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For the Love of Books: Marion H. Robinson

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For the love of books

*Bequest to the
Law Library comes
with a story*

*Marion H.
Robinson*

A family legacy of lawyering and librarianship has come together in the form of a major bequest to the University at Buffalo's Law Library. The \$25,000 gift comes from the estate of Marion H. Robinson, whose affiliation with UB began with her graduation with a bachelor's degree in 1923 and her subsequent master's degree in library science. Mrs. Robinson, who died on April 2, 1997, at age 94, specified in her will that the bequest was to become an endowment whose income would be used to purchase books at the law library's discretion.

"She had a very deep and very strong feeling for UB," said her son Donald L. Robinson, a professor of government at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. (Mrs. Robinson is also survived by another son, the Rev. Sidney S. Robinson, who taught in UB's English department for a time during the 1950s.) "She was a student when it was still downtown, and she saw its move out to Main Street and then farther out to Amherst. She loved Sam Capen, the president. And when I went to Yale, she

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used to point out to me that her professors were trained at Yale and Harvard."

But why the Law Library? It has to do with another generation: that of Mrs. Robinson's father, Orel L. Hershiser I, a Buffalo attorney who was a student and protege of James Fraser Gluck, a founding father of UB Law School. It was her father's pride in his legal training, and her family's involvement in libraries, that led to Mrs. Robinson's choice of beneficiaries. "The Law Library was a nice way to blend those interests," her son said.

Mrs. Robinson taught at Lafayette and Kenmore high schools, and served as a caseworker for the Erie County Welfare Department in the 1930s. Her studies at UB also left an imprint on the community, in an unusual way. Her mother, Margaret McIntosh Hershiser, lacked formal education, but shared Mrs. Robinson's passion for libraries. "She used to come home from her university classes and in effect reteach it to her mother," Donald Robinson said. "And what her mother learned from her, she used to create the Kenmore public library system. I think Mother felt she wanted to make a gift to honor both her mother and her father."

It couldn't have come at a better time for the Law Library, whose work of course is far different today from librarianship in those early days of UB Law School. "Libraries in general are trying both to provide electronic access to information, but still need to keep up their print collections," said Ellen M. Gibson, the Law School associate dean who directs the Law Library. "Especially in law libraries, there are a lot of people who don't have access to technology and need to use the print materials, and there are many print materials that have not converted to electronic format. As a research collection, we strive to acquire the scholarly materials published each year, but that has been so difficult lately due to budget cuts.

"This is an especially timely gift, and it definitely will be a help."

As Mrs. Robinson said in a letter included in her will: "I am proud of the School of Law today as I know my father would be were he alive. I hope this small endowment for its Law Library will reflect his love of legal learning."

Said Donald Robinson: "Mother had three younger brothers; one of them went to Iowa State for a year, but neither of the others ever went to college. In those days, for a father to send his daughter but not his sons to college was quite unusual. But he did send his eldest child to the University. That, I think, said something about the value he set in higher education and his affection for the University." ■

Firm establishes scholarship as memorial to Stanley Grossman '55

The law firm of Grossman, Levine and Civiletto is making a gift of \$50,000 to the University at Buffalo Law School to establish the Stanley Grossman, Esq. Scholarship Fund. Partners Morree Levine '52 and Samuel Civiletto '66, created the fund as a memorial to Grossman, who died on Feb. 18, 1996.

The fund will award scholarships to students in the school from Niagara County who have financial need and who demonstrate an aptitude for the legal profession. Grossman was a leading civil and criminal trial attorney in the county.

"Stanley was wonderful. He was universally admired and respected for his talents as an attorney, as well as his outstanding character," said

Levine. "Stanley had a reputation for the highest ethical caliber and conduct as a professional. In fact, he was acknowledged by the bar and the judiciary as one of the most outstanding trial lawyers in Western New York. His surviving law partners, who loved him dearly, will miss him for many years to come. We thought the scholarship was a fitting way to memorialize him."

Grossman, a native of Buffalo, moved to Niagara Falls with his wife, Carolyn, after graduating from the Law School in 1955. They had six children, three of whom are now attorneys.

He practiced law in Niagara County for more than 40 years, and was a member of the Niagara Falls Bar Association, the Erie County Bar Association and the Western New York Trial Lawyers Association. He was also active in county Republican politics.

According to Levine, Grossman was a formidable litigator. For many years he held the record in Niagara County for trying cases that resulted in the highest monetary verdicts and settlements. Among those cases was Love Canal, for which Grossman served as coordinating counsel: It resulted in a settlement of more than \$20 million.

But, noted Levine, Grossman also had a way with people outside of the world of law. A lover of good jokes and a Buffalo Bills fanatic, he was "wonderful company and attracted people like a magnet. People loved to talk to him. He was one in a million." ■



Stanley Grossman '55