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Portrait of a Collector: Reflections on an Influential Bibliophile

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Introduction

When Minor Myers, jr. was a candidate for the presidency of Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) one of the lasting impressions he left in several search committee members' memories was his knowledge of liberal arts colleges in the United States. The fact that he was a collector did not emerge as a significant characteristic then, but his fascination with higher education extended to a large personal collection of publications from universities. His knowledge was gained, at least in part, due to this collection which he considered significant enough to list on his curriculum vitae (CV).

Myers' CV is still available on the University's commemoration Web pages,¹ and among his accomplishments and associations he lists:

Collections: Books, especially Eighteenth century books (significant groupings in political philosophy, music, gardening, cookery), decorative arts, nineteenth century cookery. Musical instruments of the eighteenth century. College related materials, though my earlier group of 11,000 items once in the American Antiquarian Society is now part of the Illinois Wesleyan University Library.²

Recreations: numismatics, harpsichord, piano, tennis.

Those are a modest summary of Myers' personal interests. In the decorative arts, he collected antique furniture, china, and silver. Additional collections included autographs, books with inscriptions, coins, Japanese prints, meteorites, stamps and N-gauge model trains. One other recreation involved illustrating stories from his family's history in Ohio through buildings he created and placed along his model train railroad tracks.

People interviewed for this project have strong memories of Myers' many interests. Although the types of things Myers collected are varied, the energy he devoted to collecting is most tangible in the growth of his personal book collection during his tenure as IWU's president. A local news

¹ Minor Myers, jr., "Curriculum Vitae [of] Minor Myers, jr.," *IWU News*, accessed April 16, 2016. <https://www.iwu.edu/~iwunews/Myers/vitae.html>. All of the Commemoration pages still exist independently on IWU's Web site at <https://www.iwu.edu/~iwunews/Myers/minoradd.html>. Print copies are held in Record Group 2-17/7: In Memoriam. Tate Archives & Special Collections, The Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois.

Note: For the remainder of this paper, the repository location for the "Record Group" citations will not be repeated: all are held in the same repository at IWU.

² The donation Myers mentioned is of publications that were issued serially like course catalogs, alumni profiles, and financial reports. After processing, this collection was reduced to a little over 9,500 volumes due to problems with condition like mold and moisture damage. In 2016, this collection was selected for withdrawal from Tate Archives & Special Collections, The Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University.

story, printed in July 1989, his first month on campus, says that he possesses “3,000 titles from the [18th century].”³ On his death 14 years later, the total number of books and ephemera the University acquired from his collection was nearly 12,000.

The purpose of this essay is to bring together disparate information on Myers’ book collecting habits. President Myers used both the objects of his collecting and the intellectual ideas they represent in the course of his presidential responsibilities. This work offers an overview solely of this aspect of Myers’ activities, in both written records and oral histories, and is not an attempt to analyze the entire arc of Myers’ tenure.

The following contains an overview of this project, a summary of collectors’ characteristics, generally, and an exploration of the specific type of collector Myers was based both on documentary evidence and on interviews. Appended to this work are citations for publications in which Myers discusses his book collections, a list of the interview participants, and comments about Myers and his books from people who did not participate in formal interviews. A separate essay⁴ contains an analysis of the portion of Myers’ collections that IWU acquired, the items selected for retention in The Ames Library, and an account of the auction held at IWU in 2005 to disperse the rest of the collection.

Project background & methodology

People frequently offer anecdotes to me about Myers and his collecting interests. The stories about his influence on the University library’s collections also circulate and surface periodically among the staff to this day. A sabbatical leave made it possible for me to actively begin collecting these stories. By documenting these anecdotes and analyzing how Myers’ interests influenced the people around him, a record of both his life as a collector and the ways his activities influenced others will be available in the future.

I sent formal request letters for interviews to Myers’ son, Minor III, who several people recommended as the family’s liaison; key campus personnel from the Myers’ era; and booksellers and auction attendees. I also requested information about Myers’ pre-IWU activities and additional contacts from archivists at his two previous institutions (Hobart and William Smith and Connecticut College) and his two alma maters (Carleton College and Princeton University). With assistance from IWU staff, my electronic messages went out through four bulk distribution outlets: the alumni network, the University-wide e-newsletter *Campus Weekly*, and to the faculty and staff listservs. Additionally, I posted a message through the *ExLibris* electronic message list for book dealers, collectors, and librarians. Finally, I asked each person interviewed for referrals to others, and the ones that yielded responses enhanced the breadth of this project due to the subjects’ associations with Myers in non-IWU settings.

As a result of this outreach, I recorded 65 oral history interviews and received 26 written anecdotes about Myers and his collections. Three interview subjects requested that their

³ Susan Marquardt, “President Brings Humor, Experience to Wesleyan Job.” *Pantagraph* (Bloomington), July 18, 1989, A2.

⁴ Meg Miner, *Portrait of a Collector: A View from the Shelves of Minor Myers, jr.*, accessed October 21, 2016. http://works.bepress.com/meg_miner/28.

recordings be withheld from future use and a few did not return the interview release form. Comments from those individuals informed my findings but will not be available for future use. One person placed a time limited embargo on his recording that nevertheless makes it possible to release upon request directly to him.

Initial questions developed for interview participants focused on Myers' collecting habits, but other recollections emerged about Myers as a person and as a leader. Indeed, people offered more information than is summarized here and so these interviews provide new avenues for understanding Myers.

One limitation to the future value of this approach is that people self-selected in response to a specific request. My call for participants did not explicitly invite all perspectives of Myers and while nearly everyone who responded provided positive remarks, some who served under him tempered their positive views with reflections on the effects of his presidency as seen in the ensuing years. No doubt the people who do not have knowledge of his collecting interests would broaden the points of view collected during this project, so anyone interested in comprehensively analyzing Myers' tenure should seek additional input. Nevertheless, all interviews, with only the few exceptions noted above, will be transcribed and made available in the University Archives' Oral History collection.⁵ Consequently, this work holds the possibility for other research paths into Myers' life to emerge.

It goes without saying that Myers influenced the direction of Illinois Wesleyan University, but his attributes as a collector—always acquiring, enthusiastically chasing new interests, looking for connections among people and across history—contributed to a charismatic nature that drew people to him. It must also be stated that his presidency came at a time when IWU had a stability that enabled such a personality to thrive.

Classifying collectors

I was initially hired to work on Myers' college publications collection, and the first description I heard of him was that he was a bibliomaniac. A dictionary definition of this condition is, "An exaggerated liking for the ownership of books" with the next entry being *bibliophile*, "A lover of books" or "a collector of books."⁶ Myers was certainly the latter, but how can we evaluate what "an exaggerated liking" is? In British journalist Holbrook Jackson's comprehensive treatment of the subject, "bibliomaniacs *buy whatever comes in their way: buy their books at so much a yard*" [emphasis his].⁷

By most people's reckoning today, Myers fit all of those descriptions, but Jackson also insists that bibliomaniacs and the "true student and legitimate user of books" are too often conflated.

⁵ Illinois Wesleyan University Oral Histories, accessed May 22, 2016, <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oralhistory/>.

⁶ *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v., "bibliomania" and "bibliophile."

⁷ Jackson weaves quotes from other bookmen throughout his work and sets them off in italics. A search for the original failed to locate a copy for verification. George Augustus Sala, *Book Lore*. iv. 27, quoted in Holbrook Jackson, *The Anatomy of Bibliomania* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Co., [1950?]), 513.

Drawing on historical references, Jackson examines the distinguishing traits of “a bookman and a bookmaniac” throughout this work.⁸ There are no direct lines to Myers in Jackson’s remaining examples, but in at least some of the areas that fell within the scope of his collecting, Myers’ “exaggerated liking” became bibliomania.

