



Ferdinand Postma Library



Keys to
the past,
gateway to
the future

1869
to
2018

FERDINAND POSTMA LIBRARY

Keys to the past, gateway to the future

2018
North-West University
Library and Information Service



Acknowledgements

After the conceptual phase of the process of writing the book was accepted by the Potchefstroom Library Management Committee, the Faculty Librarian for Music, Retha Badenhost, was tasked with doing initial research work with other universities on similar projects. From her findings the project concept quickly moved to the development phase. Her contribution is greatly appreciated. Several people were consulted on the project. The names of prof Casper Lessing, Mr Paul Buys and Ms Hester Spoelstra and the contributions they have made, is worth mentioning. The encyclopaedic knowledge of Prof Lessing of a history that he had a large part in shaping, was invaluable. Many thanks to Ms Louise Vos for the provision of photo material and also for coordinating the printing of the book, and Ms Helet Swanepoel for her liaison role and ensuring that the author has all archival information he needed. A special thanks to Mr Musa Zanempi, Brand Specialist of the Marketing and Student Recruitment Office for his assistance to increase value of this publication.

Grateful thanks are due to Prof Susan Visser, Manager: Academic Grants at the office of the DVC Teaching & Learning for her leadership and support of the project whilst in portfolio of Vice Rector: Research & Innovation, Potchefstroom Campus.

It gives a sense of fulfilment that the book is completed and all can enjoy reading it.

Author: Tom Larney

Contributors: Neli Kaunda and Elsa Esterhuizen

Edited by: Corrie Breitenbach, Jubrie Oosthuizen and Louise Vos

Graphical design by Jako Kühne
Printed by IvyLine, Potchefstroom

ISBN 978-1-86822-694-8

Theological Seminary of Reformed Churches in South Africa established; first library

1869

1905

Theological Seminary moves to Potchefstroom

Library relocated to present campus

1923

1931

Library accommodated in Main Building

Henri van Rooy appointed full-time librarian

1947

1949

Library destroyed in fire

PU for CHE becomes independent

1951

1952

New Ferdinand Postma Library building completed

Department of Library Science established

1956

First use and exploration electronic bibliographic records

1975 -

1972 - 1974

Large expansion of library building

First use of electronic indexing databases

1981

1976

Casper Lessing becomes Director Library Services

Heyday of CD-ROM in provision of various databases

1986 -

1983

First computerised integrated library system

Large-scale refurbishment of library spaces commences

2011 -

2001

Tom Larney succeeds Lessing

Neli Kaunda succeeds Esterhuizen

2016

2012

Elsa Esterhuizen becomes Director Library Services

2017

New management structure for NWU libraries implemented



OFFICIAL OPENING OF FERDINAND POSTMA LIBRARY, 20th Nov, 1952.
From L to R: Prof. Dr. G. Dekker, Chairman Library Committee; Dr. Jan Steyn, M.P.; His Exc. Mr. J. van der Burg, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Netherlands; His Exc. Sir John de Roozemaat, M.C., M.P., B.Sc., High Commissioner, United Kingdom; Mr. David A. Robertson, Charge d'Affaires a.i., State of America; His P.O. Spright, President S.A. Library Assoc.; H.C. van Rooy, Librarian; Prof. J.L. Nelrius, Architect.



Foreword

Celebrating the cornerstone of knowledge – the Ferdinand Postma Library.

The Ferdinand Postma Library on the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University is celebrating its sixty-seventh anniversary this year. The cornerstone of the present library building was laid on Saturday 17 March 1951, while the library at that stage was located in the Old Main Building of the campus. This new building with its expansions and additions over the years has really become the heart of the campus.

For many generations the Ferdinand Postma Library was, and will be for many to come, a memorable landmark on the campus, symbolising hard work, long hours, learning, research and ultimately success.

On the eve of the 150th anniversary of the Potchefstroom Campus, this special anniversary edition of the history of the Ferdinand Postma Library celebrates its humble beginnings but also uniquely contributes to the milestones in the history of the campus.

With its architecture (as the first modern, post-war building of the University) it is still today an important beacon and a showpiece of the growth and academic development of the University. It has positioned itself excellently to not only contribute to the information era, but to pioneer library and information services.

May this celebration of the history of the Library not only bring back fond memories, but may it also inspire future generations to be pioneers in every new era.

Prof Fika J van Rensburg

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Potchefstroom Campus
North-West University

June 2018



Table of Contents

Table of Content

Acknowledgements	i
Ferdinand Postma library timeline	ii
Foreword	iii
Table of contents	iv
Abbreviations	v
The history of the Ferdinand Postma library	1
Prehistory	2
A new beginning	4
Branch libraries	10
The Lessing era	11
An integrated library system (ILS)	12
Computer-based journal indexes and information databases	14
Locally created databases	15
The end of an era	16
Cooperation with other campuses	17
Implementation of the new structure	18
Electronic sources and stock	18
New services and initiatives	19
Repurposing of library spaces	21
Conclusion	23
Reflections on the book	24

ABBREVIATIONS

BATL	Bibliography of Afrikaans Language and Literature
BLS	Bachelor of Library Science
CHELSA	Committee of Higher Education Librarians of South Africa
FOTIM	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions in the Metropolis
GAELIC	Gauteng and Environs Library and Information Consortium
ILS	Integrated Library Service
ISAM	Information Centre for Southern African Music
LCSH	Library of Congress Subject Headings
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and Information Service
MARC	Machine Readable Cataloguing
NWU	North-West University
OCLC	Online Computer Library Centre
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalog
PPS	Professional Provident Society
PTTC	Potchefstroom Teachers Training College
PU for CHE	Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education
PUC for CHE	Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education
SABINET	South African Bibliographic and Information Network
SAILI	South African Institute of Library and Information Services
SALA	South African Library Association
UCTD	Union Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations of the South African Universities



In the development and the history of the Ferdinand Postma Library the name of one person stands in the centre, and there is one event that more than anything else brought about a change in the development of the Library into the showpiece and asset that it is today. That person is, without any doubt, HC (Henri) van Rooy, and the event, as surely, is the big library fire of 23 February 1949.



Henri van Rooy was generally known and appreciated as Harrie, a name which to the Afrikaans ear was much easier than the French-sounding Henri. From 1 July 1947 he was the first full-time and (after his return from the USA in August 1948) professional librarian of the erstwhile Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education. (The College in 1951 would become an independent university with basically the same name, and from 2004 the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University in a new political and higher education dispensation.)

It was Van Rooy's professional training, but especially his dedication to the profession he had chosen and the institution that he served, combined with the loyalty and dedication of his colleagues and successors, which formed the basis not only of the development of the physical library and stock that could serve the academic development of the University so well, but also of professional services and standards of which the influence extended much wider than Potchefstroom and which were widely noticed and highly appreciated in the library profession.

The library fire of February 1949 (of which more will be mentioned later on), shortly after Van Rooy's appointment as librarian, was the eminent reason for the construction of a new library building in 1951 which, with its expansion in the seventies and with other improvements, ensured the central place of the library on the campus and the accommodation of excellent services in fitting facilities. One can indeed say that it was thus ensured that new wine could be poured into new skins, with an exciting phase in the history of the Library being ushered in.

