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Library Seminar, 5/1/70

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Notes: Originals on 7 inch reels. Master and circulation copies on CD.

Howard Cutler starts with a joke about a bus driver who sat in the first pew at church. The minister asks him why he sat in the first row and the bus driver responds that he is trying to learn the minister's technique of how he got people to move to the back of the bus. Mr. Cutler urges audience members who are sitting in the back to move to the front.

Mr. Cutler announces that he is going to take advantage of his position as chairman to say a few words about the library, because he feels so intimately connected with it. He says it is fitting that it is named after scholarly Mr. Rasmuson because the library represents the center of scholarship. The growth of libraries is associated with the president of the institution at the particular time. Mr. Cutler feels that Dr. Wood has helped build the university and the library. He speaks of how George Adams was the chairman of the first committee that met to consider the defining the functions of the library and the dimensions of its needs. The committee continued to meet and a consultant, Don Davidson from the University of California, Santa Barbara, was brought in. Mr. Cutler then met Ted Ryberg and convinced him to help with the development of the library. Years passed while the library was being planned. People's hopes rose and fell. Mr. Cutler met with Bill O'Neill and Ben Atkinson to help with planning, and then went to Washington to find a former teacher of his and Bill Woods', Professor John Ashton of Indiana University, who happened to be in charge of delegating funds for the building of libraries. Mr. Cutler feels that it was Professor Ashton's close contact with Bill Wood that made it possible to get a fund commitment a year in advance. This was in the last weeks of John Ashton's being in office and the approval for the library funds may even be the last thing he signed while in office.

Ted Ryberg and Paul McCarthy worked on an appeal and proposal to the Office of Education. Though the Office of Education just cares for facts in such reports, Mr. Ryberg and Mr. McCarthy produced a document not just about what the library volume size and circulation size were but also containing their hopes and dreams of what should be to properly support the academic and research programs of the University. The document was such a beautiful, inspiring and full presentation of the Clapp-Jordan formula for library needs and construction, that the chairman of the investigatory committee from Washington who was sent to review it stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning reading it. This report made it possible to get some funds, other funds were donated by the people of the state of Alaska.

Mr. Cutler turns to the subject of the seminar: uses and abuses of the library. He calls upon Dr. George Worthington Adams to speak on the subject. Dr. Adams says he would first like to make a short speech. He says although Mr. Cutler portrayed him as an active participant in the planning of the library, he was really not. Dr. Adams tells an amusing anecdote of doing "homework" to prepare for this seminar. Dr.

Adams feels that mankind deserves libraries, but it seems that “the people who use libraries are getting nastier and nastier as the libraries get better and better and it’s driving the librarians up the wall.” He says that he is aware as a professor, that if he assigns reading in a magazine, someone will clip the article out of the library’s copy. He thought to himself that this is man’s lazy nature, wishing to read the article not in the library, but at home. He then learned that mankind is even more devious than he had thought; a student will clip the article out so as to seem more clever and knowledgeable than their classmates because other students will not be able to do the reading as it is missing from the library.

Dr. Adams adds that another serious abuse of the library is the disappearance of books. He recalls that when he was a graduate student at Harvard in the late ‘20s and early ‘30s, books were not checked out and people walked freely in and out of the library with them. After serious book losses, they put in a turnstile and started checking out books. It was discovered that a middle aged grad student had stolen more than 4,000 very choice volumes from the library and filled his house with them. Dr. Adams says he believes that the technology that is coming into libraries, including Xeroxes, tapes, films, will be a good way to help guard against such abuses.

Dr. Adams finishes his speech and Mr. Cutler comments that it was rather a pessimistic view of mankind that was presented. He says that he, too, is becoming concerned about things that are going on, joking that he recently read that the school “will be closed for altercations” and that “clashes will be resumed tomorrow as usual.” He then calls upon John Boyd, a graduate student in geophysics, to speak about uses and abuses of the library.

John says that it seems the main feature and most desired quality that everyone would like to see in a library is free access. The requirement however must be balanced with the practical problem of how to achieve that access. He says it might be useful to separate, in their discussion, the main aims of the library, including issues of access, and the practical aspects, including expenses. He says that if he was a legislator that came and looked at the library he would wonder what use the library is being put to. He feels that obsolescent material in libraries is a problem and that it is necessary to make sure that the right equipment, books and facilities are in the library. John feels that periodicals, the access to periodicals, and the continuing expense of periodicals are areas that merit some attention.

Mr. Cutler calls upon Peter Ray to provide a different perspective, as President of Research and Advanced Study. Mr. Ray says that it was reported to him by a dean that the dean had been approached in his office by a student who wished to have some recognition perhaps “sine laude” for the fact that he had completed his bachelor’s degree and graduated from the university without once entering the library. Mr. Ray says that this is clearly not use of the library, and he is not sure whether or not it is abuse of the library. He says that in this modern age we are developing an incredible “hang-up” about libraries. There is a feeling that books must all be gathered in some simple repository and the consumer has the convenience or inconvenience of reading them there. Mr. Ray thinks that it is important that the collection must be diversified and made more accessible to the consumer. Mr. Ray does not entirely agree with Mr. Adams that new technology will economize or reduce pilferage. He jokes that instead of stealing books, people will steal TV consoles.

Mr. Cutler thanks Mr. Ray and mentions that graduating without using the library is a new anti-intellectualism protest that he had not encountered, similar to burning one's library card, a protest which he had heard of. He calls upon the present Academic Vice President, Donald R. Theophilus.

Mr. Theophilus says there are two things he would like to point out: firstly, the influence of and use of technology in libraries and its implications, including psychological implications and secondly, that increasing in future libraries are going to have to justify the allocations or resources allotted to them. Historically, he says, libraries have been equated with God and motherhood and that this has given them a *carte blanche* to funds. The means to measure the usefulness and effectiveness of libraries will have to be developed.

Mr. Cutler jokes that Mr. Theophilus has an easy job if it is only Ted Ryberg who acts as if he has a *carte blanche*. Mr. Cutler says that *all* the deans behave that way toward him! Mr. Cutler asks Professor Gordon Wright of Department of Music, and conductor of the University of Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Wright says that he will defend the anachronism of the book; he is a book collector. He very much loves books and is not sure that he loves the Xerox Corporation. He feels that the university has an obligation to provide a center for the book, as a symbol of entire educational history. He says that books are here for the people and the library administration would do well to educate the faculty on proper use of the library, and the faculty would in turn educate the students. He says that as a newcomer, he is terribly impressed with the library.

Mr. Cutler says he is surprised that a man so involved with music would defend the books in the library so strongly as opposed to records and tapes in the library. He says this brings up the issue of the exact definition of the library which will be an interesting topic to discuss a little later on. He introduces Ms. Linda Welch, an undergraduate majoring in speech pathology.

Ms. Welch says that "library" has different meaning for different students: some are in awe, some stay away, some are proud. She feels that students don't know what is in the library, not only materials-wise, but that they do not know about the lounge areas of the library. She feels that an effort should be made to make the library more the center of campus life and make the library more appealing as a place of knowledge and learning.

Mr. Cutler thanks Ms. Welch and introduces Earl Beistline, Dean of the College of Earth Sciences and Mineral Industries. Mr. Beistline thanks Mr. Cutler and jokes that his first thought was that with Howard Cutler at the seminar, there would be no need for any other speaker to talk as they wouldn't be able to get a word in edgewise. Mr. Beistline then starts speaking about one of his earliest memories of the University of Alaska. The tape ends abruptly.