Many who knew Myers thought he was unable to control his collecting impulses, and Myers himself apparently agreed. Robert Bray, who sometimes went to an area bookseller with Myers, recounts one conversation where Myers told him he thought his book buying was an illness, even though he said it in a “bemused” or “perplexed” way.⁹ Minor Myers III, characterized his father’s collecting as a “consumptive joy” in his life.¹⁰ Myers’ stated limits were the 18th century, so there was still a slightly narrower strategy at work than people believe, but he did not let even this broad criterion stop him from collecting something outside that range if it interested him.

Opinions of interview subjects who are collectors range from derisive to bewildered at the thought of anyone collecting what appeared to be unrelated objects, especially when many were in poor condition. These people share the common perception of what book collectors are *supposed* to do: choose a defined area of interest and collect the best condition, and most complete extent, of that particular interest.¹¹ Everyone agrees that Myers was not that kind of collector.

James Plath states that Myers was thrilled when he acquired something in good condition, but neither that nor the publication date were “a deal breaker if he found a unique item.”¹² American journalist Nicholas Basbanes advises a tempered, but still flexible, approach: “to know your limits, to work within a budget, and above all else to play with your head, not your gut.”¹³ According to Ellen Myers, her husband stretched his budget but did not spend beyond his means. She has a deep and abiding interest in decorative arts that she developed due to her husband’s interests, which she confirms were a fascination with “anything 18th century,” but she was not involved in his book collecting.¹⁴

Like some of the collectors who knew him, Myers was a bargain hunter and enjoyed the search for objects as much as their acquisition.¹⁵ An important aspect of this experience was paying careful attention to the price. Myers famously characterized himself as a collector by saying,

⁸ Ibid, 518-19.

⁹ Robert Bray, interviewed by the author, February 4, 2016.

¹⁰ Minor Myers III, interviewed by the author, March 12, 2016.

¹¹ Van Allen Bradley, *Gold in Your Attic* (New York: Fleet Publications, [1958]), 15. Advice on collecting is ubiquitous. The author chose to cite this particular book because it is in Myers collection of “books about books.”

¹² James Plath, interviewed by the author, April 8, 2016.

¹³ Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Among the Gently Mad* (New York: Holt, 2002), 5.

¹⁴ Ellen Myers, interviewed by the author, March 12, 2016.

¹⁵ See interviews with Robert Bray, Keith Crotz, Joy Doran, Greg Koos, Richard Nielsen, Roger Schnaitter, and Brian Simpson.

“Anything I can find eighteenth century—and cheap—I will buy.”¹⁶ Minor III notes an equally explicit attribute, recalling the phrase “bottom feeder” as his father’s other way of describing this criterion.¹⁷ Myers had a shared area of interest—cookbooks—with Greg Koos who also uses this phrase and says that they had a good-natured spirit of competition about who could pay the least for a desired book.¹⁸

On close examination, though, most of the books IWU acquired from his collection were published in the 20th century.¹⁹ As for prices paid, book receipts in Myers’ records show a broad range. Everyone who speaks of his purchasing habits agrees that, when presented with a choice, he purchased lesser quality volumes when it meant he could pay a lower price. In one confirmed instance, Myers proved himself a shrewd investor. He possessed at least one volume with considerable monetary value: a rare manuscript music piece, appraised by a dealer in 2003 at \$40-50,000 had a 1985 purchase price of \$250.²⁰ The year of Myers’ death that same volume was purchased by someone else and donated to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.²¹

Motivations for collecting

Several interview subjects thought Myers’ collecting impulses came from some need he was trying to fill in his life.²² Anthropologists, economists, marketers, psychologists and sociologists have written volumes on the topic. There is still some disagreement on Freudian interpretations of *why* people collect,²³ but there is agreement on the thrill-seeking, addictive nature of collecting.²⁴ At least three of Myers’ collecting peers commented on the thrill of collecting as a

¹⁶ Nicholas A. Basbanes, “Preserving the Creative Wisdom of the Past.” *Biblio*, May 1997, 9. A bibliography of sources that quote Myers regarding his collecting is in Appendix A.

¹⁷ Minor Myers III reports that his father wrote about his collecting habits during his illness. A copy of that document has not been made to the author available as of this writing.

¹⁸ Greg Koos, interviewed by the author, March 1, 2016.

¹⁹ Miner, *Portrait of a Collector: A View from the Shelves of Minor Myers, jr.*, p. 4.

²⁰ John Lubrano, interviewed by the author, February 29, 2016. Lubrano believes he appraised the volume and that it might have been acquired by Colonial Williamsburg. A subsequent search revealed that it had. The description of the original is “Peter Pelham Manuscript, Manuscript #MS 2003.7,” John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accessed March 31, 2016.

<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=cw/viwc00440.xml>. The receipt for the purchase from Goodspeed’s in Boston is among Myers’ personal papers in Special Collections: Box 2, folder “Books.”

²¹ A published facsimile edition is available in The Ames Library: *The Peter Pelham Manuscript of 1744 An Early American Keyboard Tutor*. Ed. by H. Joseph Butler. Colfax, NC: Wayne Leupold Editions, 2005. The Acknowledgments provides the names of the people who purchased the manuscript specifically to donate it. On p. 15 the editor cites Myers as its owner in 1980 after purchasing it from Goodspeed’s Bookstore in Boston. Butler is mistaken in the year of the purchase, as proven by the Goodspeed’s receipt found in Myers’ records.

²² See interviews with Robert Bray, Lisa Hillmer-Poole, Jim Routi, and Roger Schnaitter.

²³ Ruth Formanek finds fault with a series of studies based on Freud’s “biological drive model” because the researchers rely on “interpretation rather than direct observation.” Ruth Formanek, “Why They Collect: Collectors Reveal Their Motivations,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, edited by Susan M. Pearce, 327-29 and 334. London: Routledge, 1994. At about the same time, Werner Muensterberger looks for “an inner longing...the tension between the id and the ego” for explanations. Werner Muensterberger, “Passion, or the Wellsprings of Collecting,” *Collecting: An Unruly Passion*, 7. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

²⁴ Russell W. Belk, “Collectors and Collecting,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, edited by Susan M. Pearce, 319-20. London: Routledge, 1994.

trait that they shared with him.²⁵ However, this work is not an attempt at a psychological analysis. As a result of this study, I believe the *why* of Myers' collecting impulses is the least interesting of the threads running through his life that collecting represents. Some collectors I interviewed offered that there was no answer to that question to begin with,²⁶ but I will record what is known here for future reference.

Myers told *Argus* staff writer Sarah VanSickle that he began collecting because of his grandparents' interests in collecting and that his book collections started in high school. His interests in the 18th century developed during travels with his parents to American heritage sites such as Williamsburg, Philadelphia, and Boston.²⁷ He offered nearly the same explanation to Basbanes, expounding on his music interests and uses for that part of his collection as well as how he acquired some materials. Many collectors start out with a specific goal when looking for new materials; Myers often let serendipity guide him by acquiring "a pile of miscellaneous stuff" that he would then examine in order to identify interesting connections.²⁸

Myers' brother, Tom, elaborated on these collecting origin-stories in remarks he sent to the University following his brother's death. These included a story about an estate the family acquired, comprised of a lifetime's accumulations from the previous owner's many interests. Tom Myers wrote about "The Myers Museum" the siblings created as children, with Minor Myers, jr. serving as "primary curator," of the things they all discovered on the property.²⁹ Minor III also recalls this kind of curatorial nature, believing that bringing objects together into collections was more of a driving interest in his father's later years than the investment potential of what he collected. Minor III characterizes this as Myers' "British Museum" approach to collecting. By this he means that exploring some aspect of an era or area of interest through a kind of "encyclopedic" approach served to satisfy Myers' curiosity about the larger world.³⁰ One other person describes this characteristic as a deliberate strategy, too. Steve Seibring recalls that Myers adopted a practice early in his life of challenging himself to know a little about a lot of things and that he found it easy to learn and retain that knowledge.³¹

Myers' preservationist tendencies were closely tied to that approach. We know of his commitment to saving books both from him and from sellers and other collectors who knew him.³² In *Among the Gently Mad*, Basbanes quotes Myers on his attitude towards buying books. Myers had two rules: 1) to "buy the book...you are really looking for, and [*sic*] you just may

²⁵ See interviews with Greg Koos, Richard Nielsen, and James Plath.