It would be wrong to call the library services on the campus in the three decades preceding 1947-1951 primitive, because the whole Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education (PUC for CHE) then was in a development stage where, with severely limited resources and within other restrictive conditions, dedicated people toiled with an ideal and to acquire the facilities to support that ideal. This naturally had an effect on the accommodation of the library and its stock, financing and especially staffing.

Until the incorporation of the PUC for CHE as a college of the then University of South Africa in 1919 (until that date it was still known as the Literary Department of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in South Africa), there was indeed a library or at least a collection of books, but from the available sources little is known about that. As part of the library of the Theological Seminary, it was initially housed at that institution until 1923, when it was moved to buildings of corrugated iron¹ on the present campus. With the opening in 1931 of what is still

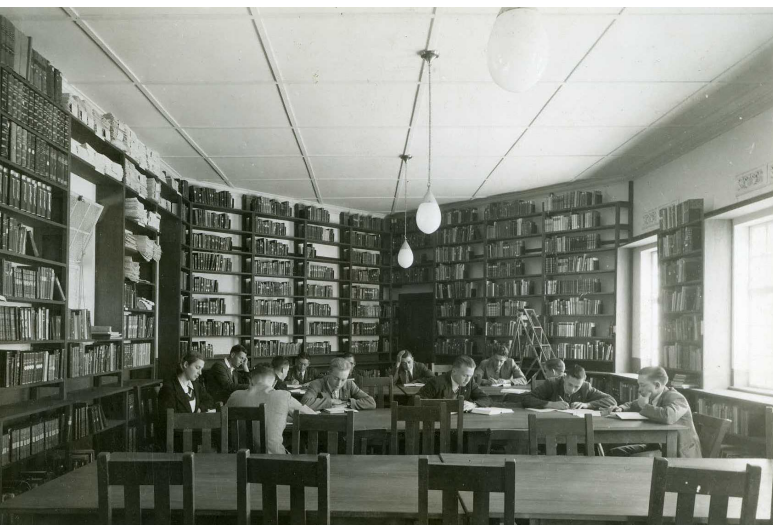
known as the Main Building (Hoofgebou), which at that stage had to accommodate a large part of the campus, the library was moved to two rooms on the north-eastern side of the top floor, and in 1938 another room was added.

The library stock and its financing, especially when compared to modern figures, were initially very modest. The following table gives some indication of the growth:

Year	Books	Journal subscriptions
1922	2316	
1929	5723	60
1935	10563	114
1946	24099	184

The financing of the Library also gradually improved. Initially it was apparently done on an ad hoc basis, until in 1923 a budget of £100 was allocated to the library. This amount may seem very small, but it must be remembered that at that stage it constituted 10% of the income of the University College. By 1927 the allocation had doubled to £200 and in 1928, after a government commission of investigation into universities pointed out shortcomings in Potchefstroom, it was again doubled to £400. In 1929 it was £750, but in 1933, apparently due to the Great Depression, it had again diminished to £200.

The staffing of the library in those three decades was also limited. Initially lecturers were appointed as honorary or temporary librarians for a limited additional remuneration, and often did not serve very long.² At other times the library, as a mere book collection, resorted under the registrar as



¹ These buildings of corrugated iron were remnants of barracks which were erected in Potchefstroom by the British Army during the South African War and later by the Union Defence Force, and which were later bought for use on the campus and at the then Potchefstroom Teachers Training College. These buildings were later replaced by permanent buildings, but the last of them, behind the present Main Building, was only demolished in the 1970s.

² These lecturers often became academically and in other contexts fairly well-known in later years. LJ du Plessis was the famous Prof Wikus du Plessis, who was not only the founder of Political Sciences and the Law Faculty of the PU for CHE, but also during the 1940s and 1950s played a prominent role in Afrikaner economic and political circles. AJH van der Walt later was professor of History at the University of South Africa and during the 1940s and 1950s Principal of that institution when, after the independence of its constituent colleges, it became an institution for distance education, and later, until today, the largest university in South Africa. Prof Gerrit Dekker was a well-known literator, author of the seminal *Afrikaanse Literatuurgeskiedenis* and, during the 1960s and 1970s Chairman of the then Publication Board.



an administrative department. A measure of permanence was achieved with the appointment of Miss B Coetzee as first assistant librarian, although still without any professional qualification. In the next two decades a number of ladies with varying post titles served in the library. After the work of the investigation commission that was already mentioned, another limited measure of permanence was achieved with the appointment of Prof Gerrit Dekker as permanent honorary

librarian in 1929 (alongside his other tasks). He served in this capacity until the appointment of Henri van Rooy in 1947, which in a sense was the crowning achievement of Dekker's involvement with the library.

As already alluded to, until the 1940s there was no possibility of the professional training or employment of librarians. The first potential change in this situation came about when the Carnegie Corporation of New York (which at that stage was already involved in South Africa with the financing of public libraries and the investigation into the Poor White question) made an offer to the PUC for CHE to make available a bursary for the training of a professional librarian in the USA. Because of the outbreak of the Second World War on 3 September 1939, the college was not able to avail itself of the offer, but requested that it be repeated at a later stage. This indeed happened in 1946 when Carnegie informed the college that a bursary of £500 was still available for the training of a librarian, on condition that such a librarian after her or his return be appointed on the level of lecturer and be able to progress to the level of professor within ten years. The college advertised for suitable candidates who were in possession of at least a masters' degree. HC van Rooy, who studied at the college in the early 1930s, who taught at Gill College in Somerset East, and who afterwards was employed as organiser at the PUC for CHE, was the successful candidate.

By the middle of 1947 two things happened simultaneously: Mr HC van Rooy was appointed from 1 July 1947, in terms of the arrangement with the Carnegie Corporation, as full-time librarian of the PUC for CHE (on lecturer level), and he departed to the USA for the studies financed by the Carnegie Corporation. He was accompanied by his wife, Ms JC (Jane) van Rooy, who would study with him at the Columbia University in New York, and who in the years after their return would play, with her husband, a very important role in the development of the library, especially as far as cataloguing and standards, but also library training, were concerned.

In August 1948, after they had completed their study for the BLS degree (Bachelor of Library Science, later upgraded to an MLS, as is to the present still the standard for American professional library training), Henri van Rooy returned to tackle the big task that lay ahead. Three matters especially were attended to:

- During 1948 Van Rooy undertook a countrywide tour to make a study of library buildings and services.³ He was assisted in this by Mr RFM (René) Immelman of the library of the University of Cape Town, who also paid a long visit to Potchefstroom later in 1948 to assist. It was as a result of this that Mrs Van Rooy was also appointed as professional librarian.
- The new librarian was tasked to make a study of American library buildings. Also in 1948 a planning commission consisting of the librarian and representatives of the various faculties

was appointed to do planning for the design of the library and the placement of study spaces and specialised material, also in a new library building, that was already envisaged at that stage. It was as a result of this study of especially Van Rooy, with his exposure to the latest trends during his study at Columbia, that a modular planning model was decided upon, which within a library building would make provision for modules with standard measurements between pillars and walls, thus ensuring maximum adaptability.⁴

- In August 1948 the council of the College decided to make a sum available for the acquisition of much-needed equipment and for the total reorganisation of the Library over the next three to five years.

