, the overall trend of attendance was on the rise. Even when enrollment dropped by over 200 students between 1948 and 1950, the total number of students attending Luther College was nearly double what it was during World War II and the Great Depression. Enrollment would continue to rise for both traditional and non-traditional students alike, as those like Carlyle Gilbertson '57 put their education on hold for military service and returned after their tours of duty were completed.<sup>4</sup> The College was quickly outgrowing its campus.

The introduction of coeducation meant more dormitory space was necessary, as housing would be separated by gender. The first wing of Brandt Hall, a new dorm for women, was opened in January 1950 and a second wing completed in 1956/1957 academic year. It was named for Diderikke Brandt, the wife of Luther's first campus pastor, Rev. Nils O. Brandt. Olson Hall, named for third president Oscar L. Olson, was built as a men's dormitory in 1955.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to dormitory construction, the destruction of Main II (Old Main) brought on a shortage of classroom space which needed to be addressed. In 1952, a decade after Old Main burned, New Main rose from the rubble. Designed by Charles Altfillisch, New Main was a midcentury modern style building featuring a central tower, large glass



*President J.W. Ylvisaker giving a speech at the groundbreaking of Main III, standing outside the Chicken Coop, 1950.*



*Students standing in front of the Chicken Coop with a crane nearby for demolition, 1950.*



*Main III, undated.*

windows, split levels, and flat roof. While very different in style from its predecessors, New Main provided badly-needed classroom and office space. Unfortunately, building New Main required that the Chicken Coop, which had held both the library and museum collections years earlier, be torn down. The Chicken Coop had been previously remodeled in 1938 to house the music department, providing classrooms, studio space, practice rooms, and space for the music library.<sup>6</sup>

The Cold War arms buildup and space race with the Soviet Union brought science and technology to the American national consciousness. In particular, the Soviet Union's successful launch of *Sputnik* in 1957 led to concerns that the United States was being left behind and calls to increase scientific education in schools.<sup>7</sup> Luther had needed new space for labs for years—science labs had long been divided between various buildings, including Old Main and Larsen Hall. A new science building, Valders Hall of Science, was completed in 1961, finally answering that need. Valders has the distinction of being the first million-dollar building on Luther's campus.<sup>8</sup>

For Koren, this rapid expansion meant the library would continue to operate in very crowded conditions, despite the new reading rooms on the first and third floors. "It is a well known fact," a *College Chips* reporter wrote in 1958, "that our present library is inadequate for our enrollment of 1,200."<sup>9</sup> The reporter noted that there was a "capacity crowd every week night," and huffed that "It is apparent to any serious student that the majority of the evening crowd in the library is not there to study. The continual buzz of coffee clutches without coffee would distract anyone."<sup>10</sup>



*Main III, undated.*



*Photo of students studying in the Koren Reading Room, circa 1960s.*

## President J.W. Ylvisaker

The president overseeing this massive campus expansion was Johannes Wilhelm (J.W.) Ylvisaker. A modest man, Ylvisaker had graduated from Luther College in 1921 and spent most of his career as a parish pastor before his election as Luther's fifth president in 1948. David T. Nelson described Ylvisaker as a cordial man, warm in relationships with the Luther community and welcoming of conversation.<sup>11</sup> "His flashes of wit," he observed, "never caustic and always friendly, have brightened many a situation."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to New Main, Brandt, Valders, and Olson, the Ylvisaker administration oversaw the building of Centennial Union in anticipation of Luther's 100th anniversary. Other notable developments during his tenure included the creation of the Dorian Music Festival, the establishment of an office of development to increase fundraising, the celebration of Luther College's centennial, and the 1961 Concert Band tour to Norway.<sup>13</sup>

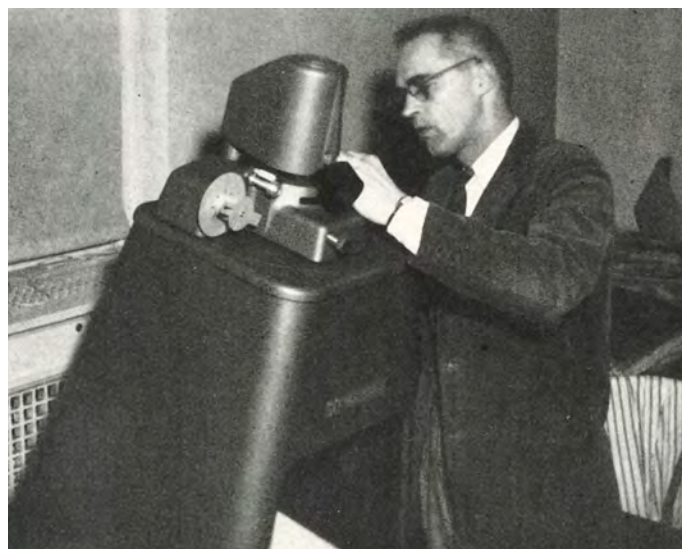
Ylvisaker stepped down from the presidency in 1962 when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. The greatly expanded campus remains a testament to his legacy.



*President J.W. Ylvisaker sitting in his office, undated*

## New Decade, New Library Tech

Contrary to popular imagination, librarians and library staff are often on the forefront of technological change. Oivind Hovde helped usher in a new form of technology to Koren Library: microforms. Microforms technology, including microfiche and microfilm, involves the copying of material at a reduced scale onto film for compact storage. Users can then view the microfilmed material with an appropriate reader.<sup>14</sup> Libraries began using microfilm to preserve their newspaper collections in the 1940s, as they were (and continue to be) heavily used by researchers, and take up significant space on shelves. As the technology expanded, libraries began acquiring other collection materials in microformats, including journals, books, dissertations, and archival collections.<sup>15</sup> Microfilming provides a way to provide easier access to researchers while preserving physical collections from excess handling. Newsprint in particular becomes notoriously acidic as it ages, leading to brittleness and disintegration.



*Oivind Hovde examining a newly acquired microfilm machine, 1952.*

When Koren Library was built, Karl Jacobsen took the Luther College Museum's collection of Norwegian-American newspapers and added them to the library collection. These newspapers remained popular with users over the decades, and early inquiries had been made into having them microfilmed. When Hovde became Head Librarian in 1949, he made microfilming newspapers a priority. Beginning in 1951, the library annually set aside funds for microfilming the entire newspaper collection, which ultimately cost \$30,000.<sup>16</sup> "The newspapers, EMIGRANTEN, 1852-1868; FAEDRELANDET, 1864-1868; and the combined paper, PAEDRELANDET OG EMIGRANTEN, 1868-1892, have been microfilmed... Other newspapers will be shipped for microfilming during the year," Hovde wrote in his annual report for 1951/1952.<sup>17</sup> He also reported that the senior class of 1951 had voted to give the library a microfilm reader as their class gift.<sup>18</sup> By 1975, the entire collection of newspapers held by Luther was microfilmed.<sup>19</sup> Among the microfilmed newspapers was the local *Decorah Posten*, which had been printed for 99 years until 1972. These newspapers are still held at Preus Library today.