²⁶ See interviews with Greg Koos, Richard Nielsen, James Plath, Brian Simpson and Jim White.

²⁷ Sarah VanSickle, "President's Shelves Collect More than Dust." *The Argus* (February 28, 1997): 5.

²⁸ Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Patience and Fortitude* (New York, Harper Collins, 2001), 174-79.

²⁹ Tom Myers, "Minor's Early Years," *IWU News*, accessed April 16, 2016.

<https://www.iwu.edu/~iwunews/Myers/tmyers.html>.

³⁰ Minor Myers III, interviewed by the author, March 12, 2016.

³¹ Steve Seibring, interviewed by the author, February 4, 2016.

³² Minor Myers, jr., memo to Sue Stroyan, August 7, 1995. Record Group 2-12/6/3: Library Collection (folder 4 of 4). See interviews with Joy Doran, Barbara Ford, Suan Guess-Hanson, Ellen Hurwitz, Minor Myers III, Richard Nielsen, Brian Simpson, and Jim White.

never see it again,” and 2) to buy “books that happen to strike your fancy....if you don’t buy them now, you will regret for years not having bought them when you had the chance.”³³ Sentiments about the buy-it-now-or-else strategy resonate with Minor III and Carl Teichman who both feel that preservation was an important factor in the quantity of books Myers ultimately amassed.³⁴ Although he was known to give books away and some were from his personal collections,³⁵ no one recalls that he sold books.

Methods of collecting

Not surprisingly for the pre-Internet age, Myers’ correspondence files for the first year of his presidency contain requests to many dealers for changes of address in order to continue receiving catalogs. These letters often include some personal detail that show Myers had cordial, established relationships with booksellers and others in the areas of interest listed in his CV.³⁶ John Lubrano, a dealer of antiquarian music, recalls working with Myers for 25 years and yet states that it was probable he never met Myers in person and instead received orders by phone or mail. This kind of relationship was not unusual for Lubrano who describes Myers’ methods as that of a “typical book collector.”³⁷ Specifically, one who has a particular interest and whose needs a dealer comes to understand over time without regard to distance.

Myers visited book stores in person as often as he could, and that included the places he traveled to for his IWU duties. There are even a few reports that Myers arranged such visits in order to shop in different places. According to several interview subjects, Myers either found out about stores in advance of his travels or asked for recommendations once he arrived at a destination.³⁸ Two Central Illinois booksellers, Keith Crotz of American Botanist Booksellers in nearby Chillicothe, Illinois; and Brian Simpson of Bloomington’s Babbitt’s Books offer insights into how Myers conducted visits closer to home.

In Keith Crotz’s case, Myers only visited the store one time but he also made many catalog purchases and requests by phone of 19th century American and British horticulture. As shown in the companion essay,³⁹ books on gardening were among Myers’ primary areas of interest. According to Crotz, Myers had a particular interest in the Phoenix Nursery and its owners which could mean that for his relationship with this particular local seller, Myers was collecting for an historical interest in people affiliated with Illinois Wesleyan. Crotz was not aware of this connection but believes the historical content was the attraction for Myers rather than the potential for future investment yield.⁴⁰

³³ Nicholas A. Basbanes, *Among the Gently Mad* (New York: Holt, 2002), 44.

³⁴ Minor Myers III, March 12, 2016; Carl Teichman, interviewed by the author, January 19, 2016.

³⁵ See interviews with Katie Brokaw, Carol Churukian, Tom Griffiths, Ann Harding, and Shanna Shipman.

³⁶ Record Group 2-12/2/1: Correspondence, General.

³⁷ John Lubrano, interviewed by the author, February 29, 2016.

³⁸ See interviews with Miles Buckinghamshire, Ann Harding, Jerry Philpott, Jo Porter, and Jim Routi.

³⁹ Meg Miner, *Portrait of a Collector: A View from the Shelves of Minor Myers, jr.*, p. 4.

⁴⁰ Keith Crotz, interviewed by the author, April 21, 2016.

Brian Simpson owned Babbitt's from 1990-2015 and his encounters with Myers and his family were much more frequent. He recalls Myers being an astute observer of the stock in his shop—so much so that Myers would recognize changes on specific shelves he had browsed before. He does not recall searching for items on Myers' behalf but recognized in him a set of interests so broad that he could fit almost anything he saw into an historical context generally or a specific collection or sub-collection he was interested in.⁴¹

The advent of the Internet, with growing opportunities for online book sales and auction sites such as eBay, coincide with Myers tenure at IWU. As stated above, Myers told a reporter his personal book collection stood at 3,000 volumes when he arrived at IWU. A four-fold increase in the numbers of books Myers owned would not have been possible solely through gathering “armloads”⁴² of books in a shop or through catalogs. The Internet was a book collector's friend and at the same time, it affected the market for books by making it possible for sellers and collectors to compare prices without crossing a store's threshold.⁴³

After recommending an auction for Myers' books, the University Librarian observed that this was a suitable method since he acquired them by purchasing auction lots.⁴⁴ Several interview subjects thought this likely, but John Lubrano offers direct support for that opinion by stating he represented Myers at auctions occasionally.⁴⁵ The most memorable auction stories for colleagues at IWU pertain to eBay. Myers was an avid participant who was known to interrupt a meeting in order to respond to a bid-acceptance signal.⁴⁶ Greg Koos recalls Myers saying he had difficulty breaking away from eBay to go to work in the mornings when the online bidding phenomenon first became available.⁴⁷

Analysis of uses

The most interesting aspect of Myers' book collecting is the way he used his collections to establish or maintain connections to people. When meeting someone for the first time, Myers consistently employed the ice breaker: “What do you collect?” Carl Teichman considered Myers' goal in acquiring information about people's collections as “donor research.”⁴⁸ Ellen Myers believes this simple question helped him cultivate relationships with people based on his widespread knowledge. He could learn something about a person and draw on his accumulated resources for discussion points. Taking that idea a step further, Minor III describes this kind of knowledge as a cross-referencing system, much like subject headings in a book catalog, and

⁴¹ Brian Simpson, interviewed by the author, February 8, 2016.

⁴² Robert Bray, February 4, 2016.

⁴³ Greg Koos, March 1, 2016; and Brian Simpson, February 18, 2016.

⁴⁴ Sue (Anderson) Stroyan, memo to Roger Schnaitter, July 5, 2005. Record Group 2-12/7/5: Minor Myers, jr. Collection Book Auction: Sept. 17, 2005.

⁴⁵ John Lubrano, interviewed by the author, February 29, 2016.

⁴⁶ See interviews with Sue Anderson, Robert Bray, Ann Harding, John Lubrano, Minor Myers III, Jerry Philpott, Jo Porter, Roger Schnaitter, Brian Simpson, and Carl Teichman.

⁴⁷ Greg Koos, March 1, 2016.

⁴⁸ Carl Teichman, January 19, 2016.

believes that information gained in this way made it possible for Myers to build on connections with individuals' interests in other contexts.⁴⁹

There may have been a limitation to the depth of cross-referencing Myers accomplished with people in this way, though. Either his capacity or his interest limited how far Myers would engage others' passions. Two interview subjects, Robert Delvin and Jim Matthews, had multiple interests in common with Myers but also recall that their interactions did not involve these commonalities. Delvin has interests in trains and his expertise as an organist, combined with a research interest in early American music, could have provided a common bond but Myers did not engage with him beyond Delvin's work in the library.⁵⁰ Matthews is also a train enthusiast but only connected with Myers on his field of study, the French Enlightenment, and his duties as Dean of Students.⁵¹ That Myers only went so far in finding out about people fits well with Seibring's and Minor III's recollections of a tendency towards brief, encyclopedic classifications.