The fire of 23 February 1949 (on the same day that the academic programme for 1949 was scheduled to start and so shortly after the return of and planning by Van Rooy) was a turning point. Apparently an electrical short in the roof above the rooms in the Main Building used by the Library, caused the fire. Despite the best efforts of staff members and students, more than 80% of the stock of the library was destroyed. Only 4612 books could be saved.

The fire caused a large outpour of sympathy from the traditional supporters of the PUC for CHE, as well as from people well outside its sphere of influence and support. More than 25000 books were received as donations and a further more than 3000 were bought, so that, together with

³ It must have been during this tour that he asked for advice from the well-known RF Kennedy of the library of the University of the Witwatersrand. After the situation and the limitations in Potchefstroom were explained to him, Kennedy's advice to the much younger Van Rooy was: "My lad, start a fire!". When the library fire happened in February 1949, the first reaction of an upset (or amused) Kennedy was that Van Rooy should not have taken him so seriously.

⁴ It is this modular model that not only gave the library building something of a timelessness, but which also ensured that with the expansion that was undertaken in the 1970s, it could happen without the changes being too visible or with too much of a noticeable transition between the old and the new.



those that could be saved, by the end of the year, a total of 33000 books could be catalogued for the library.

As mentioned above, even before the fire and after Van Rooy's assumption of his duties, plans were being made for a new, more functional library building. The fire, which caused the library

again to be temporarily housed in the building of the Physical Education Department, was the final inducement to continue with the planning process. At the request of the college, the government undertook to make available the largest part of the £50000 that was needed for a new building. In the meantime work proceeded for the drawing of plans by the architect, Prof AL Meiring, and

⁵ Interestingly enough, the new building was meant to be the first fire-resistant library building in the country.

with other technical specifications.⁵ During 1950 the contractors, Van Heerden and Johnson, commenced with the construction, and on 17 March 1951, the same day on which the PUC for CHO became an independent and autonomous university, the cornerstone of the building was laid by the then Minister of Education, Mr Jan Viljoen. (There is probably something symbolic to the fact that these two events could or must have coincided, and that the new library with its expanding services was in a way representative of the growth of the University.)



On 29 November 1952 the new building was officially opened. Indicative of the importance of the occasion, and maybe also of the reputation of the new PU for CHE, was the fact that at the event no less than three senior foreign dignitaries were present: the Dutch ambassador, the high commissioner of the United Kingdom, and the chargé d'affaires of the embassy of the USA.



The new building had room for 100000 to 120000 books, seating space for 160 students, 12 study cubicles, seminar rooms, a photographic department and a bindery section (after such activities commenced in 1949 with the appointment of Mr S Buys as book binder).





The library was placed at a very strategic place on the campus, which is indicative of the value that the university for many years to come would attach to it.

With its architecture (as the first modern post-war building on campus) it was a noteworthy presence on the campus and an inspiration for the later Administration building and the Botany and Zoology buildings across the central quadrangle or lawn from it.



About what the name of the new library building should be, there was little doubt at the university. Prof Ferdinand Postma, who from 1921 to 1950 was the principal of the PUC for CHE, was the obvious and only candidate to be so honoured.

He not only for years worked tirelessly for Christian education and for the expansion of the institution, but was also, as a renowned classical scholar, intimately involved in the maintenance and expansion of the library. What would have been the crowning moment of his life's work, namely the independence of the PU for CHE in March 1951, he was however destined not to experience: after he led the preparations for this with great diligence, he died on 4 November 1950.⁶

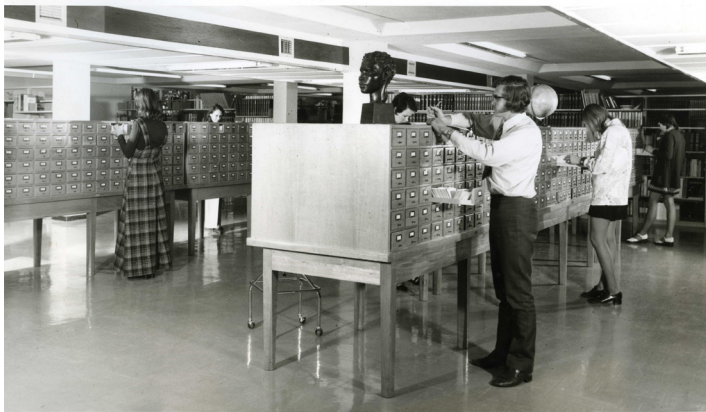
The new library building, as a monument for Ferdinand Postma, but also as a first crowning of the work of Henri van Rooy, would for decades afterwards, and to the present day, remain a cornerstone and indeed the academic heart of the campus. But with the expansion of the campus, especially after Prof HJJ Bingle became the principal in 1964, even this academic palace in time proved to be insufficient. In 1960 limited additions were made, but more significant expansions would follow in 1972-1974. With the experience of and investigations by Van Rooy and Casper Lessing, who started working in the library in 1957 and in 1962 became Van Rooy's right-hand man as Deputy University Librarian, and with the planning and input of Conradie Architects of Potchefstroom, the library building was virtually trebled. A further floor on top and a basement were added, combined with large extensions to the west.

⁶ It is not improbable that the library fire and its consequences taxed his physique to such an extent that it hastened his demise.



The shelf space was extended from 125000 to 600000 books (at that stage the library already contained 350000 volumes) and the seating capacity to as much as 1200 users. The total floor space increased from about 3000 square meters to more than 11000 square meters.

The initial completion of the Ferdinand Postma



Library followed a few years after the appointment of Henri van Rooy, while its significant expansion in the early 1970s shortly preceded the end of his career as professional librarian. In the two and a half decades between these two events, this giant of the South African library scene laid the foundations of what are still today a successful library and library community. Rather than list

these contributions chronologically, the following is an attempt at a thematic listing:

- Thanks to his training in the USA and his exposure (and that of his wife and co-worker Jane) to scientifically based library services, he could in the new library that he all but founded, put in place certain professional and technical standards. In the case of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules it over decades provided a basis for effective cataloguing and thereby made a contribution not only to national cooperation, but also to the later virtual hassle-free computerisation of the library catalogue and other resources.⁷
- Right from the start Van Rooy concentrated on and emphasised the acquisition and availability of bibliographic and information resources, with his point of departure being that even where his own library could not acquire certain resources, it should still be possible to determine where those could be found.
- He was responsible for cultivating at the university a strong awareness of the importance of library services and thus (at least initially and for a long time) a very positive attitude towards library financing. Probably the best evidence of this is the fact that in the years 1959-1965 the university's allocation to the library was as high as 8.38% of its annual operational budget (salaries included), while the highest average at other South African libraries was only 5.42%.⁸
- Probably as a result of his own experience, he placed a particularly strong emphasis on the training of librarians. At the conference of the South African Library Association in 1953 he presented a paper on the subject, and

⁷ One of the developments during this era was the development of Afrikaans subject headings on the same basis as the LCSH (Library of Congress Subject Headings). Under the leadership of initially Mrs Jane van Rooy and later Mrs Vida Venter, the head of the Cataloguing Department, and with the help of academics from virtually every subject field, Afrikaans versions of the subject headings were developed alongside the English ones. The library was thus able to make an important contribution to the development and recording of Afrikaans scientific terminology. This practice continues to the present day.

