Ray Bradbury's original manuscript "Fahrenheit 451" at Cal State Fullerton

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There is only one place in the world that has Ray Bradbury's original manuscript of "Fahrenheit 451": Cal State Fullerton's Archives & Special Collections.

Bradbury, who died in 2012, wrote a number of science-fiction books that dwelled on morality, including "Dandelion Wine," "The Martian Chronicles" and "The Illustrated Man."

The university also has drafts of "The Fireman," Bradbury's short story that sparked "Fahrenheit 451," set in a future where books are outlawed and firemen hunt down illegally stashed books and set them on fire.

“It's not all of his papers, just a few, but some of the key ones,” said Sharon Perry, university archivist, special collections librarian and coordinator.

The Archives & Special Collections, in the south wing of Pollak Library, has nearly 60 collections, which are available to the public.

There is the Roy V. Boswell Collection for the History of Cartography, a collection of pre-1901 maps; the Freedom Center of Political, Social & Religious Ephemera, writings representing the political movements of the 20th century; and a collection of books written by Cal State Fullerton faculty.

The newest collection is the Darryl and Doris Curran Art, Culture and Poetry Collection. Doris Curran created the Poetry Reading Series at UCLA.

But the most popular collection is its assorted science fiction, which includes books, magazines, manuscripts, even a Tribble, Perry said.

A Tribble is a puffy fur-ball critter that came with the "Star Trek" TV series script, "The Trouble with Tribbles," an episode in which the U.S.S. Enterprise becomes overrun with the critters. The special collection has photocopies of original "Star Trek" scripts.

The sci-fi collections see mostly off-campus visitors, some from as far away as Europe, Perry said. The second most frequented collection is local history, used mostly by students and faculty, she said.

Sci-fi works include pulp magazines, printed on cheap pulp (paper) and known for their sensational, often racy, colorful covers, as well as manuscripts of Philip K. Dick, who lived in Fullerton and Santa Ana for a time, and Frank Herbert, author of the “Dune” chronicles.

Much of the sci-fi collection was acquired in the 1960s and '70s under the leadership of the Cal State Fullerton professor Willis McNelly.

McNelly, who died in 2003, was a pioneer of sorts. Inspired by Cornell University's new science-fiction class, he launched a sci-fi course at Cal State Fullerton in the mid-1960s.

“He introduced science fiction as a respected academic subject,” Perry said. “Science fiction had a great fan base and practitioner base, but it wasn't widely perceived in academics as a legitimate focus of study.”
McNelly, an authority on the works of James Joyce, T.S. Eliot and other literary figures, went to science-fiction conventions and formed personal relationships with sci-fi authors. He was close friends with Bradbury, Dick and Herbert.

Dick was a guest lecturer in McNelly’s classes, Perry said. He was a known figure on campus. While living in Fullerton, Dick wrote, “Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said,” “Confessions of a Crap Artist,” and “A Scanner Darkly,” according to an article by McNelly. “A Scanner Darkly” was adapted into a 2006 movie of the same name starring Keanu Reeves, Robert Downey Jr. and Winona Ryder.

McNelly also described driving back from Herbert’s Bay Area residence in the late 1960s, gleeful because his trunk was full of Herbert’s “Dune” manuscripts.

“McNelly himself wrote the Dune Encyclopedia, with Herbert’s blessing,” Perry said. “He edited that as a labor of love.”

Most of the special collections were acquired by the library long ago, she said, and new items mostly need to fit existing collections. The special collections library is modest in size and funding, she said.

“Each collection has had its own path to us,” she said. A lot of them came through Ernest Toy, who was the first university librarian. He formed the Patrons of the Library, which supports the library financially and otherwise.

Many of the members who joined the group had personal collections, Perry said. “Toy would tell them, ‘When you’re ready to find a home for your collections, we’re here.’”

The special collections library consists of two offices, a readers’ room and the stacks, where Perry and library assistant Mark Thomas retrieve items. Because of the value of the items, people can’t wander the stacks and browse.

The library has that musty book smell. Perry once had a student assistant who developed an allergic reaction and couldn't work there anymore.

In addition to keeping the collections intact and orderly, Perry also assists patrons who visit.

Perry is the librarian whom you might conjure in your imagination, not only in style but in substance.

“I enjoy working quietly with material. I love to put things in order and maintain that order,” she said. “I like interacting with the patrons.”

She's eager to help people get what they need. But often they don't know what they need.

“People don’t always know how to state in a linear fashion what they’re seeking,” she said. “They’ll say: ‘I need to find out things about boats.’ When you get to the nitty-gritty, they want to know when the Titanic sank.

“That's where the art of the reference interview comes in handy. It's a technique librarians learn in library school.”

This is Perry's 44th year at the university. She began as a reference librarian and took on her present job in 1985.

Cal State Fullerton is her alma mater, too. She graduated from the school twice – once with a bachelor’s and again with a master’s in history after obtaining a library master’s degree at UCLA. Librarians need two master’s degrees.

Perry said she's enjoyed her job at CSUF.

“I’m good at the work,” she said. “I hope that doesn’t sound egotistical.”

**Local History:** Orange County and Southern California history from 1776 to present.

**American Presidential Buttons and Ephemera:** A small collection of campaign buttons from U.S. presidential and other local and national elections of the 20th century.

**California Water and Related Energy in Orange County:** Documents related to the county and Southern California water districts of the 20th century.
Romance Books and Ephemera: Romance novels from the mid-20th century to present, including sub-genres such as historical and paranormal.

Capt. P. Markham Kerridge Angling: A collection of freshwater angling paraphernalia founded with a large donation from Orange County angler Markham Kerridge in 1969.

Source: Sharon Perry

Founded: 1967

Location: Third floor of the Pollak Library, south wing

Hours: 1-4 p.m. Monday and Tuesday; 9 a.m.-noon Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Research: Many of the archives and special collections are catalogued online at opac.fullerton.edu

Website: library.fullerton.edu/visiting

What is the difference between the archives and the special collections?

An archive is a collection of original documents and other related materials created by and pertaining to a country, government agency, person, family, business or organization. University archives pertain to the history and mission of California State Fullerton, its departments and personnel.

Special Collections are made up of books, pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts, photographs and ephemera pertaining to a certain subject, region, person, or type of material. In Cal State Fullerton's special collections, there are many different collections, such as rare books, rare maps, fine press printed books, local history, angling, political issues, popular culture.

Source: Sharon Perry, Pollak Library