There is no doubt that Myers used questions about collecting as a means to find common ground with others; in keeping with Myers' own practices, it is possible to see these encounters in a classification system. The people interviewed for this project relate stories about Myers using his collections in ways that fall into the following categories: scholar, political, inspirational, and fascination.⁵²

Scholar

John Lubrano characterized Myers as an "academic collector" who was not interested in "boutique" items. He was more interested in the content of something, as opposed to its completeness, for what it could contribute to the aggregate picture of an era or subject that interested him.⁵³ Myers used his collections as any scholar would: to write, teach and give lectures on public occasions. However, Myers did not limit these traditional outlets to political science, the field of study in which his Princeton Ph.D. was awarded. In fact his son somewhat wryly notes that his father would have been "untenable" today, given the restrictions that are placed on acceptable scholarly output.⁵⁴

Myers' book length publications were histories of places, people, decorative arts, and a hereditary society he belonged to—the Society of the Cincinnati. He published introductory essays and complete articles and catalogs that included selections from his own collections and

⁴⁹ Ellen Myers and Minor Myers III, March 12, 2016.

⁵⁰ Robert Delvin, interviewed by the author, March 1, 2016

⁵¹ Jim Matthews, interviewed by the author, February 10, 2016

⁵² The descriptions that follow are only selections from the remembrances contributed for this project. When the recordings are completely curated, the appropriate descriptors will be applied to each interview.

⁵³ John Lubrano, interviewed by the author, February 29, 2016. See also interviews with Keith Crotz, Richard Nielsen, Brian Rogers, Richard Sommers, and Mike Weis.

⁵⁴ Minor Myers III, March 12, 2016.

others'. Early in his academic career, Myers was also a Friend of the Connecticut College Library and contributed articles to their quarterly publication as well as serving as its editor.⁵⁵

His scholarly uses of books went beyond seeking source materials for publications, though, and also served the curious curator in his nature. Robert Bray contrasts his own interest in collecting, according to the parameters of his scholarly research interests, to Myers' interests in the "world of the text." The specific example Bray cites is Myers' interest in textbooks, explaining that Myers used these kinds of books to learn what people in a society felt must be taught.⁵⁶

Similarly, Cynthia Gendrich recalls Myers loaning her books from his collections on domestic sciences and cookery. She was in an adjunct position at IWU and conducting research for her Ph.D. when they met. Their discussions revolved around the utility of these kinds of texts for learning what society thought needed "correcting."⁵⁷ Sarah Florentine recalls Myers loaning her a stack of comparable types of books so that she could draw on historical sources during an internship project. The outcome of that work was her *Managing Clover Lawn: From Ingredients to Enjoyment: A Guide to the Kitchen of Sarah Davis and the Life That Filled It* which is still available from the David Davis Foundation.⁵⁸

Political

No interview subjects gave the impression of any crass or cynical political purposes in what I categorized as Myers' political uses for his knowledge. His interests in people always felt genuine to them, but the examples collected in this project do offer a view of how the specific objects in his collections and his broad knowledge of people's interests actively cultivated connections for the University's benefit and, more passively, established a rapport in social encounters.

Even before his inauguration, letters in Myers' correspondence files show him actively engaging with other collectors from his new home. The earliest of these are exchanges he had with two people who self-identified their mutual interests to him.⁵⁹ Pearl Funk was one of these people. Carol Churukian, who was a friend of Mrs. Funk, recalls how impressed Funk was that Myers called her while on a trip to the West Coast. Funk said he saw a book he thought she might like and asked if she wanted him to bring it back for her.⁶⁰ Funk eventually donated a monetarily significant collection of books to the IWU's special collections. Ann Harding relates a similar story of an alumnus asking Myers about a specific book during an event in another city. When Myers returned home he located a copy of the book and sent it to that person.⁶¹ It is not always possible to draw a direct line between these kinds of encounters and some sort of advantage

⁵⁵ Minor Myers, jr., "Curriculum Vitae [of] Minor Myers, jr."

⁵⁶ Bray, February 4, 2016.

⁵⁷ Cynthia Gendrich, interviewed by the author, January 23, 2016.

⁵⁸ Sarah Florentine, interviewed by the author, April 25, 2016.

⁵⁹ Minor Myers, jr. letter to Mrs. Charles A. (Pearl) Funk, August 2, 1989; and to Rev. Ralph E. Jasper, August 3, 1989. Record Group 2-12/2/1: Correspondence, March-August 1989.

⁶⁰ Carol Churukian, interviewed by the author, April 8, 2016.

⁶¹ Ann Harding, interviewed by the author, January 22, 2016.

gained by the institution, but one imagines there were residual effects with bonds that were forged in this way.

Social encounters seem more about making people feel at ease or creating a connection through a shared interest. Myers often brought out books his guests might be interested in during events at his home.⁶² An example of a connection Myers made through books at Hobart & William Smith Colleges comes from Miles Buckinghamshire, a descendent of Hobart's founder, the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire. Myers found a book on the Hobart family and reached out to Buckinghamshire who was unaware of his ancestral connection to the college. Their acquaintance grew as Myers made other discoveries and shared his findings with Buckinghamshire. Myers later asked him to become an honorary member of IWU's Board.⁶³

Myers also took new acquisitions to faculty for advice in their areas of expertise. Faculty who speak of the latter tell stories of Myers bringing them texts in languages he could not read but that he had nevertheless acquired. Professor of Greek Nancy Sultan illustrates this aspect, recalling Myers bringing her a book containing pictures of artifacts from an archaeological site. The book lacked covers and a title page, but Myers and Sultan found the artifacts intriguing regardless and enjoyed speculating about the book's content.⁶⁴

Inspirational

Stories from alumni frequently include Myers offering some example for how to interact with the world. As if in answer to thoughts of many who remember such encounters with him Myers wrote, "Too often the multi-talented seem amazing, Renaissance Men or Women harkening back to the era when multiple talents were expected as a cultural norm."⁶⁵ Through his own example and his conversations with others, Myers shed light on the potential such characteristics held for the world. Participants of all types remember the way Myers' talents affected them, and their stories often include Myers using personalities found in his books to promote his values.⁶⁶

Rebecca Anderson remembers speeches Myers gave where he cited books as sources. These works contained stories that Myers framed into the value of being multitasking, that special interest he promoted throughout his tenure. Anderson recalls this as an epiphany. It was the first time in her life no one advocated that she should find one right career interest to follow. That Myers always expressed interests in a range of subjects and brought them into his encounters with students set an example for her of life-long learning.⁶⁷

⁶² See interviews with Dan Terkla, Stacey Shimizu, Carl Teichman, and Mike Young.

⁶³ Miles Buckinghamshire, interviewed by the author, January 28, 2016.

⁶⁴ Nancy Sultan, interviewed by the author, January 22, 2016. See also interviews with Sonja Fritzsche and Jim Matthews for similar encounters with Myers and books in other languages.

⁶⁵ Minor Myers, jr. Abstract for "Polymath: The World of the Multi-Talented." Record Group 2-12/1/1: Publications by Minor Myers, jr. (folder 1 of 7).

⁶⁶ See interviews with Garrett Davey, Joy Doran, Suan Guess-Hanson, Tariq Khan, Art Killian, James Martin, Jim Matthews, Meghan Murphy-Lee, Ellen Myers, Minor Myers III,

⁶⁷ Rebecca Matuszak Anderson, interviewed by the author, January 27, 2016.