⁸ An interesting precursor of this attitude is to be found in the second half of the nineteenth century. The PU for CHE developed from the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in South Africa. Shortly after the founding of the Seminary in 1869, its Board of Curators decided that half of the annual student fees of £12 must be used for the library.

emphasised that it should be concerned with education and foundational principles, and not only with routine and technical training. Shortly hereafter the university conducted an investigation into the academic training of librarians and in 1956 the Department of Library Science was founded, with Van Rooy as the first head of the department.

Initially a lower as well as a higher diploma in



library science was offered, to be followed in due course by a BA degree, which eventually would become a BBibl degree. More staff members were also appointed: from 1958 Mr SI Malan (later Prof Faan Malan of Unisa) joined the staff (he was the head of the department from 1958 to 1961),

and in 1960 Mrs Jane van Rooy also became a lecturer. With the departure of Malan Van Rooy once again became department head, with the rank of professor from 1962 on.

- He contributed to the training and professional development of a number of people who would later become directors at various institutions:
 - Casper Lessing, who was one of the first postgraduate diploma students and who would in time succeed Van Rooy.
 - John Willemse (chief director at Unisa).
 - Piet Aucamp (director at the then Rand Afrikaans University).
 - Hennie Viljoen (chief director at the University of Stellenbosch).
 - Frans de Bruyn (city librarian of Pretoria and for a time also head of the library at the erstwhile University of Bophuthatswana).
 - Alida Dippenaar (University of the Free State).
 - Dirk Fokker (University of Port Elizabeth).
 - George de Bruyn (Sastech).
 - Albert Viljoen (consecutively head of the Department Library Science, dean of the Faculty of Arts, Director Library Services at the University of the Orange Free State, and Vice-Rector (Academic) at his alma mater.
- All these contributions, along with his direct contribution to the library profession through his membership over decades of SALA (of which he also was president) and his chairmanship of the National Library Advisory Council, was recognised in 1980, when the PU for CHE awarded him an honorary doctorate in Library Science.

Although all the developments did not occur during the term of Henri van Rooy, the various branch libraries of the Ferdinand Postma Library are significant to mention.

Although from the start, both for economic and efficiency and service delivery reasons, the centralisation of library services was strongly emphasised (among others in the recommendations of an effectivity investigation conducted in 1998), for various reasons (among which the insistence of faculties) a number of branch libraries came into existence over the years:⁹

- The Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches in South Africa, from which initially the Literary Department and afterwards the PUC for CHE and PU for CHE developed, always remained a separate institution, although it formed the basis of the University's Faculty of Theology and a contractual agreement between the Seminary and University was signed in 1945. In 1962 the Jan Lion Cachet Library, still in its own accommodation at the

Theological School, was put under the control of the Ferdinand Postma Library. Although the Reformed Churches no longer contribute funds for acquiring stock, control is maintained about what part of the collection is historically for the account of the churches and what for that of the University.

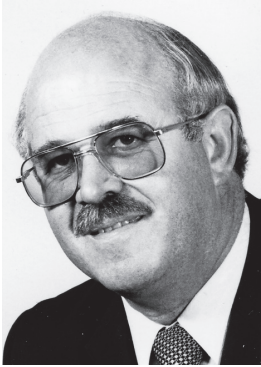
- Because the Music Conservatory of the University is located at some distance from the campus in its own building, and because it houses a distinctive collection of not only books and journals, but also sound recordings, in 1962 a Music Library was established in the Conservatory.
- In the late 1960s the University started to offer courses in certain subject fields in Vanderbijlpark. The result of this was that there also developed library services and later a fully functional campus library in the initially modest and later less modest buildings that developed into the Vaal Triangle Campus of first the PU for CHE and later of the North-West University.
- During the 1970s, amid a phase of considerable expansion and innovation of the PU for CHE, a number of buildings of the Faculty of Natural Sciences (among which Physics and Chemistry) were joined with the construction of a central complex with additional lecture halls and offices. One of the central facilities of this building (which became popularly known as the 'Spinnekopgebou' or 'Spider Building' was what, after certain stock and staff were moved there, became the Natural Sciences Library.
- With the incorporation of the Potchefstroom Teachers Training College and its facilities into the University shortly after 2000 (as part of the Faculty of Educational Sciences), and with the removal of the faculty to the buildings of the college, the Library of the PTTC continued to function as a branch library of the Faculty.



⁹ The possibility of centralising most of the branch libraries was a recurrent theme during Larney's tenure as director (as late as 2011), but it met with little success.

THE LESSING ERA

At the end of 1975 Henri van Rooy retired as Director Library Services and University Librarian after an extraordinarily fruitful service and founding era of nearly three decades. He was succeeded by his deputy, Mr CJH Lessing.



(He became Dr Lessing in 1983 and in 1992, when he also became head of the Department of Library and Information Sciences, was awarded a professorship.) Over the years Lessing was intimately involved with Van Rooy's vision for the Library and with various

initiatives, and he continued to implement and expand this vision with particular enthusiasm. He especially shared Van Rooy's convictions on and involvement with library cooperation. Since 1962 he had been honorary secretary of the South African Library Association, and he served

in this post with distinction until 1980, when SALA became the South African Institute of Library and Information Services, with a renewed emphasis on the professionalisation of the field.¹⁰

The biggest emphasis and culmination of Lessing's career however lay in the extraordinary contribution that he made to the computerisation of library services and to the effective use of communication and information technology in the effective implementation and expansion of these services. Under his leadership, which was characterised by imagination and daring, the Ferdinand Postma Library became a leader in various aspects of this field. With this attitude a large part of the basis was laid for the way in which the University in the following decades embraced and expanded research and innovation.¹¹ It is not possible to make a watertight distinction between the various aspects of this modernisation process, but certain concentration points do present themselves.



¹⁰ It was indeed with a thesis on the contribution of SALA to library development in South Africa that he received his doctorate in 1983, with Van Rooy as his promoter.

¹¹ This progress would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support that Lessing got from Prof CJ (Carools) Reinecke, first as the vice-principal to whom the Library reported, and afterwards as Principal of the PU for CHE. Reinecke's understanding of what the Library envisaged, and the room for movement that he created, was a key factor in the success that was attained.

The first and most important of these was without doubt the development and maintenance of an integrated library system, which, on the basis of a complete computer-readable system or catalogue of bibliographic records of high quality would form the core around which other library functions, like the acquisition of material, and information service and circulation services, could be put into operation.