*A person using the Kodagraph microfilm machine in Koren Library, undated.*

## Growing Library Department

While there was only ever one head librarian at Koren Library, it certainly took more than one person to keep the building running. Karl Jacobsen employed several assistant librarians throughout his tenure, including Valborg Bestul, Magdalene Almelie '48, and Marjorie Grimes '45.<sup>20</sup> Donald Rod '38, who served as an assistant and associate librarian in Koren from 1940 to 1943, later went on to serve as the head of the library at the University of Northern Iowa from 1953-1986. That library is now known as the Donald O. Rod Library.<sup>22</sup> Vera Thompson (later Vera Harris) was hired in 1942 as an assistant librarian, and she left in 1948, a year before Jacobsen's retirement. Later, she would be appointed to the Iowa State Library Board and have a career in library consulting.<sup>23</sup>

As the collections and student population grew, so did the number of faculty and staff needed to manage them all in Koren Library. Oivind Hovde hired several additional librarians beginning in the 1950s. Angeline Jacobson began as a library science instructor and reference librarian in the fall of 1951.<sup>24</sup> Leona Alsaker began as an assistant reference librarian in the fall of 1956.<sup>25</sup> Together, they staffed the reference desk among other duties, complementing each other well. According to Leigh D. Jordahl:



*Reference librarian Angeline Jacobson, undated.*

"[Leona] was at her best when confronted by...students baffled by the most elementary problem library usage," Jordahl wrote. "'Isn't that interesting?' or 'let's see what we can find,' she would say with a happy smile...In no event did she make even the most baffled student feel foolish. That Leona enjoyed her work was clear to those who at staff coffee hours heard her report on this or that 'interesting' question she had dealt with that day."<sup>26</sup>

Jacobson relished "tough bibliographic challenges," impressing faculty and students with the efficiency and tenacity with which she would locate resources to answer their questions.<sup>27</sup> She was a serious woman, but according to colleague Duane Fenstermann, she also had a dry wit.<sup>28</sup> Both would remain at Luther College until their retirements. Other



*Karl Anderson checking out a book from assistant librarian Vera Thompson (later Vera Harris), 1948. Vera joined the staff in 1942 and remained there until 1948.*



*Leona Alsaker and a student reviewing cards in the card catalog in Koren Library, undated.*

librarians hired in the 1950s included Vivian Peterson as a cataloging librarian in the fall of 1952 and Ingrid Julsrud as a circulation librarian in 1957.<sup>29</sup>

Martha Selness Henzler joined the faculty as an assistant catalog librarian in 1964. She had attended the Decorah College for Women beginning in 1934 and graduated from Luther College in 1938, working in Koren Library as a student, then returning to join the library faculty from 1939 to 1941.<sup>30</sup> Duane Fenstermann would join as the acquisitions librarian in the fall of 1966.<sup>31</sup> Fenstermann did a lot of work to integrate new technology into the library, including collaborating with other colleges to create the Northeast Iowa Union List of Serials (NEIULS). These lists of periodicals were created using punch cards that could be read by computers. In an era before online library catalogs, this allowed librarians to search the collections of other libraries and make interlibrary loan requests for items they wished to borrow. He also worked on indexing the library's sizeable newspaper collection.<sup>32</sup> In addition to this work, he would take over the role of managing the Luther College Archives, with assistance from Henzler. Her neatly handwritten catalog numbers can still be seen

today on many documents in the archives. Both would remain at Luther until their retirements.

In addition to professional librarians, Koren required a number of technical staff to assist with ordering, cataloging, and preparing resources for use in the library. These tasks included everything from putting call numbers on books, and typing catalog cards to managing the daily intake of serials, such as newspapers and magazines. Ruth Remmen and Arla Nettet worked in cataloging with Martha Henzler, while Kathy Kalsow managed serials. Jean Dickman was hired in the later days of Koren to assist the head librarian, later taking over work with acquisitions. Other important staff members assisted with circulation such



*Acquisitions Librarian Duane Fenstermann in Koren Library, undated.*





*Assistant Cataloging Librarian Martha Henzler at the card catalog in Koren Library, undated.*



*Circulation librarian Ingrid Julsrud, undated.*

as Edna Bakken, who helped double check backpacks to make sure no errant material snuck out of the library. Finally, no library is complete without its custodians. Irene Johnson and Hattie Lillgraven cleaned Koren Library for several years, which was no small task for such a heavily trafficked building. Johnson recalled years later that she had to mop the floor about every day when the building was busy.<sup>33</sup>

The growth of librarians and library staff added to the crowded working conditions in the building. "Within a few years Koren was so crowded that they worked almost on top of each other," Jordahl wrote.<sup>34</sup> Fenstermann described the Technical Services room in Koren as housing between 17 and 18 people (including full-time, part-time, and student workers) when only being 27 by 18 feet. "I had a...small desk," he told Luther librarian Bill Musser '80:

"To my left was an aisle that went down the middle of the room, and it was just large enough to get a book truck through with a little extra space... Then immediately across the aisle was my secretary's desk...immediately behind her was Ruth Remmen's desk, so that if she backed up her chair would literally hit [Ruth]'s desk. Then immediately behind Ruth Remmen's desk was Martha Henzler's desk...and immediately behind her desk was...the west wall."<sup>35</sup>

Kalsow recalled that one part-time interlibrary loan staff member had only a typewriter stand and a stool, and Jean Dickman gave Musser a demonstration of her "elbows tucked into the ribs and knees together" position she had to use when typing.<sup>36</sup> Peas in a pod, it seemed, had more room than the staff in Koren.



Ruth Remmen, Cataloging Assistant, at her desk in the Technical Services Room, Koren Library, 1967. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



View into the Technical Services Room, Koren Library. The room was "L" shaped with the entrance into the room, shown in this photograph, as the short line (bottom) of the "L." The table on the right held the mimeograph printing machine. 1967. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Kathy Kalsow, Serials Assistant, checking in periodicals, in the Reference Office, 2nd floor, Koren Library. 1967. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Edna Bakken with the book cards for books checked out. February 2, 1968. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Three students packing things up in the Cataloging Department end of the old Technical Services Room in Koren Library. May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Reference Desk Area, 2nd floor, Koren Library. 1967. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.

## Library Faculty Browsers

Before online newsletters and social media, librarians had to put more effort into letting users know about their newest acquisitions. To get faculty up to speed, the librarians would host a "library browser." During a browser, faculty, staff, and their spouses could come to Koren Library and view an assortment of books which had been purchased within the last six months, arranged on tables by subject. Oivind Hovde told the *College Chips* that by allowing faculty to familiarize themselves with new titles, they would then "recommend them to the students for their use."<sup>37</sup>



Faculty members Herbert Rebasso, Emil Miller, and N. Lewis Fadness sit at a table in Koren Library during a Library Browser.



Faculty members Erling Naeseth, Frank Barth, and William Berg sit at a table in Koren Library during a Library Browser.



Faculty members Erling Naeseth, Frank Barth, and William Berg sit at a table in Koren Library during a Library Browser.



Weston Noble and Clara Paulson at a Faculty Browser.

## “Now it is Gone” - C.K. Preus Gymnasium Burns

In his recounting of his presidential administration, Dr. Oscar Olson wrote that Preus Gymnasium was “practically fireproof.”<sup>38</sup> In the end, his words may have tempted fate. A fire began the night of November 2, 1961, a few weeks after Homecoming Weekend, which had wrapped up the college’s centennial celebrations.<sup>39</sup> Luther students Chuck Yount and Pete Alwin spotted the flames on their way back from downtown Decorah and sounded the alarm. As had previous generations, Luther students pitched in to save what they could. Some freshmen held hoses for the over 100 firefighters from Decorah, Ossian, Waukon, Cresco, and Calmar, while others moved cars away from the blaze. Still other students helped move pianos and other materials out of the building.<sup>40</sup> Given the heavy winds that night, college administrators feared the fire spreading to other buildings and evacuated the women in Brandt Hall to Koren Library, although some students chose to keep vigil on the lawn in front of New Main.<sup>41</sup> Loren Evenrud '65 remembered seeing flames from his dorm room in Olson Hall. “I’m sitting there studying, and all of a sudden it’s bright red!” he shared. “There’s a fire! So I got to watch the first fire trucks arrive.”<sup>42</sup>