Even in social settings that did not involve Myers' own books, he found connections with students over shared topics of appreciation. This was the case with Faizal Chaudhury who recalls two substantive memories of Myers in his early days at IWU as an international student. One was Myers mentioning the value of being a Renaissance Man as one who could engage in conversations on a variety of subjects. By way of example, Myers expressed knowledge of a poet from Chaudhury's home country of Bangladesh. Chaudhury was impressed that Myers knew the poet, and they discussed the possibility of him bringing Myers a copy from his home someday.⁶⁸

Myers also used his books to connect students with the past and to affect a transformation in students' views of the world. Alumna Princess Galloway remembers meeting Myers years before her academic career at IWU. They met because she was part of the Detroit-based Wade McCree, Jr. Incentive Program. In 1994, IWU became the first private college and the first campus outside of Michigan to join the scholarship program and Galloway recalls Myers being committed to her success as a means for demonstrating the value of IWU's participation in the program. Myers challenged and encouraged her throughout her time at IWU including when her work as a leader in the Black Student Union and Student Senate tested some accepted practices on campus. But "the single most important experience" for her took place soon after The Ames Library opened, just a few months before she graduated. Myers asked her and other Black students to meet him on the 4th floor in the Bates and Merwin Reading Room. There he passed around a book that he said he recently acquired specifically to share with them. Galloway does not recall the title of the book but it was written by a former slave and she says Myers' interest in sharing it with them was to connect them with history in a way that inspired "a true intelligence," a deep understanding of where their struggles fell into a larger historical context.⁶⁹

Fascination

Interview subjects from across the range of connections Myers had—faculty, friends, staff, students—report instances of Myers sharing an unabashed delight in the book as object.⁷⁰ Dan Terkla and one of his former students, Katie Brokaw, both recall the beauty of an edition Myers owned of Dante Alighieri's *La Comedia*, an edition that included commentary by Cristoforo Landino. This book was not among the volumes IWU acquired, but Myers' notes indicate it was published in 1584.⁷¹ Terkla recalls Myers loaning him this and other texts without being concerned about when the books were returned. This was the case when Myers brought a small, pigskin-covered edition of *The Bible*, containing an imprint from Mexico, into Terkla's classroom when he was walking to his office one day. Terkla and his students recall this happening shortly after Myers purchased it and he didn't hesitate to pass it around so the students could get a close look. Terkla used these texts and others Myers loaned in ways that related to his

⁶⁸ Faizal Chaudhury, interviewed by the author, January 23, 2016.

⁶⁹ Princess Galloway, interviewed by the author, January 28, 2016.

⁷⁰ See interviews with Lynda Duke, Sonja Fritzsche, Princess Galloway, Minor Myers III, Richard Nielsen, and Nancy Sultan.

⁷¹ Record Group 2-12/6/10 (folder 4 of 7) Unprocessed Research Notes.

courses, but Myers interest in sharing the books was more about conveying the excitement of holding them.⁷²

Pam Muirhead had a similar experience with one of her classes in November 2002. After finding that her students were eager to “hang out” with the president, Muirhead arranged for a class visit to Myers’ home. Both she and her former student Garrett Davey relate that Myers enthusiastically shared a book carrying the imprint of Benjamin Franklin. Myers’ energy and passion about this recent find affected Davey because he wasn’t used to seeing this side of an adult.⁷³ Muirhead believes such open enthusiasm led to the “rock star” status Myers had among students.⁷⁴ The message he conveyed was that old and rare books were for use. James Plath, who shared a range of collecting interests with Myers, believes that collecting physical objects helps “bridge time” and that Myers enjoyed communicating that aspect by sharing his collections.⁷⁵

Brokaw also recalls Myers inviting her and her friends to his home to look at new books and encouraging discussion on which texts were their favorites. Her sense is that he was sharing the books in a way that “was more about the object than the contents.”⁷⁶ An incident Shanna Shipman recalls echoes this idea. Shipman told Myers of her interest in “old book” collecting when she was a new student on campus. She knows that Myers befriended many students, took a genuine interest in them, and looked for ways to connect with them on a personal level. In her case, Myers also gave her a book simply because of their shared passion for old books. It was not in an area of her collecting interests: it was an 18th century volume in French that he thought she would like to have even though she couldn’t read in that language.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Several of this project’s participants offered observations similar to Katie Brokaw’s that Myers was “genuinely curious about the world and about other people” – someone who found listening more interesting than talking.⁷⁸ The only collecting interest Myers failed to mention in his CV or in the interviews he gave was his collection of people, but several participants believe this is a collecting aspect worth noting.⁷⁹ Further insights into the Myers’ era are now possible through the people who considered themselves part of Myers’ collections and were willing to share their experiences for this project.

⁷² Dan Terkla, interviewed by the author, January 26, 2016. Kate Fago was with Katie Brokaw in this class and provided a written remembrance that is appended to this work.

⁷³ Garrett Davey, interviewed by the author, February 4, 2016.

⁷⁴ Pam Muirhead, interviewed by the author, February 25, 2016.

⁷⁵ James Plath, April 8, 2016.

⁷⁶ Katie Brokaw, interviewed by the author, January 25, 2016.

⁷⁷ Shanna Shipman, interviewed by the author, April 25, 2016.

⁷⁸ Brokaw, January 25, 2016; see also Cate McDonald, e-mail message to the author, January 16, 2016; and interviews with Miles Buckinghamshire, Sonja Fritzsche, Carl Teichman, Anke Voss and Mike Weis.

⁷⁹ Sean T. Evans, e-mail message to author, January 16, 2016; Dennis and Betsy Kohan, e-mail message to author, January 16, 2016; and the following interview subjects: Daniel Bassill, Blouke Carus, Ellen Myers Nancy Sultan, Vadim Mazo, and Jim White.

These people may be interested to know that even Myers' people-centric traits were intentional, and the proof of this is in a letter he sent to William Jewell College President J. Gordon Kingsley. Myers expressed his admiration for Kingsley's article, "The President as Bard," in which Kingsley asserts that "The most useful image to me has been that of the solitary singer galvanizing a people to noble, even heroic action by the power of Their Story. The president as bard."⁸⁰

Kingsley frames his views on presidential responsibilities under the following headings:

The president-as-bard tells The Story of 'the tribe.'

The president-as-bard gives epic and mythic proportion to The Stories.

The president-as-bard gives The Story joy.

The president-as-bard gives new content and new meanings to The Old Story.

The president-as-bard calls for all to sing The Story.

The president-as-bard leaves The Story unfinished.⁸¹

In his letter dated August 21, 1989, the month after he arrived at IWU, Myers commented on his own time as a "well-tempered" singer and stated, "some administrative finesse is always necessary but you have put your finger on the mark between those who merely survive and those who can lead while they appear to be following."⁸² This letter may represent the only personal insight Myers left about his leadership strategies, but the relationship of the article's message to what others observed in Myers is clear.

The power of the story persists in Myers' interactions. This project is the first attempt to collect and analyze stories of Myers' presidency compared to an interest that was deeply ingrained in his character long before he arrived at IWU. These accounts aid our understanding of the ways Myers used his collections when interacting with the people around him. Each person had a singular experience of Myers, but the thread running through this exploration is one of the "president as bard" singing The Story to all who would listen.

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⁸⁰ J. Gordon Kingsley, "The President as Bard," *AGB Reports* 29, no. 4 (July 1987): 19.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

⁸² Myers, jr., Minor. Personal correspondence to Dr. J. Gordon Kingsley, President, William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri. Record Group 2-12/2/1: General Correspondence March – August, 1989.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Bibliography of sources containing interviews with Myers about his collecting and sources the author consulted on collectors.

Appendix B: A list of project participants.