Although such systems did not yet exist in the 1970s, a start was made, among others by the British Library, with the creation of computer-readable bibliographic records on the basis of the MARC format.¹² The British Library on a regular basis distributed such new records internationally on magnetic tape. The Ferdinand Postma Library subscribed to this service from the late 1970s and used the tapes that were received to download the bibliographic records of books that had been bought and store these apart electronically as the basis for a future integrated system. It was also



used to make printouts which were distributed among academic staff as book announcements and with a view towards possible recommendations for acquisition. By the time the Library terminated its subscription, there was already a database of about 9000 records available for potential use in a fully integrated system.¹³

There was however still a need for a system which could handle the different library functions online. One of the first of these was a system named DOBIS/LIBIS¹⁴ which was marketed by IBM and was already in use at the Library Service of the University of Pretoria. In 1983 the first modules of the system were acquired by the University, because the Department of Computer Services already specialised on IBM equipment. The Library could then proceed with the large-scale creation of bibliographic records of newly acquired material as well as of certain smaller collections. Various factors, among which the availability of funds, limitations on the network infrastructure on campus, as well as changes in operating systems, however prevented other modules of DOBIS from being implemented. By 1991 the writing was on the wall for the system. The DOBIS era however still had the benefit that the Library's number of computer readable records grew to just more than 100000.

It was not easy or simple to decide on another system. Of the other systems that were being used in South Africa, like URICA and Erudite, most were run on mini-computers that could not be

¹² MARC is an acronym for the concept Machine Readable Cataloguing and created a format where various data fields in a bibliographic record (author, title, and the like) could be stored in an electronic file with various numeric labels and additional qualifying codes and a record guide (table of contents). Over time a number of these formats developed in various countries, among which UKMARC in the United Kingdom, USMARC or LCMARC in the USA, and even, for a limited time, SAMARC in South Africa.

¹³ Apart from the tapes that were received on subscription, the Library also bought a suite of computer programmes from the British Library. This suite of programmes, written in the Assembler 370 programming language, proved to be, although it was not intended as such, most useful and valuable for the compilation of the first electronic version of the Union Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations of the South African Universities (UCTD). This work, which was rather more of an index than a catalogue, because it did not reflect holdings, was since the late 1950s first compiled by Mr SI Malan and later by the Library itself on the basis of information continually extracted from the graduation programmes of all South African universities.

¹⁴ DOBIS for Dortmund Bibliothek und Informationssystem, because the system was initially developed on an IBM computer at the University of Dortmund in Germany, with LIBIS added on the same basis when further modules of the system was developed at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium.

accommodated at the University. Eventually, more as a happy chance, a system was identified in the literature which operated under the DOS operating system on a PC network and that satisfied about all the requirements set. This was the Data Trek system marketed by a company of the same name in Carlsbad in California. The data from DOBIS could be transferred to the new system, and with the selective and effective addition of new bibliographic records, the circulation function (and naturally also the acquisition function), could be implemented shortly after, so that the Library by 1993 for the first time had a proper integrated system.¹⁵ The availability of a fully integrated system, with a full information searching module (OPAC) for end users, was naturally also an inducement for the removal of the card catalogue and for the reuse of the space that it formerly occupied to accommodate new counters of a modern and attractive design with computer workstations, which at that time was a showpiece both on campus and among academic libraries.

Further changes in the ILS development of the library happened in 1996 and the following years, with the establishment of a consortium of academic libraries in the four northern provinces. When the Universities of South Africa and the Witwatersrand approached the Mellon Foundation in the USA for the financing of a new ILS, Mellon recommended that a larger cooperative structure among academic libraries in South Africa be formed.

Thus GAELIC (the Gauteng and Environs Library

and Information Consortium) came into existence.¹⁶

With the cooperation of and funding by Mellon, there had to be decided on one system to be used by all the member libraries, and so the Innopac system (later in its web-based version known as Millennium) of the firm Innovative Interfaces Inc in California was chosen. One of the implications of the use of the new system was that all the different libraries' bibliographic records from their old systems (URICA, Erudite and so on) had to be downloaded for processing and loading onto the Unix servers which were bought by Mellon for each university. This in itself entailed big expenses. The Ferdinand Postma Library was the only one of the cooperating libraries in 1998 and 1999 who was able to download its bibliographic records (by then some 350000 records in the Data Trek system) by itself and process them internally without incurring large payments to contractors or the suppliers of the old systems.

As already mentioned, it was one of Henri van Rooy's big priorities to make available journal indexes and other resources to make information about especially journal articles readily available to users. Over the decades, the Library built up an impressive collection of such indexes that, although very useful, was very cumbersome to use and that occupied considerable shelf space. This was one of the resources in which information and communications technology would bring about big changes in availability, and where Lessing embraced the new developments wholeheartedly.

¹⁵ The Library was, not without reason, quite proud of its implementation of the Data Trek system, and always got good support from Carlsbad. Data Trek was of the opinion that their system was best suited for a library of not more than 100000 bibliographic records. When the system of the Ferdinand Postma Library by 1995 contained about 300000 bibliographic records, it was still in active and effective use, although it was reaching its limits and change was necessary.

¹⁶ Only later a mother body of GAELIC was formed as an overarching cooperation between the universities of which the libraries were already involved: FOTIM (Foundation of the Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis).

The first development in this regard was the Library's subscription, in the first half of 1981, of the DIALOG information system, a commercial system from the USA that enabled users to conduct searches on a variety of journal indexes at affordable prices. In a sense this system was a forerunner of the later availability of such databases, invariably still on a subscription basis, on the internet. One of the biggest differences, and hence limitations, was that access still had to be effected on the limited networks that were available at the time and on computer equipment that provided very little of the flexibility of later workstations.¹⁷ Nevertheless DIALOG served the Library well for quite some time and enabled staff to acquire valuable experience with computerised information searches.

A turning point came with the advent of CD-ROM technology from the mid-1980s, on which the most widely used databases were soon available. The Library acquired its first database on CD-ROM in 1986 (Grolier Encyclopaedia, which as a result of the political sanctions that were then in place, had to be imported through the office of another institution in Washington), and practically simultaneously, though not without some effort, its first CD-ROM player.

With Lessing's driving force and insistence dozens of especially index databases soon followed, so

that by the mid-1990s the Library could boast that with the networked multi-drives which it had (especially HP SureStor) it had one of the biggest CD-ROM networks under one roof in the world (with more than 220 CD-ROM's).



But this was also an interim phase, even though an extremely important and useful one. With the advent and availability of the internet, and with the establishment of cooperative organisations like SABINET¹⁸ and GAELIC, as well as the collection and marketing of a large number of databases by companies like EBSCO and Swets, and the ability of these to negotiate and help afford access to databases, the days of locally accommodated and limited databases were numbered and internet access via the World Wide Web would become the norm in the new millennium.

¹⁷ The Library's first access was done with the fairly primitive (in 2017 terms, of course) Texas Instruments Silent 700 terminal with two rubber 'ears' in which a telephone handset could be placed (an acoustic coupling thus) and with printouts on rather short-lived thermal paper.

¹⁸ SABINET (the South African Bibliographic and Information Network) was established in 1983 as a cooperative organisation for the provision of bibliographic information to especially academic libraries in South Africa. The Ferdinand Postma Library had, apart from its membership of SABINET and as client of the later Sabinet Online, close involvement with this organisation in two other ways: the establishment of SABINET was the result of one of the last investigations of the National Library Advisory Board when Henri van Rooy was still its chairman, while Casper Lessing later did valuable work during his term as chairman of SABINET's User Committee.