“Now it is gone,” *College Chips* reporter Joan Mani '63 wrote in her article the following day. “All that remains is a pile of bricks, grotesquely twisted beams and the charred remnants of some 1300 folding chairs, music, instruments, athletic equipment and innumerable objects that were housed in the building.”<sup>43</sup> Among the ruins was a carillon, newly dedicated for Luther’s centennial weeks earlier. Total losses were estimated to be \$1 million dollars at the time, which would amount to about \$9.4 million in 2022.<sup>44</sup> It is a testament to the centrality of Preus Gymnasium in Luther life that it was replaced by two buildings: the Field House for athletics, now known as the Regent’s Center, completed in 1964; and perhaps the crown jewel of President Farwell’s building program, the Center for Faith and Life, completed in 1977.<sup>45</sup>



*C.K. Preus Gymnasium on fire, 1961.*



*Firefighters standing on a truck outside the burning Preus Gymnasium, 1961.*



*Students walking by the burning C.K. Preus Gymnasium, 1961.*



*Wreckage of the fire in C.K. Preus Gymnasium, 1961.*



*Burned remains of the C.K. Preus Gymnasium, 1961.*



*The remains of C.K. Preus Gymnasium after the fire was put out, 1961.*

## The World Turned Upside Down: Luther in the 1960s

The 1960s were a turbulent time for college campuses, and Luther was no exception. "The college changed enormously from my freshman year to my senior year," Michael Hovland '72 explained.<sup>46</sup> When Hovland was a freshman in 1968, intervisitation (men visiting women's dorms and vice versa) was governed by strict rules. A handful of years later in 1972, most residence halls were co-ed by floor. Anti-war activity and racial unrest increased on campus and in the Decorah community. "All the things that were happening in the '60s, I guess, happened in a microcosm sort of way at Luther. So the college was just enormously different after four years...And I'm sure it was just a nightmare for the development office and everything else but it was, it was a fascinating time...to be at this school."<sup>47</sup>

Some people at Luther recognized the changes in the student body more quickly than others. Kurt Leichtle '70 remembered an interaction his future wife, Karen, had with a theology professor Bruce Wrightsman. More than halfway through a class, Professor Wrightsman was quite frustrated with his students, asking them, "Don't you study this in catechism?!"<sup>48</sup> According to Kurt, "One of the students put up their hand [and said], 'Dr. Wrightsman, I'm not Lutheran.' He looked at the class and went, 'So how many of you aren't Lutheran?'" When three quarters of the students raised their hands, Professor Wrightsman had a realization, "So you have not understood half of what I said...I assumed you knew all this background?" The shifting demographics of students in the 60s led to a classroom that was more diversified than it had been in the past. "The tone and the tenor of the campus changed in a lot of ways, and I think the people who were there then didn't always realize how much."<sup>49</sup>

Not everyone welcomed these changes. The papers of Elwin D. Farwell, the president of Luther during the era, are filled with letters from parents, alumni, and others criticizing him and the direction of the College. "There were all these people who had gone to Luther when...it was a place of rules and strictness and all of a sudden, there were no rules or strictness about anything," Hovland remembered.<sup>50</sup> These people made their displeasure with Luther known, but to his credit, Dr. Farwell always replied with generosity. "Certainly they will make mistakes and there will be excesses," he wrote of Luther students to one concerned letter-writer, "but it is better to make those mistakes and learn the consequences in college...We are far from perfect, and we make lots of mistakes."<sup>51</sup> He closed his letter with the same graciousness. "We appreciate your concern. I am not critical of you, but grateful to you for writing."<sup>52</sup>

## Vietnam and Civil Unrest

The Vietnam War overshadowed the experience of many Luther students. In 1967, Vietnam was on the edge of Luther's consciousness. Carol Birkland '67 remembered the first protest against the bombings that were occurring in Vietnam, which was only attended by a handful of students and one professor.<sup>53</sup> Peter Hovde, who graduated in 1963, recalled talking with a military recruiter who was visiting Luther. "The Marine Corps officer said, 'Vietnam, it's a little war, but it's the only war we've got.' And that just kind of appalled me. It appalls me to this day, because of what Vietnam really became."<sup>54</sup> Military recruiters would eventually be banned from Luther's campus in 1970.<sup>55</sup>

Later, students became much more aware of the Vietnam War. Some students left Luther to serve in the military. Other students found creative ways to avoid the war. Steven Jacobsen '69 entered seminary to avoid the draft, only to find his calling as a pastor. Similarly, Mark Donhowe '70 joined the National Guard, knowing that they had just returned from Vietnam and were unlikely to be sent back. This decision later caused Mark some inner conflict following the 1970 Kent State shootings, where the Ohio National Guard killed four college students peacefully protesting the war. "I'm a college student, but I'm being trained to keep these college students down that are protesting this war that I'm certainly not not wild about either."<sup>56</sup>



*Vietnam Moratorium protest marching to downtown Decorah, 1968.*

## Civil Rights at Luther

Around the same time, the Civil Rights movement began to affect the local community at Luther. Luther's first native African student, Asibong Okon came to Luther in 1951 and graduated in 1954.<sup>57</sup> Other Black students would follow in the 1960s, with Jessie Butts and Willie Heard graduating in 1964. Beginning in 1964, faculty member David C. Johnson arranged the Southern Exchange Program, in which students from four southern, historically-black colleges would attend Luther for a semester and Luther students attended the southern colleges. This program continued for a number of years. President Farwell encouraged the recruitment of Black students from Chicago and Waterloo, advising admissions staff to expand beyond "usual Luther territory."<sup>58</sup> "[Farwell] sort of was a facilitator of changing things that didn't make sense in terms of human

rights," Richard Staff shared. "He did a lot to start bringing more people of color to campus... There weren't very many people of color. But... every year, there were more people of color, and I think he was sort of quietly behind it all."<sup>59</sup> A significant enough number of Black students enrolled at Luther that a Black Student Union (BSU) was established in 1968. The BSU sponsored Black cultural events, including talent shows and film screenings, invited notable speakers to campus such as Stokely Carmichael, and pushed for the creation of a Black Studies department. The BSU celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018 and continues to exist today, advised by Dr. Guy Nave.



*A memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr. held on the steps of the Winneshiek County Courthouse on April 7, 1968.*

The arrival of Black students into a community and campus that was predominately white naturally sparked conversations around race, racism, and civil rights. Public speakers who gave lectures on the existence of racism in the U.S. were labeled in the 1968 *Pioneer* as speaking on "controversial issues."<sup>60</sup> For many students, Luther was the first time that they had sustained interactions with students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. As Kay Nickelsen shared, "That was a whole new experience for me, and I'm sure it was new for them, too. Coming to this lil white town."<sup>61</sup> While Luther has long been a school primarily made up of white students of Norwegian descent, the 1960s marked the beginning of a shift in the demographics of the student population.