Appendix C: Written remarks from people who did not participate in the interviews.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Portrait of a Collector Participants

Interview participants

Rebecca Matuszak Anderson, Class of 2003
Sue Anderson, University Librarian, 1992-2006; Academic Outreach Librarian, 2007-
Jane Baines, Advancement, 1987-2014
Daniel Bassill, Class of 1968 and H.PhD 2001
Robert Bray, Professor of English, 1970-2014
Katherine Brokaw, Class of 2003
Miles Buckinghamshire, 10 th Earl of Buckinghamshire and H. IWU Trustee
Blouke Carus, H.PhD 2003
Marianne Carus, H.PhD 2003
Faizal Chaudhury, Class of 1996
Carol Churukian, Staff Accompanist , 1992-
Keith Crotz, American Botanist Bookseller
Garrett L. Davey, Class of 2004
Mike Davis, Class of 1998
Robert Delvin, Fine Arts Librarian, 1980-
Joy Doran, Adjunct Instructor, Piano, 1990-
Lynda Duke, Associate Dean, 2014- and Academic Outreach Librarian, 2001-2013
Marc Featherly, Campus Photographer, 1996-2014
Sarah (Vales) Florentine, Class of 2004
Barbara Ford, Class of 1968
Sonja Fritzsche, Professor of German and Eastern European Studies, 2001-2015
Princess K. Galloway, Class of 2002
Cindy Gendrich, Class of 1984
Tom Griffiths, Associate Dean and Professor of Natural Sciences, 1981-2007
Suan Guess-Hanson, Friend of Ellen Myers
Ann Harding, Director of Alumni Relations, 1988-2014
Lisa Hillmer-Poole, Class of 1998
Frederick Hoyt, Professor of Business Administration, 1987-
Ellen Hurwitz, Provost and Dean, 1988-1992
Tariq Khan, Class of 1993
Art Killian, Grounds Keeper, 1984-2011
Greg Koos, Executive Director Emeritus, McLean County Museum of History
John Lubrano, J & J Music Antiquarians

(cont'd)

James Martin, Class of 1992
Jim Matthews, Dean of Students, 1989-2005 and Professor of French, 1986-
Vadim Mazo, Associate Professor of Music, 1987-
T. John Metz, Carleton College Librarian, 1972-1997
Jack Muirhead, Class of 1962
Pamela Buchanan Muirhead, Emeritus Professor of English, 1972-2014 and Class of 1968
Meghan Murphy-Lee, Class of 1993
Ellen Myers
Minor Myers III
Richard Nielsen, Collector of P.G. Wodehouse
Jerry Philpott, Class of 1959
James Plath, Professor of English, 1988-
John Platt, Pembroke College Emeritus Chaplain
Jo Porter, Director of Grants and Foundation Relations, 1989-2011
Sarah Pritchard, Northwestern University Dean of Libraries
Brian Rogers, Connecticut College Librarian, 1975-1992
Jim Routi, Dean of Admissions until 2003 and Class of 1963
Fred Schlipf, Urbana Free Library Emeritus Director, Carleton College classmate of Myers'
Roger Schnaiter, Associate Provost and Professor of Psychology, 1969-2010
Steve Seibring, Advancement, 1991-present and Class of 1981
Stacey Shimizu, International Office Director, 1995-
Shanna Shipman, Class of 2001
Brian Simpson, Babbitt's Books owner 1990-2015 and Class of 1979
Richard Sommers, Army War College Distinguished Fellow and Carleton College classmate/roommate of Myers
Nancy Sultan, Professor and Director of Greek and Roman Studies, 1993-
Carl Teichman, President's Office 1986-present and Class of 1980
Dan Terkla, Professor of English, 1995-
Anke Voss, University Archivist, 2000-2005
Mike Weis, Professor of History, 1988-
Jim White, Asahel Gridley's Antiques
Mike Young, Professor of History, 1970-
Karen Zander, Class of 1970 and H.PhD 2001

Written comment contributors

David L. Brown, Class of 1951
Jeremy Coffman, Class of 2002
George Coontz, , Class of 2004
Mark Denzler, Class of 1993
Betty Dorsey, Class of 1966
Kathryn Eissfeldt, Class of 2001
Marissa Emerson, Class of 2000
Sean T. Evans, Class of 1999
Kate Fago, Class of 2002
Robert B. Fazzini, Class of 1962
Dick Folse, Director of Grants and Foundation Relations and Class of 1985
Gerri Wenger Friedberg, Class of 1960
Amanda "Gwydhar" Gebien, Class of 2004
Claranne Jones, Class of 1994
Christopher Joyce, Class of 1996
James Keeran, Class of 1963
Marilyn Keiser, Class of 1963
Dennis & Betsy Kohan, Class of 1967
Nathan Marken, Class of 2003
Cate (Rubba) McDonald, Class of 1998
Matthew Mitchell, Class of 2000
Tom Monken, Class of 1992
Cindy Morris Myers, Class of 1980
Philip J. Nicolosi, Class of 1981
Ann Stroink Shultz, Class of 1976
John Wiley, Class of 1957

Appendix C

Written Remarks

Name	Affiliation	How and when did you know Minor Myers, jr.? What memories would you like to share about his collecting interests?
David L. Brown	Class of 1951	<p>I was long gone from IWU when Minor arrived. As I recall, I first met him at some west coast event for alumni. Saw him a few other times, and on one of his visits to San Diego, I was requested in advance, to introduce him at a local alumni dinner event. I did so, and probably went overboard, for it seems he responded with "Wow". (But frankly, he deserved it!). It seemed that he was one of, by and for the people, and that those who spent their days on his campus were exceedingly lucky! I just wish that I could go back and spend more hours with him . . .</p> <p>After I graduated in 1951, and spent another year at Michigan State, I joined the Navy (rather than be drafted), and applied immediately to enter the officer training for Supply Corps officers. My entry form required 2 letters of recommendation, and I contacted President Merrill Holmes, who graciously provided a wonderful one. (I had been pretty involved on campus events, etc.). I credit him for assuring my acceptance.</p> <p>I met Minor on one of his yearly trips to the west coast, and thereafter had the opportunity to meet him several times in subsequent years, as well as having an occasional phone conversation with him. I knew that he was a "collector", though I do not recall any significant conversation re that. What a truly great fellow he was! I am certain that everyone was equally crushed when he so suddenly left us!</p> <p>My visits to campus have been maybe 2 drive-through town and campus in all of the years, when Maggie and I have passed by Bloomington. Both after Minor was gone.</p> <p>I am afraid that I would have very limited things to write about such a terrific man, beyond those few comments. I certainly wish that I had an opportunity to have spent more time in his company, for he was a truly rare individual--one of the best I have ever had the opportunity to at least know. His loss to IWU had to have been a terrible blow, though I am certain that those who have followed have been excellent in the Presidency.</p>
Jeremy Coffman	Class of 2002	<p>Myers was the President of IWU during my nine semesters as a student, from fall 1998 through fall 2002.</p> <p>President Myers was a wonderful supporter of seemingly everything, including the performing arts (I was a Music Education major with heavy Theatre Arts involvement), which hadn't gotten much support in my experiences with educational administration prior to my time at IWU. He frequented performances and productions, made recommendations to others who may not have heard about the shows, and always seemed to be having the time of his life.</p> <p>But my favorite memory of President Myers (which may or may not have anything to do with this project) was made when he and a number of faculty prepared a late-night breakfast for students in the food service facility ("Saga") during</p>

		<p>finals. When service was finished, he mingled from table to table and came upon five or six of my friends and me as we were engrossed in a captivating round of the Cup Game*. He was immediately interested and happy to learn how to play, and then joined in as soon as he got the hang of it. It's that kind of genuine interest in the lives of the students that was, for me, his most endearing and important quality.</p> <p>*The Cup Game involves a number of people clapping, patting the table, and moving a plastic cup all in a specific rhythm while passing, or in order to pass, cups from one person to the next.</p>
George Coontz	Class of 2004	<p>As a student; from 2000- until his passing</p> <p>My first memory of Minor was as a prospective student to IWU. I was walking around the quad with my family....before or after a tour and Minor stopped and talked with us for a while. He was obviously on his way somewhere, but he took the time to talk with us. I can't remember if he was carrying a musical instrument or just a stack of books and papers, but as I would learn later, this was typical Minor.</p> <p>I also had experience working with Minor through my campus job in the Archives in the library. I helped him and Carl Teichman with research for their history of IWU book. He always seemed to have interesting questions related to IWU or alums.</p>
Mark Denzler	Class of 1993	<p>As a student at Illinois Wesleyan, I had the pleasure of knowing and interacting with President Myers on a regular basis.</p> <p>President Myers and I started our IWU careers together in 1989 and as the president of the Class of '93, I had the opportunity to work with him frequently.</p> <p>Politics is my passion and he encouraged me to collect political buttons and even took me to a couple of auctions to encourage me. Even after graduating, I would occasionally open a letter from Minor with a new button for my collection!</p> <p>I continue to think of his famous quote that Titans know well: "Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good."</p>
Betty Dorsey	Class of 1966	<p>I knew Minor during his time at IWU. I am alum; my husband, Gil, was a member of the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Gil and I attended a dinner at the President's home with a number of other people. We played 2 games that evening, both coming from old books in Minor's collection. (They weren't all scholarly, but still interesting to him.) I happened to be his partner for these games, one of which required that we unscramble letters of the first and last name of each U.S. President. Our team was finished way ahead of anyone else with very little input from me. We could have won the second game as well but he whispered to me that, as the host, he thought that would be unseemly. I was always impressed with his casual way of making people feel welcome, with his thoughtfulness, and, of course, his wise-</p>