LOCALLY CREATED DATABASES

The combination of the fact that the Library was always very intent on the use of indexes and databases, and the fact that some important technical know-how was developed from the 1980s onwards, inevitably resulted in a strong emphasis on the internal creation of such databases and on their electronic production. Mentioned has already been made of the UCTD, which was created and being maintained by the Library. With the software that was acquired from the British Library, a start was made with the electronic input of this database, which resulted in the full database, with various indexes, being output to microfiche and being made available in that form to other libraries and users.

Another important development during the early 1990s was the acquisition of the Inmagic programme package which, because of its primary focus on the handling of textual data, lent itself especially to the creation of bibliographic databases. With the use of this package, a large number of databases, both for internal and external use, could be created, and the Library could also in a wider context provide assistance to especially smaller libraries with the expertise

that had been gained. Apart from databases that were aimed at the indexing of local journals, BATL (the Bibliography of the Afrikaans Language and Literature) was one of the success stories of this project and is still significant and active (also through its international availability through the use of Inmagic's DBText system via the internet). Other databases that deserve mention, although not all strictly bibliographical, are those of the Cloete manuscript and Pierneef collections, as well as the inventory of the works in the Art Gallery and at the Information Centre for Southern African Music (ISAM).

(Although not really a bibliographic database, the Library's digitisation and provision of historical examination papers was very popular from the beginning and to this day it remains one of its most intensively used databases.)

Apart from bibliographic databases, the Library's Research and Development Section also provided valuable administrative support through the development of various administrative functions, initially with the use of the Reflex and later of the FOCUS programming environment.



Casper Lessing retired as Director Library Services at the end of October 1998, after a fruitful service of more than four decades, of which a large part in close cooperation with his mentor, Henri van Rooy. Mr PE (Paul) Buys acted as Director Library Services from 1 November 1998 until the end of 1999, when he unfortunately also had to retire. In this capacity he was succeeded by Tom Larney, who was appointed permanently from 1 January 2001.

With the retirement of Larney as Director Library Services at the end of 2011, he was succeeded by Mrs Elsa Esterhuizen, who had a most successful term of office until the end of 2015, with dramatic changes especially to the internal arrangement

of the library building. She was succeeded from 1 January 2016 by Mrs Neli Kaunda, on whose shoulders the responsibility would fall to lead the Library into a new era of integration with the services of the libraries of the other campuses, within the framework of the University's new management model.

From the perspective of 2017 it is easier to look back on the creation and development history of the Library up to the end of the Lessing era. The past nearly two decades is more difficult to judge and to evaluate. Nevertheless, certain tendencies and main areas of activity and development can be lifted out.



Paul Buys



Tom Larney



Elsa Esterhuizen



Neli Kaunda

COOPERATION WITH OTHER CAMPUSES

The early years of the new millennium saw a dramatic restructuring of the higher education scene in South Africa. On 1 January 2004 the North-West University was established as a merger of the University of the North-West (previously the University of Bophuthatswana) in Mafikeng and the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, as well as the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of VISTA University. This implied that the Vaal Triangle Campus, which until then had been a satellite campus of Potchefstroom, now became a full-fledged third campus of the NWU, with the same implications for what until then had been a branch library of the Ferdinand Postma Library, as well as the fact that the stock of the Sebokeng Campus also had to be incorporated.

Even before the formal merger there was cooperation with the library in Mafikeng. It was the tradition of collegial cooperation that existed over years in library circles which made the eventual cooperation between the various campus libraries so much easier as was the case with other departments of the new University.

Over the next decade and a half there would be various developments in the cooperation with Mafikeng. (In the case of the Vaal Triangle Campus the preceding history made cooperation much easier.) Already in 2007 the Innopac system at Mafikeng was merged with that of Potchefstroom and its server, and the technical maintenance and

support were done largely from Potchefstroom. The same integration and rationalisation in time spread to aspects like the subscription to databases and also electronic journals. A further necessary and very important development was the creation of a single web page with access to the services and offerings of the different campus libraries.

On the level of management and staff provision there were also developments. After there had been attempts before 2012 to effect cooperation under the management of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), a Library Forum was created in 2014 under the leadership of that functionary and with the various library directors as members of the forum. In 2015 the NWU Library and Information Services undertook to compile a collaborative strategic plan for 2016-2020. Each library compiled its own internal departmental analysis beforehand. The final collaborative strategic planning session was held at Vanderbijlpark in October 2015. During this first and unique occasion, senior staff of all three campus libraries were able to establish a purpose statement, common values and six areas as common strategic priorities. The strategic goals were aligned to the university's overall strategic plan in 2016 and were effectively implemented in 2017 and currently serve as the underpinning guiding principles for the LIS performance objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW STRUCTURE

The new LIS structure was implemented on 1 July 2017. New management under the leadership of Dr Mathew Moyo as the Chief Director LIS was appointed. There are two directors; Director: Shared LIS Services, Ms Neli Kaunda and Director: Client Services, Ms Hendra Pretorius; two Senior Managers; Senior Manager Campus Operations: Mahikeng, Ms Manare Tshenye and Senior Manager: Outreach, Projects and Quality,



Ms Louise Vos. An additional post of the Senior Manager Campus Operations: Potchefstroom is currently vacant.

The LIS implementation plan comprised of several deliverables bearing impact on staffing to a greater extent across the three campuses, space requirements, infrastructure planning, LIS operations, the budget arrangements, policies and procedures and library systems to a greater extent. The Senate Library Committee was established to replace what was then called the Library Forum with new terms of reference and extended membership to preside over LIS matters of interest impacting on faculties, students, research and innovation as well as teaching and learning. Strategic priorities were clearly defined and are in process of being implemented.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES AND STOCK

As a logical progression of the electronic developments and services that have already been mentioned, there was, especially as more resources became available electronically, a dramatic increase in those. In 2008, to mention but one example, there were already 1,8 million searches on the electronic sources of the Library, an increase of 36% on that of the previous year. As more journals and serial publications became available electronically (among others through for example SABINET's SAePublications, Swets Navigator, EBSCO Online, Elsevier's ScienceDirect and in time also the more archival

JSTOR), it was possible from 2002 on to start to systematically cancel subscriptions to printed journals. Whereas the Library was subscribed to just more than 2000 printed journals, it could at that stage already offer access to as much as 15000 electronic journals.¹⁹ These developments were not restricted to electronic journals: inevitably more and more electronic books also became available. In 2012 the Library provided access to 4875 of these, in 2013 to 7020, and in 2014 to no less than 10778, which represented a consistent and dramatic increase.²⁰

¹⁹ One of the consequences of the availability not only of electronic journals but also of a large number of indexing and other databases via the internet, was that the need for the CD-ROM format became progressively less. In 2001, the so-called Tower Room, where all the CD-ROM drives and towers were accommodated and which was the pride of the Library, was closed down.

²⁰ It was not only CD-ROM's that fell; in 2008 the Library for the first time in decades added no more sources on microfilm or microfiche to its collection.