*Members of the Luther College Black Student Union stand on the porch of the Black Cultural Center, 1976.*



## Double Standards for Women

Students always have pushed boundaries in college, but the 1960s saw anti-authoritarianism rise in ways previously unseen. They began pushing back against long-held rules governing conduct. In particular, women, influenced by the rise of second-wave feminism, began to push against rules that were specifically aimed at them.<sup>62</sup>

In the early years of Luther College, students were expected to adhere to a strict code of conduct. As written about in other histories of the college, the Luther founders were not only concerned with educating students, but also with their "moral formation," an approach taken by many colleges in the 19th century. Faculty and administration viewed themselves as acting in a parental role (referred to as *in loco parentis*) and these rules were intended to ensure students developed and adhered



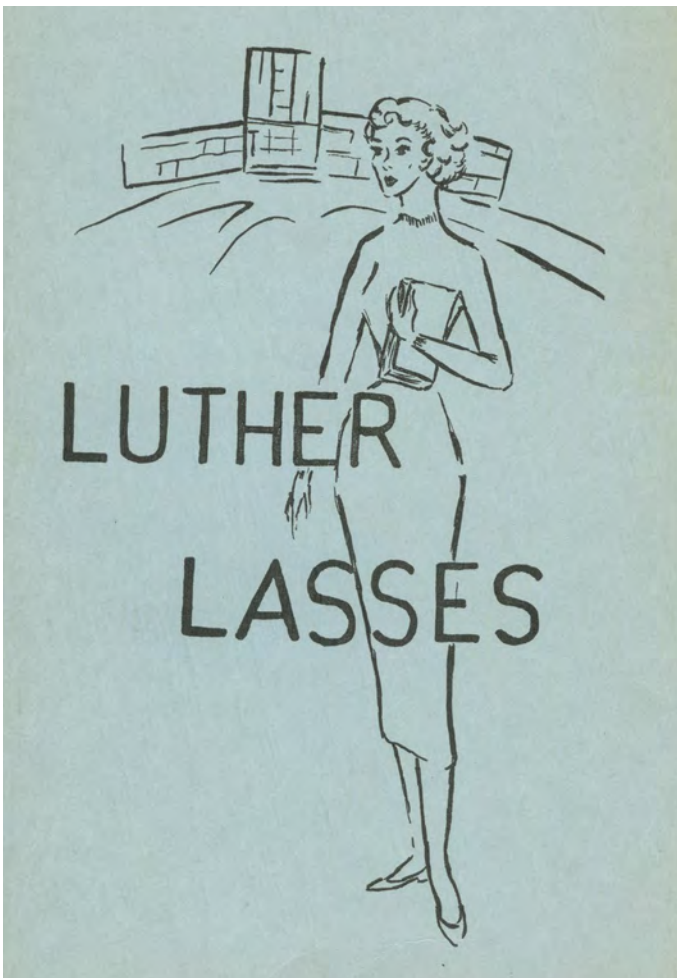
Women Students

to Christian morals.<sup>63</sup> Students in the 1920s, for example, were required to attend chapel and church services, could not leave Decorah without permission, and had a curfew. Students under 18 could not use tobacco, and were prohibited from "dancing, card-playing, gambling, using or possessing intoxicating liquor, and visiting billiard-rooms, pool-rooms, dance halls, and other objectionable places."<sup>64</sup> When Luther went coeducational in 1936, additional rules were created specifically for women. These rules were put together in a little booklet called *Luther Lasses*.<sup>65</sup>

Women were subjected to a strict dress code, which was not always practical for Iowa winters. Cathy Baldner '69, who attended Luther when these rules were being challenged, explained nature of the dress code:

"These were the days I have to tell you...the women were told that they would have to wear dresses. They could not wear jeans or slacks, or any of those kinds of things. You wore dresses. Now think about this. This is northeast Iowa. It gets very cold in the winter. And by the time I was a junior it was the miniskirt era. Think about that. That's a lot of bare skin!"<sup>66</sup>

Several rules governed when women could leave their dorms or leave campus. They had to sign out whenever they left the dorm after 7:30 pm, indicating where they were going,



Cover of a *Luther Lasses* booklet from the 1950s.

Ask at Lib where note

LUTHER COLLEGE  
SIGN-OUT RECORD

CARD 2 SIDE 1

NAME Follmer Diane ROOM NO. 3 CALL NO. .

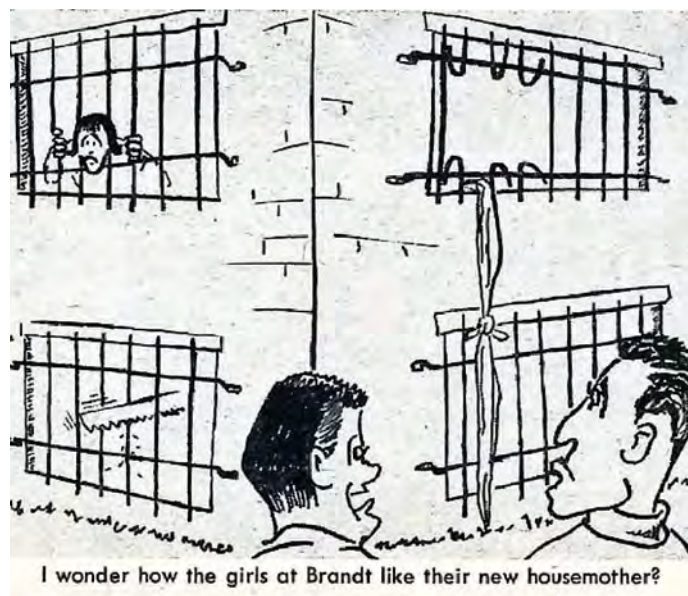
HOME ADDRESS Stanley Iowa HOME PHONE NO. 13

Date	Destination	Out	Return	Returned	Date	Destination	Out	Return	Returned
12/14	Out	10:00	12:00	11:15	1/3	Sub at Lib	4:15	10:00	9:10
12/15	Massiah	7:00	12:00	10:45	2/4	Union	7:15	10:00	9:30
12/16	Massiah	7:00	11:00	10:30	2/6	Union	7:45	10:00	9:30
12/17	Lib and Massiah	6:30	11:00	9:45	2/7	Sub at Lib	6:30	10:00	10:00
1/5	out	9:00	11:00	10:45	3/1	Library	8:00	10:00	9:15
1/5	Union	6:45	10:00	9:30	3/3	Library	6:00	10:00	8:45
1/7	Sub at Lib	6:30	10:00	10:00	3/4	Sub at Lib	6:45	10:00	10:00
1/7	Union	6:30	11:00	10:20	3/5	Sub at Lib	4:30	10:00	9:10
1/10	Lecture	7:45	10:00	9:35	3/10	Sub at Lib	6:30	10:00	10:00
1/11	Union	9:45	11:00	10:50	3/11	Union	8:15	10:00	9:15
1/12	Union	8:30	12:00	11:45	3/13	Sec. Lib	12:45	10:00	9:20
1/13	Reading	7:50	10:00	9:15	3/14	Sub at Lib	5:00	10:00	9:15
1/14	Sub at Lib	6:50	10:00	10:00	3/15	Library	7:15	10:00	9:30
1/15	Union	7:45	10:00	9:30	3/17	First Lib	6:20	10:00	8:20
1/17	University	6:35	10:00	9:50	3/18	Sub at Lib	7:00	10:00	10:00
1/27	Main	9:50	11:00	10:35	3/1	Library	6:30	10:00	9:10
1/30	Chapel	6:50	10:00	9:50	3/10	Library	6:30	10:00	9:30
1/31	Sub at Lib	7:10	10:00	10:00	3/17	Sub at Lib	6:50	10:00	10:00

Each girl must be signed out if she is out of the dormitory after seven thirty.

Outcard of Diane Follmer, 1960s.