		ranging intelligence.
Kathryn Eissfeldt	Class of 2001	<p>Through my undergraduate years at IWU from 1997 to 2001</p> <p>I had an interest in history of science that he encouraged by connecting me to the program at Pembroke College at Oxford University, where I could study the subject in depth. My senior year, we happened to take the same train to Chicago, and he wanted to hear all about the course I'd taken there on the history of microscopy. Despite the fact that I'd just taken an entire term on the subject, he still knew more about the history of microscopy, of course!</p>
Marissa Emerson	Class of 2000	<p>Roughly 1993-2000</p> <p>My older sister and I both attended IWU (she was a senior when I was a freshman). Minor was a powerful speaker. He was so kind -- always looking disheveled and bookish, but very interested in students and excited to be a part of their lives. I was involved in IWU athletics, so my parents would visit often -- he would also stop and talk to them. He may not have known their names, but he would remember various facts about their lives and ask them about them. He was a true gem -- the antithesis of the dean portrayed on 'Animal House.'</p>
Sean T. Evans	Class of 1999	<p>Attended 1995-1999.</p> <p>Myers collected people too. He somehow kept every person he met with him. I had had one meeting with him, in a formal setting. Then, months later, at a restaurant well off-campus, my roommate and I were eating lunch when Myers appeared at our table and said hi. He recognized us out of context, addressed us comfortably and made us feel like old friends.</p>
Kate Fago	Class of 2002	<p>Attended IWU from 1998-2002. As a writer and then editor of the Argus, I had the opportunity to interact with Minor Myers, jr, in a way, perhaps, different from other students. But I largely remember him as just having a significant presence on campus--even if not physically.</p> <p>I remember sitting in a class with Dr. Terkla in Shaw. I don't remember the class specifically--probably something to do with French medieval romances. We'd often see Minor (and this is the thing--we all called him Minor. He was always just Minor. Never intended in a disrespectful way, though, of course; it just suited him best) shuffle by hurriedly, head bent down, lost in thought--or at least seemingly so. He always seemed to notice everything around him at the same time though. He always said hello when you passed him on the quad.</p> <p>Anyway, I don't remember if we waved at him--it would have been like Dr. Terkla to say, "everyone look at Minor and wave!"--or if he noticed us first, but like that, class was interrupted as Minor came in to show us the latest book he had acquired. I don't remember what the book was, or if he had to go home and get it and come back. I don't even remember looking through the book itself, though I'm sure it was present because that's how Minor was--always excited about the latest book he had acquired, or some fact he had stumbled upon or some new experience he had and always willing and wanting to share it and talk about it.</p>

		<p>He was the epitome of a liberal arts education--seek, discover, dig, unearth. You want to be a piano-playing biologist? Go for it! You got sidetracked on the way to your original goal? I'm sure it was worthwhile! Whether you often interacted with him or only vaguely knew him to be the university president, I'd venture to guess that everyone felt Minor to be that encouraging force. And anyone who graduated during Minor's tenure hears that final send off in the back of their head: "go forth and do well, but more importantly go forth and do good." Who wouldn't take that to heart?</p>
Robert B. Fazzini	Class of 1962	<p>Met at a reception shortly after he was hired.</p> <p>Our youngest daughter was one of nearly 2,000 students at IWU, when Lynne and I encountered Minor in Uptown Normal (then Downtown) one Sunday afternoon. He saw us across the street and made it a point to come over to visit with us and ask us how our daughter, Valerie, was enjoying her college experience. We were flattered that he made the effort to come over to visit with us, and we were amazed that he remembered that our daughter was an IWU student and astounded that he even remembered her name.</p>
Dick Folse	Class of 1985	<p>I knew Minor Myers, but not very well - he was very kind when we spoke. I did find something recently when researching the Arnold Beckman Foundation that may be of interest regarding Minor's thoughtfulness and research/collecting abilities.</p> <p>Note: The following is copied from the document Folse sent titled "Dr. Arnold O. Beckman's remarks for Illinois Wesleyan University [President's] Convocation, September 25, 1991"</p> <p>"...During those years I played piano at dances and silent movies. Dr. Myers, displaying his customary alertness, noted this and did a little investigating on his own initiative....Many dance were sponsored by Wesleyan fraternities and sororities, often held at the Miller Park Pavilion or the Bloomington Country club. Dr. Myers also discovered Hills Hotel, a large hotel near the courthouse square with a dining room that provided music during the dinner hours. I was part of the trio that provided that music. He even sent me a picture of the balcony where violinist Harry Burke, cellist Paul Burke and I played. Dr. Myers also found out that the Burke brothers attended the Wesleyan School of Music."</p>
Gerri Wenger Friedberg	Class of 1960	<p>Minor was always inspiring & gracious. He invited many of us to their beautiful, museum-like home full of books, musical instruments & antiques. His vitality and charm will always be choice memories. He was drawn to exceptionally intelligent, multi-'major' students who, like himself, were enchanted by our complex world.</p>
Amanda "Gwydhar" Gebien	Class of 2004	<p>I attended IWU for my undergraduate education beginning Fall 2000 (graduating Spring 2004). His philosophy of fostering multi-talented individuals was a key in my decision to attend Wesleyan over the other schools to which I was accepted.</p> <p>It got to be Christmas time during my freshman year and I was feeling festive and craftsy, so I made little Santa ornaments out of the leftover gourds that were on clearance from Thanksgiving. I made one for President Myers. Maybe at another school it would've been unacceptable for a freshman student to bring a homemade gift to the president of the university, but that wasn't the atmosphere at IWU at the time.</p>

		<p>I brought the gift to Minor Myers' office. I didn't have an appointment, but he made time for me anyway. The Santa ornament was wrapped in a box that I had also made out of some scraps of mat board in order to be the right size and shape for the gourd.</p> <p>President Myers exclaimed politely over the ornament, but he positively marveled at the box and the fact that I had made that too. He held it up to look at all the sides and took it over to the window for better light to see it by. It seemed funny to me that someone should be more interested in the box than the gift that came in it, but only because it seemed to be perfectly in character. This was someone who didn't just think outside the box, but actually saw the box in the first place and thought of it as something worth marveling over.</p> <p>For all I know, the gourd-Santa rotted and was thrown away (I know the one that I kept did), but I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if the box was still there in his office right up until the bitter end.</p>
Claranne Jones	Class of 1994	<p>I was a music major at IWU between the years of 1990-1994. I can't recall the exact year, but sometime during my schooling I was asked to play the piano during a cocktail event that Minor Myers was hosting. Everything went well, and when I left, I thought that was the end of the story. When I went home during the next school break after the event, I found a letter had been mailed to my home address. My mother opened the envelope and found a hand-written thank you note had been sent to me from Minor Myers. She couldn't quite believe that it was handwritten, so she licked her thumb and rubbed the ink. When it smudged, she knew it wasn't just a form letter printed in italic script. Honestly, I think she was much more elated than I to have received the thank you card. She bragged about it for years to anyone who would listen. "My daughter received a hand-written thank you note from the President of her University!!!" It just goes to show how very classy he was. I will always carry that memory with me.</p> <p>This was more about my family collecting a memory from Minor Myers, so I'm not sure it accurately relates to your topic. I just wanted to share my experience with you.</p>
Christopher Joyce	Class of 1996	<p>1992-1996 while I was attending IWU.</p> <p>Developed a friendship. He had a material impact on my career: Helped me get my first job with the former Prime Minister of England, Sir Edward Heath. In that job, I ended up writing a portion of Sir Edward's autobiography. Minor Myers traveled over to London to visit while we were working on the book.</p>
James Keeran	Class of 1963	<p>I remember him as a very friendly person who always seemed interested in everybody he met along the way. I also heard that he visited About Books, a used book store on east Front Street, sometimes as often as three times in a day. And he usually bought something.</p>
Marilyn Keiser	Class of 1963	<p>I encountered Minor Myers, Jr. only briefly when I came to IWU to dedicate the Evelyn Chapel organ.</p> <p>I was so touched, after spending such a short time with President Myers, to receive in the mail a wonderful and lengthy article about the "Organ Lofts of Paris." His interest in music seemed very real, and that he should be reading about</p>