NEW SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

The development of electronic resources, but also the rapid changes in the academic world within which the Library had to function and had to see that its service remain necessary and relevant, brought about various new modes of service delivery and other initiatives:

- Mention has already been made of the creation of a single web page for the three campus libraries. As technology in this field developed, the web offerings of the Library expanded annually and even on a month-to-month basis. Not only was it necessary to ensure that all the electronic and other facilities of the Library are made available effectively within its web environment, but the Library also had to ensure that its resources and services were available transparently through electronic learning support systems like eFundi. In 2010 as many as 72000 visits to the Library web pages were recorded. This development was not only limited to the Library's own resources, but also included systems like OCLC's WorldCatLocal (now called WorldCat Discovery Service) and the EBSCO's Discovery Service (EDS), which enabled simultaneous searches on different databases and platforms.
- The training not only of library staff but also of library users to make effective use of resources and services, had been an early priority for the Library. Casper Lessing in the 1990s especially took the initiative with the creation of a course in information skills that was in time integrated into the University's syllabi as first RINL and later the expanded AGLA course. Apart from this the Library's Information Services section had always been very active with the presentation of ad hoc training sessions about a variety of information use aspects. In 2005, for example, a total of 132 such sessions for 1745 library users were presented. Later on the use of social media in the support of users would become important also. The training of library staff also required serious attention. Because the University had terminated, as part of its rationalisation programme, the academic training in library services, other avenues had to be found. As from 2007, there were significant developments and progress on staff development through collaboration with Human Resources. Most staff had opportunities to study further. The engagement with the Skills Development Office continues to yield positive results in developing and enhancing staff skills.
- To the extent that more emphasis was laid, within the University as well as in the library profession, on quality measurement and standards in service delivery, it also became a bigger priority for the Library. In 2005 the Ferdinand Postma Library, along with a few



other larger university libraries in South Africa, were the first in the country to make use of the LibQUAL project of the Association of Research Libraries in the USA, whereby various groups of users were afforded the opportunity to evaluate all aspects of the Library's service. The feedback is evaluated in a sophisticated way, and constantly, also in repeated application of the survey until 2015, resulted in very positive feedback about users' experience of the Library. The LibQUAL survey was repeated in 2016 on the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses; Mafikeng Campus could not participate due to library renovations. An action plan was developed as an outcome of the survey which is currently implemented on an ongoing basis. Some aspects of improvement has budget implications which still awaits approval of either the campus or institutional budget committee. The implementation process will continue in 2018.

- One of the most important developments for universities and their libraries worldwide within the digital environment was the development of the concept of institutional repositories, especially in the first decade of the new millennium. In this regard, and with the developments of various electronic platforms, libraries took upon themselves

the responsibility to collect the 'academic production' of their institutions (in the form of academic journal articles but also otherwise) and to make it available to the outside world. In the Ferdinand Postma Library a beginning was made in 2004 with the digitisation of theses and dissertations, as a forerunner for such an institutional repository. That repository, named Boloka, was formally established in 2008, and immediately resulted in significant exposure worldwide of the University's research activities and results. According to surveys done by the Webometrics firm Boloka's position improved rapidly in South Africa and in the world.²¹

- The Library realised the need to properly market the services rendered and that there should be a clearly focused intensive approach. Since 2007 a graphically attractive quarterly newsletter, called InfoForum, was regularly distributed to inform users about the Library and its new services. The last of these newsletters appeared in 2015 and it has since been replaced by a blog.
- In 2006 a beginning was also made with the design, production and distribution of an annual calendar in two different formats. Earlier, and thereafter again at at least two occasions, the Library was also responsible for the production of a screensaver with photos of the library and mainly the campus and environment.



²¹ In this same context the Library was primarily instrumental in the University's signing in 2014 of the Berlin Declaration, through which institutions committed themselves to freely making available their research output on the internet. In this way the University became part of the Open Access movement.

REPURPOSING OF LIBRARY SPACES

The important place that the Ferdinand Postma Library always had on campus, both as a building and a service, cannot be denied. The fact that in a year like 2008 more than a million visits to the library was reported, in itself says something of its central importance on campus. Earlier, mention has been made of the initial modern and modular design of the building. Over the years however, it became necessary, in accordance with modern developments and expanding needs, to make drastic changes to the building. Interestingly enough, it was exactly its modular design that made these changes easier and more sensible.

One of the first drastic changes, and one not necessitated by the needs of the library service alone, was the transfer of the University's archives to the eastern wing of the library building and the refurbishment of the reading hall on the ground floor as the art gallery of the University, two developments that in a manner concentrated the University's cultural and information property in one building. With the closure of the Department of Library and Information Studies in the 1990s a large part of the east wing of the library building became available and the University considered using that space for some administrative department like the Examinations Department. The then Director of Library Services took the initiative with a request to the University management to rather use it for



the Archives, a move that also necessitated the use of a part of the basement. In the same way the reading room on the ground floor, which as a result of other developments became rather isolated from the rest of the Library, provided a natural home for the Art Gallery.

The use of the Library's own internal spaces eventually also necessitated changes. In 2000 a start was made with some training areas, among others through the refurbishment of the then newspaper reading room as the Besembos Training Room. There were however also indications of a user need for smaller group training and meeting rooms, and in 2008 five such rooms were created (which, with the closing of toilets on the stair landings, had other positive results as well), with an additional 2500 user sessions being reported for the year.

Two last developments while Larney was director, and which anticipated the dramatic developments of the Esterhuizen era, was the refurbishment of the Journal Reading Hall (with a large number of additional group rooms, attractive furniture, and more access to computer connection points) and the opening, in 2011, of the Library's own coffee house, Ferdi's, which can rightly be called a first in South Africa.

Some of the most dramatic changes however, which in a sense also took the Ferdinand Postma Library into the 21st century on a visual level, took place from 2012 to 2015. After the preparation for that was started in 2011, a visual architect from Cape Town who was contracted, in 2012 did a total replanning of space utilisation in the Library and drew up plans for that. This was inspired, but in a sense also necessitated by the worldwide development of academic library space and the reuse of specific spaces (mostly termed an 'information commons'), in which provision was

made for the changing pattern of information use by both post- and undergraduate students, with a greater need for the individual use of computer workstations and for group cooperation in safe and attractive spaces which are put aside for that purpose.

In the Ferdinand Postma Library that entailed, thanks to a donation of R300000 that was received from the Professional Provident Society, the creation of a modern and attractive research and honours commons for PC's on the third floor, which was opened with much appreciation in March 2014.



This was followed, thanks to another donation of R250000 by PPS in 2014, by the creation on the ground floor of an undergraduate information commons with 90 additional workstations (which contributed to the IT infrastructure), a training room with 42 workstations, and a lecture room for 70 persons, all of which was opened on 22 June 2015.