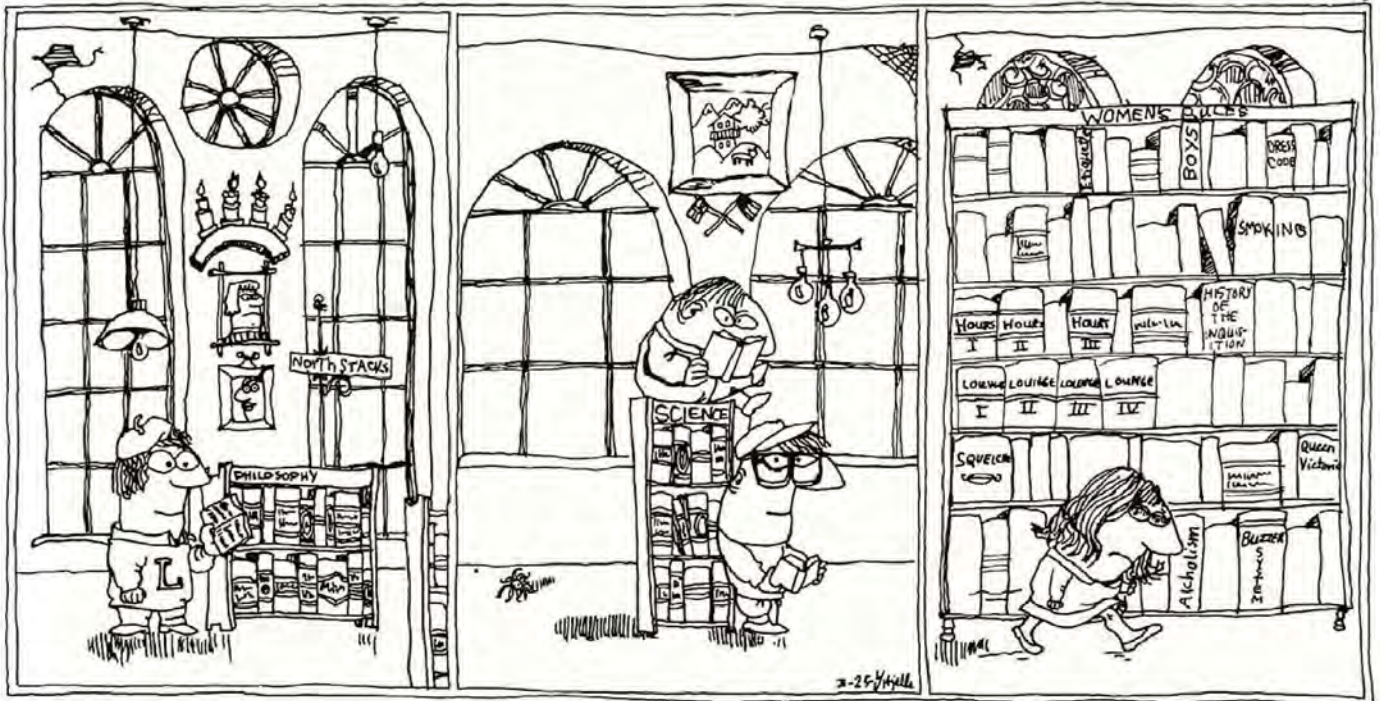
and sign back in when they returned. They had to be back in the dorm by 10:00pm, unless it was a Friday or Saturday night, or if they were using a "late leave", of which they got between 2-4 per semester, depending on their year. There were restrictions on when they could leave campus; overnight stays off-campus usually required parental permission. There were strict rules about when men and women visited each other's dorms, referred to as *parietal rules* or *intervisitation*. There were special hours for men to visit the living areas of women's dorms, while women were expressly prohibited from doing the same in men's dorms, unless it was an official college function. One of the most notorious rules was the ban on smoking for women: "The college disapproves of smoking on the part of women students."<sup>67</sup> While women were banned from smoking on campus, the men were still allowed to do so, highlighting the double standards imposed on women during this time.



Cartoon about the restrictiveness of women's hours in the *College Chips*, September 26, 1958.

Women found the gender-based rules frustrating, but developed workarounds, as students often do. One of the most popular workarounds centered on Koren Library. "You had to have something you had to [do], and you had to write it out. You had to write down where you were going," Mary Jorgensen '66 shared.

"So a lot of us signed out to Koren library... that was acceptable to do. But once we got out of the dorm, after seven o'clock, we didn't always go where we said we were going to go... Women who wanted to smoke would sign out for the library, they would go to Koren, put their stuff on the table and then go outside. And behind Koren there are lots of trees and bushes and so girls would go out behind these trees and they'd sit there and be smoking away. And so Koren was central to social life and illegal smoking."<sup>68</sup>



Cartoon in the March 25, 1966 Chips criticizing double standard rules that women students had to follow, including no smoking.

While she did not smoke, Jorgensen saw the rule as being a double standard and was inspired to run (and was elected) for women's student government to represent the freshman class. "Koren played a big part in that because that was where women could legitimately leave the dorm and do something that was against the rules...Koren got me started thinking about the double standard and the unfairness, the injustice of it."<sup>69</sup>

Eventually, there was enough pushback and negotiation that these rules were dropped, due in part to student protest and in part to increased opportunities for students to participate in college governance.<sup>70</sup> Social dancing was permitted beginning in the fall of 1962.<sup>71</sup> Rules against intervisitation, women's hours, and women's smoking were eventually lifted as well.<sup>72</sup>



Students sitting in the Union during the women's hours protest, March 5, 1968.



Union Director Paul Hjelle asking demonstrators to leave the building, March 5, 1968.



Students debating during the women's hours protest, March 5, 1968.

## A Liberal Arts Education

Interviewer: How did you go from getting a biology major to going to seminary?

Steven Jacobsen: The war in Vietnam. I had hoped to go on to do some graduate work in microbiology. But that was not a way. I was number 32 in the draft...I don't know if you knew there were lotteries back then. I was going to go and I was opposed to the war. And a number of my friends had been killed in Vietnam, and some of them had gone to jail, and some of them that fled to Canada. And the reason I went to the seminary was not that I was particularly called to be a pastor. But I figured if I could hang out in the seminary for a year, maybe the draft would be over and the war would end. So I just was hiding there for a year and all of a sudden realized I had a call.

Interviewer: The Lord works in mysterious ways.

Steven Jacobsen: Well, if you want to call a war in Vietnam mysterious, you're right on sister.

## The Unexpected E.D. Farwell

Elwin D. Farwell did not fit the traditional mold of Luther College presidents, being neither of Norwegian descent nor a graduate of Luther. His background was in animal husbandry, which he taught for eight years at Michigan State before becoming interested in higher education administration.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Buck, as he was known, would end up presiding over an era of significant growth and change at the college. "Very soon, it was also to become clear that the new president liked to dream big dreams for his college," Leigh Jordahl and Harris Kaasa wrote about Farwell, "and that his optimism was, for the most part, contagious."<sup>74</sup>

Continued growth of the faculty and student body required new facilities to accommodate them all. He oversaw new dormitories, including Ylvisaker Hall (1964), Dieseth Hall (1966), and Miller Hall (1968). The Field House, completed in 1964, and Carlson Stadium (1966), provided new athletic facilities to replace Preus Gymnasium and Nustad Field. Preus Library, the final building project of the 1960s, opened its doors in the fall of 1969. Farwell's most memorable building project, however, would



*President Elwin D. Farwell in his office, 1964.*

be the Center for Faith and Life. Completed in 1977, it was a years-long endeavor often referred to as "Farwell's Folly."

Campus development was only one part of his tenure. Farwell's presidency saw the establishment of the Paideia and J-Term programs, increased study abroad opportunities, Nordic Choir's first international tour, the development of women's athletics due to Title IX, and the creation of the Community Assembly, which included students in campus governance. He also grappled with the sociopolitical tensions of the age, working to foster dialogue surrounding issues of race, gender, and sexuality.<sup>75</sup>

Farwell and his wife Helen worked tirelessly to build community at Luther and within the Decorah. Wilfred Bunge, Dale Nimrod, and Mary Hull Mohr wrote that the Farwells would respond to births, deaths, anniversaries, and other important moments with "a personal note, flowers, visits, and, in Helen's case, a signature loaf of sourdough bread."<sup>76</sup> The Farwells are remembered fondly by those who knew them.