		the great organists of Paris in the early part of the 20th century was a delightful surprise to me.
Dennis & Betsy Kohan	Class of 1967	<p>During his IWU presidency</p> <p>I remember how his charisma brought the great people of our country to IWU and its functions. Regarding collecting, when Minor came to Long Beach to see us, he always took time to visit Acres of Books, a huge warehouse with an eclectic collection of books for sale. He collected both books and loyal friends when he came to visit us in Southern California.</p>
Nathan Marken	Class of 2003	<p>Minor Myers, Jr. was President of Illinois Wesleyan during my attendance (1999-2003).</p> <p>When I was a senior in the School of Music finishing my degree in Vocal Performance, I petitioned to the Office of the President to sponsor an independent study of early comic opera. My petition was to cover the production costs (costuming, etc.), and primarily to cover the costs of paying a harpsichordist. President Myers was known to have played the harpsichord and this resonated with him. He inherently understood the need for the performance practice and with great curiosity and pride, he approved the sponsorship.</p>
Cate (Rubba) McDonald	Class of 1998	<p>I was a student at IWU between 1994-1998-- as a Presidential Scholar, I had the honor of a few sit-down talks with him...</p> <p>Through talking, he had discovered that I was a Bach aficionado--- he got this sly grin on his face and asked if I'd ever played Bach on a Harpsichord ...(I hadn't even SEEN one at that point in my young life!) -- he almost skipped out of the office and had me follow him to this special place on campus where apparently they kept a harpsichord that he liked to go and play from time to time (who knew?)... And had me sit down and play "some Bach I preferred"! I'll never forget how amazing that was- even now, the memory takes on this special coloring and feeling, and I believe it's because, somehow, he saw that-- for me, that experience would have been just like a dream coming true- he was perceptive and curious about Life and Human Beings as much as he was a spirited Collector of "things"--and it showed in his eagerness to share his world with others.</p>
Matthew Mitchell	Class of 2000	<p>I was a student at IWU from 1996-2000.</p> <p>I was a student at IWU from 1996-2000. Minor Myers Jr. was such a larger-than-life presence at the university. My friends and I all talked about him. I assume half of what we heard were rumors, but if even half of them were true, he was incredible. One of the things I remember our group discussing was that he built harpsichords in his basement in his free time (fact or fiction???).</p> <p>I was so impressed by Dr. Myers that I dressed up as him for Halloween my sophomore year. I even attempted to mimic the way that he slouched so far back in chairs that he always seemed just about to fall out of them (but he never did!)</p>

		<p>Anyway, in my junior year I was doing organic chemistry research in Ram Mohan's laboratory. Dr. Myers came by for a tour one day that fall, and he took the time to talk with each of us in the lab. At the time, I was working on the synthesis of the compound curcumin. Not many people I knew had heard of curcumin or turmeric then, so I was used to explaining that curcumin is the component of the root/spice turmeric responsible for its yellow color and that it is said to have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and other properties. When Dr. Myers came to my station in the lab I explained all of this to him. Without even pausing he said "you know, I was actually reading about turmeric two nights ago. It was in a cookbook by [someone whose name I've long since forgotten] from the 1800s [he actually gave me a publication date that I've also forgotten] in a recipe for a faux tomato sauce made without tomatoes. Turmeric was one of the ingredients they added to give the recipe a tomato-orange color."</p> <p>This moment impressed on me the extent of Dr. Myers' reading, the vastness of his collection of books, his memory for these details, and the interest he took in student research!</p>
Tom Monken	Class of 1992	<p>He was the president of IWU for most of my time in school. I believe he was named president either at the end of my freshman year or early sophomore year (1989).</p> <p>He was a genuine and caring man. He loved IWU sports and visited our practices on several occasions. He spoke to our football team and I'm sure most of the players remember his admission that "he was not an athlete" but enjoyed sports. He and his wife would often sit in the student section at IWU basketball games. They would join with the crowd in cheers and I enjoyed interacting with them on a personal level.</p>
Cindy Morris Myers	Class of 1980	<p>As an alum, during his presidency</p> <p>I am a music education major who became an entrepreneur. He immediately tried to make a connection because of the spelling of our names. He made an effort to send me a newly released recording of the time of Dawn Upshaw's. He knew we were in music school together and thought I would appreciate it, I certainly did. Our investment in business locally as an Allstate agent drew his appreciation and support. He believed in a well rounded education and my pursuits in the business world after coming out of IWU with a BME was right up his alley as a renaissance man. It was my pleasure to know him, he certainly was an advocate of being a well rounded person.</p>
Philip J. Nicolosi	Class of 1981	<p>I graduated from IWU 1981 and participated in various alumni fund raising events. I met and was able to visit with Pres. Myers at some of those functions.</p> <p>I just don't know if I would have that much to contribute as others. However, I wanted to share my fond and grateful sentiments of Minor. My main remembrance was the energy and enthusiasm that he had for the university and life in general, and the genuine sincere interest he had for the person with whom he was speaking. Particularly, I remember his great interest in and knowledge of music, and this is the remembrance I feel compared to share with you.</p> <p>Sometime in the 1990's I happened to mention to the university development representative that used to 'call' on me that I enjoyed classical music. Shortly thereafter I received a package in the mail containing a classical CD of</p>

		<p>Mendelssohn music with an hand-written note from the president of the university! Upon receiving your email I found the note in a file and have scanned it and can email it to you if you would like. It's not dated but based on where it was located in my file I'm guessing it was around 1999-2000. I was utterly amazed that he actually would take the time to send something to me who had a shared interest in music as he did.</p> <p>To follow up on that, sometime thereafter I was talking with him at a fundraiser at a home on the North Shore of Chicago. It was in the home where 'Trains, Planes and Automobiles' was filmed. I mentioned to him how my eldest brother also shared a passion for classical music. He asked for my brother's name and address and a couple weeks later my brother too received a classical music CD from Minor. Minor didn't know my brother and my brother wasn't an IWU alum, but he was a fellow classical music lover. Again, a man with the schedule he must have had as president of a university, felt compelled to take the time---and show the generosity---of sharing a mutual interest with someone he didn't even know.</p> <p>Above and beyond the innumerable accomplishments he had at the university, memories like these remind me of the kind of man he was and are what continue to inspire me to emulate his actions.</p>
Ann Stroink Shultz	Class of 1976	<p>I've known him through his entire presidency. He made remarkable impression not only for the university but also for community. We brought several visiting dignitaries to our home to support Illinois Wesleyan. Examples are Sir Edward Heath, James Watson (DNA helix), A. Pratt musician. We do have some pictures of these events as well.</p> <p>There was one time when he shared all of his Japanese prints that he collected and had them displayed in our home. This allowed visitors an exposure to his interests.</p>
John Wiley	Class of 1957	<p>He visited here in Dallas a few times. My most significant memory was once when he and his wife went to the movie "Thomas Jefferson in Paris" during the afternoon.</p> <p>At the reception later, his wife told of attending the movie. Then she said "Of course, Minor is Thomas Jefferson"</p>