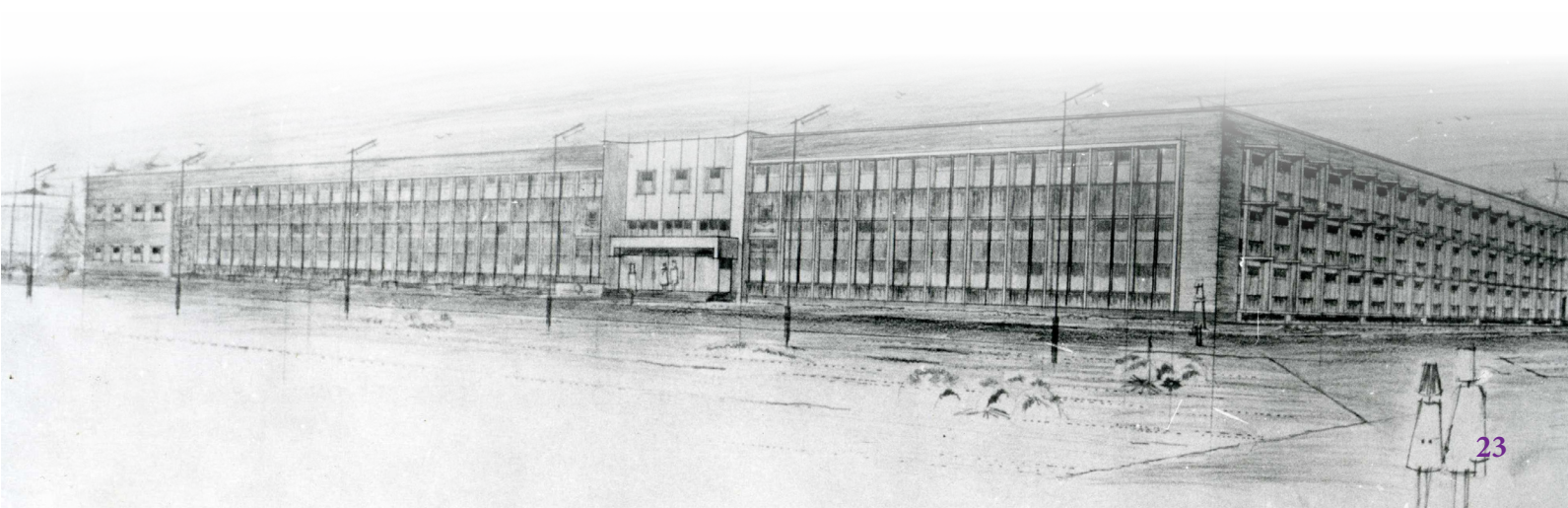
This refurbishment, together with the earlier changes, necessitated a large-scale removal of older and lesser-used books and other material, to spaces in the basement. But with these changes, the Library, which already had been the pride of the University, also represented the progress of the University in a new era with its modern refurbishment and visual attractiveness.

CONCLUSION

This publication seeks to document history and to provide insight for the future. When the history of the Ferdinand Postma Library over the past seventy years is contemplated, there are especially three tendencies that present itself and manifest in the different eras:

- The maintenance of high standards and the training to give effect to that.
- Cooperation between libraries and with other institutions to ensure optimal service delivery.
- A willingness to continually adapt and modernise, be it in the acquisition of information resources or the use of physical facilities.

It was these attitudes that enabled the Ferdinand Postma Library over decades and despite many limitations, to play a respected role in the support of the University's academic development. It is this same approach that will still enable the Library, under new management and drastically new circumstances, to play a leadership role both within the University and in a much wider context.



Given new developments and trends swiftly evolving, the book aims to preserve the history of the Ferdinand Postma Library on the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU for data curation and research purposes. The book serves as a quick reference tool on specific types of inquiries the library receives – mostly from the international community. It gives a holistic view of the past and the gateway to the future. Most importantly, it is about the preservation of knowledge for the new generation to learn and value contributions of university management and staff who served the university with the utmost dedication and passion.

Certain names stand out: Prof Henri van Rooy, Prof Casper Lessing, Dr Tom Larney and Ms Elsa Esterhuizen, thereafter, the library senior management of the new LIS structure that came into being on 1 July 2017 – Dr Mathew Moyo, Neli Kaunda, Hendra Pretorius, Louise Vos and Manare Tsenye. Although the library experienced a drastic setback in 1949 when the building caught fire, this did not hamper the enthusiasm to continue with new and advanced developments of all facets of library services and infrastructure in line with the users' needs. In November 1952 the new building was officially opened p. 6 - 8. Library resources have grown since 1929 to modern technology fitting with new trends. Access to limited resources and information was channelled through GAELIC Consortia in the past for the purposes of sharing resources with other academic institutions. LIASA is the national governing association on library professional matters. Intensified engagements with all stakeholders led to the development and implementation of integrated library resources embraced by all user categories in the form of:

- The Library website with its own domain name: <http://library.nwu.ac.za> is also completely mobile friendly. The home page visits increased with 51% since 2015 by end of 2016.

- The Institutional Repository, Boloka, which is a digital archive that collects, preserves and distributes research material created by members of the NWU, was established in 2009. The aim of the NWU-IR is to increase the visibility, availability and impact of the research output of the North-West University through Open Access, search engine indexing and harvesting through several initiatives. A new webpage for Boloka was developed and rolled out during June 2016. After the NWU 2017/2018 restructuring, the ETDs Collections and Research Outputs Collections were also restructured according to the new NWU faculties. <https://repository.nwu.ac.za/>. The table below shows the rapid growth of items hosted on Boloka in the past three years:

2015	2016	2017
15, 535	18, 407	23, 298

- The library has a presence on social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter and has its own blog since 2015.
<http://library.nwu.ac.za/social-media>
The blog promotes communication amongst staff on the three campuses and enhances liaison on library matters with library users.
- Print and eResources statistics to date

Total number of book titles	488, 612
Total number of book volumes	650,221
Total number of print journals	4, 629
Total number of access to eBooks and eJournals	337,570
Databases	126
e-Journal packages	13
e-Reference works	43
Open Access packages	30
e-Book packages	109

This millennium is marked by users' preference for e-resources as opposed to printed sources. Management has responded to the need by reducing duplication of resources and budgeting appropriately to extend the use of e-resources across the three campuses albeit with central administrative management which yields efficiency and maximum off-campus access.

The appointment of library staff during the past three decades was limited. Initially lecturers were appointed as honorary librarians, p. 2. The Ferdinand Postma Library now boasts fully qualified librarians specialising in specific subject fields as guided by university faculties structure of which some work across the three campuses. There is clear separation of duties in the financial approval system to source additional library materials for growth purposes in order to adapt to the changing academic curriculum needs and stay abreast with international trends. The revival of the library and information science programme will meet the need to train librarians continuously to stay relevant in serving users in a more responsive manner. This programme will reside in the Faculty of Humanities with the LIS being the major stakeholder and will be implemented in 2020/2021. More developments are expected in the future, making the library the cornerstone of diverse, comprehensive and integrated academic programmes.

Neli Kaunda

Director: Shared LIS Services

One gets a good idea of how far the history of this library has gone back. It indicates quite clearly the tremendous strides made in terms of not only merging to serve a university of unity, but also provide proactively in the changed landscape of information and technology to serve its users to the maximum.

Elsa Esterhuizen

Former Director: Library Services, Potchefstroom Campus



www.nwu.ac.za

<http://library.nwu.ac.za>