*Helen Farwell receiving a Norwegian bunad, undated.*

## A New Library

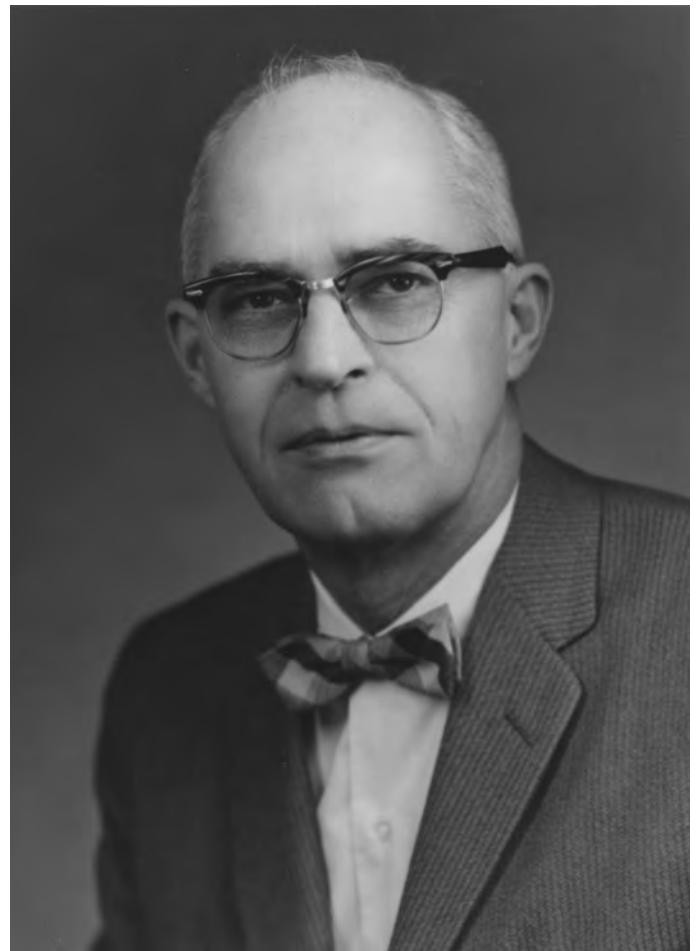
During the final years of his career at Luther, Karl T. Jacobsen observed that the future of Koren Library would require an expansion or a new building. "If adequate library facilities are to be provided for a student body of a maximum of 600, it is essential that the building be remodeled," he wrote in his 1945/1946 annual report. "If an even larger student body than that is to be provided for, a more extensive plan, possibly involving a new structure, must be considered."<sup>77</sup> In 1963, fourteen years after Jacobsen's retirement, the Luther College Board of Regents passed a resolution making the construction of a new library the next building project.<sup>78</sup> Jacobsen's successor, Oivind M. Hovde, chaired the building committee and got right to work.

The new library, which would become known as Preus Library, is arguably the greatest achievement of Hovde's tenure as Head Librarian. Hovde worked closely with architect Donald Gray to design a building that would be flexible and functional. Their designs were influenced by hours spent attending American Library Association conferences on new construction, visiting other academic libraries, and getting feedback from students, faculty, and staff. The result was a 100,000 square foot mid-century modern building that seated 900 students and held 300,000 volumes, anticipating an enrollment of 2,500.<sup>79</sup> By contrast, Koren had been designed for 84 students, 80,000 volumes, and an enrollment of 300.<sup>80</sup>

Instead of a reading room with separate stacks only accessible to staff, the new library would have centrally-located open stacks, with student study spaces around the edges, allowing users to retrieve books without disturbing those working. Another key feature was a deliberate lack of interior walls. Hovde had firsthand experience seeing how library needs changed over time in Koren, and believed that having few interior walls would allow future librarians to reorganize the space as needed.

Hovde was not only involved in the design of the new library - he also put a piece of himself in the building's new cornerstone. He was an avid golfer, according to his children and former library staff members, who remembered Wednesday as golf day.<sup>81</sup> According to his son, Peter Hovde '63, Oivind had saved the golf ball from his one hole-in-one, which was reported on in the Decorah newspapers. The night before the cornerstone for the new library was to be laid, Hovde placed that ball and a copy of the newspaper article inside. Presumably, they remain there to this day.<sup>82</sup>

When it came time to move to the new library, it was all hands on deck for the Hovde family. Oivind's son, David Hovde, recounted his arduous experience of moving books from



*Oivind Hovde, Luther Head Librarian, undated.*



*Preus Library, undated.*

Koren to Preus. Each part of the crew would try to move a shelf at a time, taking the books down the rickety freight elevator and placing them on book trucks, before driving over to the new library, unloading the books, and making sure that they were properly organized in their new home. Even before they began the move David had some previous experience with the freight elevator because he loved repeatedly riding the elevator as a child, much to the chagrin of the librarians.<sup>83</sup>

"Hovde used to say there were three requirements for a good library," Jordahl and Kaasa wrote, "a well trained staff; a carefully chosen collection; and a functional, efficient building. He already had the first two. With Preus Library, he ensured the third."<sup>84</sup>

## Students Moving the Library

When Koren Library first opened, squads of students assisted Karl Jacobsen with moving books into the new space. This tradition carried on when it came time to move into Preus Library.

Kurt Leichtle '70 remembered moving boxes of books with his service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega. "We were carting books back and forth for a good few days," he shared. "We'd load them up, wheel them over, go inside, put them on shelves, and it certainly saved the college a lot of money."<sup>85</sup> Moving the library gave members a sense of what books were in the library and where they were. "The chapter had a very firm sense of what the library collection looked like after having moved it," he remembered. "So students helped by [saying] 'Oh yeah, I remember there were books about that in there!'"<sup>86</sup> Kay Nickelsen

'69 also remembered packing up books for the big move as a student worker.<sup>87</sup>

The librarians had deliberately organized the book moving process by ordering boxes that could fit an entire shelf's worth of books in them. "The traditional method of moving books in those days was to get beer cartons and put them in beer cases because they were sturdy," Duane Fenstermann recalled in a 1994 interview. He and Hovde went on a search for the perfect box, which they eventually found, and then explained the moving process: "In Koren we would fill up a box, a student team would carry it over to Preus, and it would go directly to the shelf that it was designated to go on."<sup>88</sup>

Duane Fenstermann, retired Acquisitions Librarian, documented the process of moving into Preus Library during May 1969. He generously digitized his photos and donated a copy to the Luther College Archives, along with detailed descriptions of the images. Thanks, Duane!



*Student workers loading boxes of books into a pickup truck for delivery to Preus Library, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*



*Student workers carrying boxes of books out north door of Koren Library, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*



*Four student movers in the Periodical Shelving Room by Leona Alsaker's desk, 2nd floor of Koren Library, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*



Student workers placing boxes of books at a pickup truck pickup place on High Street, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Two students carrying a box of books, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Students moving microfilm cabinets, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Student workers unloading a pickup load, carrying boxes across unfinished landscaping, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Unidentified student workers unloading boxes of books and carrying them into Preus, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Two students carrying a box of books, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Three student workers waiting for a pickup to arrive with another load of books, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



Leona Alsaker, Reference Librarian, and student carrying box of books in Book Stack Area, May 1969. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.



