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Adopters fund rare book restoration

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Guests at the Book Adoption Party held yesterday enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvres, making sure not to spill their refreshments on the books, maps, manuscripts and coins on display.

The event, at which guests could adopt a variety of rare items for prices ranging from \$100 to \$1,650, was designed to raise funds to restore pieces in poor condition, and obtain rare and valuable pieces. A wide range of materials was up for adoption, from a photo album recording the construction of Lake Carnegie to a pirated edition of some of Oscar Wilde's works. Bookplates with the adopter's name will be placed in the adopted books.

"The Book Adoption Party will raise money for the building up and conserving of the University's collection and raise awareness in the Princeton community of Friends of [the] Princeton University Library's work," said Donald Farren '58, the event's organizer. Farren, a scholar-in-residence at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., was inspired by a similar event at Folger.

Harold Shapiro GS '64, University president emeritus and Wilson School professor, was the first to adopt, choosing a rare edition of the children's book "Orlando the Marmalade Cat."

"My wife was actually the one to pick it out, but it's great to actually see it," he said.

The book was one of the top items up for adoption in the children's section because of its high production value and beautiful illustrations, explained Andrea Immel, the curator of the Cotsen Children's Library, which is part of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

Ben Primer, the associate university librarian for rare books and special collections, was happy with attendance and participation.

"I predicted 75 people would turn up, but ... more than 90 have come," he said.

"We plan to send out a report to everyone who attended the event indicating which items were adopted and which items remain orphans," he explained, adding that he hopes that this will give a second wind to the adoption plan.

The project had already received \$5,000 from people who were unable to attend the event but who still wanted to adopt, Primer added.

Charles Greene, keeper of the Rare Book Reading Room, said that the curators tried to choose a variety of manuscripts to cater to different interests.

Diana Garrett, who serves on the Program Committee of Friends of the Princeton University Library, adopted a natural history book for her husband's birthday, saying that she was particularly taken with an illustration of a black squirrel in the book.

"My grandfather had lots of very old books, and they just fascinate me," she said.

The event attracted local community members in addition to University faculty and staff.

David Meni, a ninth grader at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South, and his mother adopted William Blake's "The Book of Urizen."

"My English class read Blake's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience,'" he explained.

The Times of Trenton and PNC Bank sponsored the event. Austin Starkley '73, PNC's senior vice president, said that he was pleased with the event and the close relationship that has developed between the bank and the library.

"Education is a priority for the bank in terms of its social funding, and what better way to support education than through a library?" he said.

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