## Life in Koren Library

While Koren bore witness to several major historical events during its time as a library, the building was also full of energy in its day-to-day life. "I like the sounds of that building," Marty Bergsrud '64 said. "On the marble floors, you know, you'd hear the footsteps. And then to the right was the open staircase, with wide steps and this big, long railing. And the banister, it was tempting, but I never dared slide down the banister, which others did! Haha!"<sup>89</sup>

Luther community members vividly recalled their favorite personal memories of Koren in interviews. They reminisced about favored study spots, student-work experiences, and lifelong relationships that began in the library.



*Staircase in Koren prior to renovations in 1980s, undated.*

## Studious Space

Koren Library served as an academic center of Luther College. For many, Koren Library was a quiet environment conducive to learning. Richard Ylvisaker '50 explained that some classes would put materials on reserve in the Koren reading room, alongside essential reference materials that populated the reading room walls.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, Rolfe Nervig '60 recalled that he spent much of his time in Koren because of the studious atmosphere. According to Nervig, the reading room was pleasant for light studying but individual study carrels scattered throughout the stacks provided a quieter space for concentrated study.<sup>91</sup>

Though Koren was supposed to be a quiet place to study, that did not mean that everything was calm and peaceful. As is still the case today, students would compete for the best study tables, going so far as to reserve their study spaces before dinner by dropping their books



*Photo of students studying in the reading room of Koren Library, undated.*

on library tables. Wendy Tessman Stevens '69 recalled subverting study space claims; while she wouldn't move other students' materials, she did remember strategically identifying which study spaces had 100 watt bulbs and which lamps had only 60 watt bulbs. If Wendy was setting up her study space near a lamp with a 60 watt bulb, she would look around for a student who had abandoned their spot to get dinner and she would swap her 60 watt bulb for their 100 watt bulb while they were gone.<sup>92</sup>

When it came to study spaces, it paid to be an upperclassman. For many years, only seniors and juniors were granted "stack permits," or permission to enter the stacks to retrieve books. Earning a stack permit required being instructed by a librarian. Seniors also had access to special study carrels scattered throughout the library.<sup>93</sup> In 1954, Head Librarian Oivind Hovde permitted all students, regardless of year, to apply for a stack permit, hoping that students could then see for themselves all that the library had to offer.<sup>94</sup> Regardless of the changing open stacks policy, special study spaces continue to be reserved for seniors.

While Koren Library was primarily a research library, some students were still able to find books that were not applicable to classes but aligned with their personal interests. Anthony Preus '58 fondly remembered a special shelf housed in Koren where professors and students could unofficially leave used paperback books that they no longer wanted in exchange for



*A woman student studies at a desk in the Koren Library stacks, undated.*

taking any interesting books already on the shelf. According to Preus, books he found on that shelf significantly broadened his perspective and directed his academic interests beyond his classes.<sup>95</sup>

Some students were perhaps a bit too studious, as was the case with Wilfred Bunge '53. When Wilfred was attending Luther, the library would close for chapel and sporting events to allow people to attend. Leading up to one such game, Wilfred was working on a school project in the library. When the library closing was announced, Wilfred chose to stay and continue working on his project. Hours later, Wilfred finished his project and got ready to leave the library. Only, when he tried to open the doors to get out of the library, he learned that he had been locked inside! Without a cell phone or other means of communicating his predicament, Wilfred took matters into his own hands and eventually found a classroom window to crawl out of, successfully escaping the library and evading disciplinary action.<sup>96</sup> Another student, Roald Nelson, was less fortunate. He was locked in the stacks one evening and his encounter was memorialized in the 1954 *Pioneer*.<sup>97</sup>



*Two students sitting at a desk, studying in Koren Library, undated.*

## Free Food in the Library?

Professor Chellis Evanson was a huge proponent of Koren Library, encouraging his students to use it. We have come across a couple of instances of Dr. Evanson telling students they could find "meat and potatoes" in the history section. The 1954 Pioneer mentions that there were a couple of sophomores "still looking for the

'meat and potatoes' Dr. Evanson promised would materialize in the history section."<sup>98</sup> While Dr. Evanson was certainly using it as a metaphor to tell students that substantial evidence of history could be found in the books, it is well known that the best way to get college students to attend anything is to offer them free food.

## Library Student Workers

Then as today, students played an important role working as assistants in the Koren Library. Student assistants helped check library materials in and out, reshelved books, prepared newly-purchased books for circulation, demonstrated the use of microfilm machines, and answered incoming calls regarding book availability and library services. A 1967 *Procedure Manual for Student Assistants* outlines the responsibilities of student assistants, impressing upon students the importance of their work. "We wish to stress that your position is one of trust and responsibility," the manual states. "We like to have you feel that you are a part of the administrative services of Luther College, and as such you have a responsibility to take the work seriously and carry out your assignments with dignity and efficiency."<sup>99</sup>

For some students, library work served as an enjoyable part-time job, a way to meet new people, and a chance to do some light reading. Shirley Fjoslien '61 enjoyed meeting new people as a student library assistant. Her work allowed her to help other students locate relevant research materials; however, her late shifts in the library also left time for her to grab a few children's books from the curriculum library, preparing her well for her future work as a teacher. While she liked most of her work, Fjoslien did not care to shelve books at night because the stacks were spooky.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Connie Kronlokken '66 found her library work agreeable because she had the chance to explore the stacks while reshelving books and to appreciate Koren's large arched windows while organizing the reading room.<sup>101</sup> Kay Nikelsen enjoyed watching people come



*Student Assistant entering data on the keypunch machine. February 2, 1968. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*



*Acquisitions Department Student Assistant, seated next to Pamela Teslow, at Pamela's desk. Pamela placed orders for books and other media approved for ordering, checked in the books when they arrived, and kept the bookkeeping records about the orders and Acquisitions budget. This space was also in the Technical Services Room. February 2, 1968. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*

and go during her morning shifts at the circulation desk, although she recalled always hoping the next worker would show up. "If they didn't, you had to stay!" she said. "And that happened a couple times."<sup>102</sup>

Not everyone was excited to work in the library. In the 1940s, students who wanted to work at the library worked as unpaid interns for half the semester before they could officially start working for 60 cents an hour. As Wilfred Bunge shared, "I was going to be approved for work. And then Mr. Hovde, he told me that I wouldn't be paid for the first half of the semester. And I decided that was not a very good deal. I was going to find work elsewhere, which I did eventually then. But it was only at the library that this policy applied. Karl Jacobsen, the earlier librarian, very conservative fellow. And he probably thought that was appropriate, but you had to serve an internship before you can get a paid position as a student worker. So I never did end up working at the library."<sup>103</sup>



*Student Assistant preparing data for entry into the union list via the keypunch machine, working in a corner of the Technical Services Room, Koren Library. February 2, 1968. Taken by Duane Fenstermann.*

## Curriculum Library

An academic library on a college campus is not the first place one would think to look for a collection of children's and young adult books. However, that is exactly what could be found on the first floor of Koren Library.

Education courses had been available at Luther College since 1865. In fact, from 1865-1886, Luther offered what was called the "normal course" for students intending to be teachers.<sup>104</sup> When Luther officially became coeducational in 1936, courses specifically for elementary education were introduced to the curriculum. To support students training to be teachers, Luther needed appropriate textbooks and teacher manuals.

The Curriculum Library was established in Koren Library in 1950. According to Luther's state accreditation application, the education department gave the library "a collection of about 400 elementary and secondary school textbooks to form the beginning of a Curriculum Library."<sup>105</sup> The new collection was moved into a room of its own on the first level of Koren. Within the year, the librarians had both updated and expanded the collection to about 1000 items, created a vertical file of useful images and pamphlets, added films and recordings useful for teachers, and established "a steadily growing collection of elementary and secondary school library books" that "represents a sample library of the best children's and juvenile literature."<sup>106</sup> One elementary education major, Shirley Fjoslien, recalled "I think by the time I was a senior I had read every children's book we had in the library!"<sup>107</sup>

While the Koren Library was built for undergraduate students to use, students were not the only ones who could be found wandering in the library. In the early days of the library, many children like John Nelson '58 and Karl Jacobsen '72 enjoyed running through the stacks and searching for children's books. Of course, the stacks can be an intimidating maze for children, as evidenced by

Peter Hovde's memory of getting lost in the stacks. "I guess it was a Saturday or a Sunday, there were no other people in the building," he recalled, " and he [Oivind Hovde] left Marty and me in the stacks, and we roamed around and we suddenly realized that we didn't know where we were because every floor looked the same, and we started wailing and crying and Dad came to rescue us."<sup>108</sup>

Nelson recalled that Mrs. Vera Harris, who worked at the library, would help him find books, but also reminded him and his friends alike that they were not to run in the stacks. Still, frequent reminders from a librarian cannot completely stymie children's capacity for mischief in a library.<sup>109</sup> Even as the son of the head librarian, David Hovde recalled being regularly shushed as a child because he was making too much noise. Still, with volumes such as *Robinson Crusoe*, the curriculum library piqued the interest of many visitors, students and children.<sup>110</sup> The Curriculum Library still exists today on the lower level of Preus Library.



*Students studying in the Curriculum Library of Koren, undated.*

## Choosing a Major

Many alumni fondly remember the friendliness of their professors, and their professors' willingness to provide advice. Karen Johnson Engelhardt '64 even added a major based on a chance conversation with one of her professors. "Professor Leland was a history prof at Luther when I- he was my favorite history Prof. And he saw me walking across campus one afternoon and caught up to me and said, 'Johnson, what are you majoring in?' And I said, 'elementary ed,' and he said, 'What if you don't like it?' And I, I never thought about not liking it."<sup>111</sup> Eventually, Karen went on to double major in elementary education and history. She credits Luther for having professors who take a vested interest in their students as individuals.

## Gallery of Gausta

During the time that the Koren building was used as a library, the third floor was primarily home to an art gallery and lounge. John Nelson has fond memories of climbing the stairs to the art gallery with his childhood friends and thinking that it was a peculiar and exotic place because of the Herbjorn Gausta paintings, which were unlike anything that he had seen around Decorah at the time.<sup>112</sup>

Overcrowding of the Reading Room required creative problem solving, and this floor was eventually turned into a space for students to access periodicals. The Gausta paintings remained on the floor for a time. Today, several Gausta paintings are still on display around the Luther College campus.



*Museum gallery space on the third floor of Koren, undated. A number of Gausta portraits, including those of Rev. U.V. and Elisabeth Koren, can be seen hanging on the wall.*



*Four students studying on the third floor of Koren, which had been taken over for a study space*

## Library Shenanigans

Where students are gathered, pranks will inevitably happen. From sliding down the staircase banister to strapping beer cans to the Martin Luther statue in front of the library, students managed to bring Koren into various shenanigans throughout the years.<sup>113</sup>

The Martin Luther statue just outside of Koren was the target of numerous pranks, generally involving alcohol. Solveig Sperati Korte '74 recalled bottles of whiskey being left in the statue's arms "on a fairly regular basis."<sup>114</sup> Anthony Preus also remembered "strategically located" cans of beer on the statue.<sup>115</sup> The statue also was painted on occasion and decorated for his namesake's birthday.



*Statue of Martin Luther with a rubber dart between the eyes, undated.*



## Romance in the Stacks

In October of 1959, Luther Chips published an article calling Koren "The Dating House."<sup>119</sup> The stacks were designed as a space for reading, researching, and studying, but that did not stop some students from using the stacks for less academic purposes. Some alumni remember rumors of students making out in the stacks and others recollect that the stacks were a great place for potential lovers to meet up. Kent Finanger '54 remembered going straight to Koren after dinner to spend time with his girlfriend; they would spend the evening in the library till ten, which was the women's curfew at the time.<sup>120</sup>

One of our more creative alumni even used the stacks as part of his strategy to catch the attention of another student. Richard Boyum reminisced that he once had the brilliant idea to send his crush on a scavenger hunt through the stacks. He hid personal information about himself in different books; if the girl he was interested in was able to find the right books, she would get different clues and information about Richard, eventually finding his name and SPO number. Richard's thinking was that if his crush was interested in him, she would then have a way to reach out.<sup>121</sup>

While Richard has moved on from his library crush, he was not the only student using the library as a place to meet romantic partners. Alumni Solveig Sperati Korte also shared the story of her parents first meeting in Koren. According to Solveig, her father wanted to talk to the cute woman working at the front desk, but was too shy to approach without a reason. Using the excuse of an abbreviation he ran across while doing research, Solveig's father convinced her mother to help him figure out what the abbreviation meant. Koren holds a special place in Solveig's heart because without Koren, she would not be here.<sup>122</sup> Similarly, Richard and Dorthea Lind '62 remember Koren as an important spot to spend time together, particularly when Richard was at seminary and Dorthea was enrolled at Luther. They would spend their weekends in Koren, trying to study but getting distracted because "you are falling in love with somebody and you don't see them, you only see them every other weekend".<sup>123</sup>

## The First Library Lawn

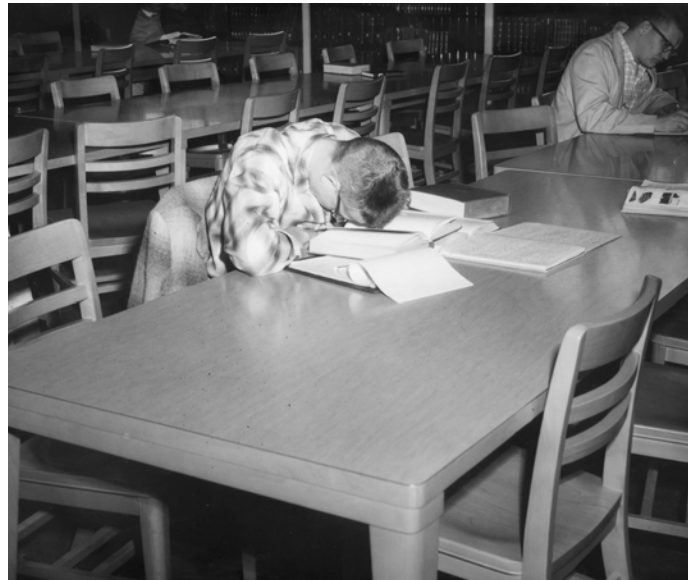
Today, the Bentsdahl Commons provide an outdoor space to study, eat, and relax. However, before Preus Library was built, Bentsdahl Commons was the location of the sports fields. The communal outdoor space was found outside the Koren Library. Similar to how Bentsdahl Commons are used today, the green outside of Koren was a popular spot to meet and relax. Nola Nackerud '72, remembered freshman orientation being held outside Koren Library, simultaneously introducing the newcomers to Koren Library and to Luther's green space.<sup>124</sup> Some people gained more than just a knowledge of the Luther campus at these orientation events; Russell Loven met his wife for the first time at one.<sup>125</sup>

## End of an Era

As the last boxes of books were carted across campus, the era of Koren Library came to an end. After years of increasingly crowded work and studying conditions, Luther faculty, staff, and students finally had some breathing room and no longer needed to fight over study spaces. This was not, however, the end of Koren's story. In our next issue, we will look at the many roles Koren played during the 1970s and 1980s, as it served as a chapel and performance space while also housing new departments such as nursing and anthropology.



# *Students Studying at Koren Library*



## Endnotes

### Introduction

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