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A Life with Books

Stanley Marcus

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Carl
Hertzog
Lecture Series



A Life with Books

Stanley Marcus,
Chairman Emeritus of Neiman Marcus,
Author and Fine Book Designer



Carl
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The Carl Hertzog Lecture Series

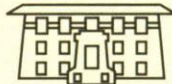
The Hertzog Lectures, inaugurated on February 5, 1989, and presented biennial in the month of his birth, honor the memory and life work of the "Printer at the Pass," J. Carl Hertzog (1902-1984).

A premiere typographer and book designer long before his association with the University of Texas at El Paso, Mr. Hertzog brought his international renown to the then Texas Western College in 1948 and launched Texas Western Press in 1952, serving as its director until his retirement in 1972.

Books bearing the distinctive Carl Hertzog colophon reached a standard of excellence that is unexcelled to this day.

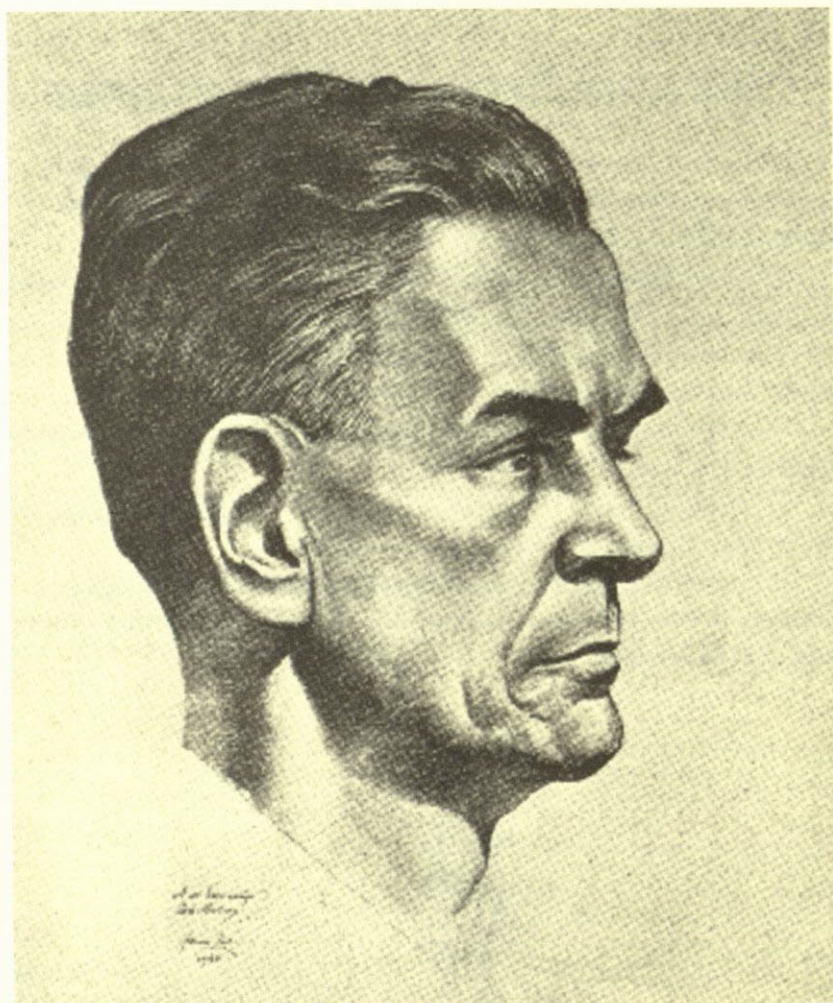
The University Library's Special Collections section is the repository of the extensive Hertzog Collection of books and papers.

The Carl Hertzog Lectures and the biennial Carl Hertzog Award for Excellence in Book Design, are sponsored by the friends of The University of Texas at El Paso Library.



**Texas
Western
Press**

The University of Texas at El Paso



(Drawing by Tom Lea, 1946)

J. Carl Hertzog
1902 - 1984

A Life with Books

Stanley Marcus
Chairman Emeritus
of Neiman Marcus
Author and Fine Book Designer

February 8, 1998

Carl Hertzog Lecture Series, No. 8

(Recreation of lecture delivered by Mr. Marcus February 8, 1998)

Carl Hertzog and I met, after having heard a lot about him from J. Frank Dobie and other admirers of fine typographic design, and I made up my mind that I had to meet him to do some printing for both Neiman Marcus and me personally, and also with the ulterior idea of trying to lure him away from El Paso to come to Dallas to head up the SMU Press. This latter idea was one that DeGolyer conceived and deputized me to execute it for him.

There was no way that I could find, at that particular time, to spend a few days getting to know Mr. Hertzog and to approach the subject of Dallas in more friendly terms. I asked him whether he could consider moving to Dallas and taking the job. He said he didn't think so. So I told him of the various activities of a cultural nature, as well as opportunities for printing, which he absorbed politely and still had a look of "no" on his face. I dropped the subject, because I had to make a connection between the Texas & Pacific train that had brought me into El Paso and the Southern Pacific train that was going to take me out. I had about two hours to spare, part of which was spent on breakfast and the other was devoted completely to Hertzog-Marcus conversations. Finally, as departure time was called, I said to Carl, "What is the message that you want to send Mr. DeGolyer, who is one of your great admirers?" He replied, "Tell him I'll be up there a week from Tuesday, at 9 o'clock; just to look it over."

I came back from California especially to be there when Hertzog and DeGolyer did meet in Dallas. They got along fine and it looked to me like Dee was about to change Carl's mind. He said he would give us an answer before 5 o'clock when he was going back to El Paso. At 5 o'clock I met him, and he said, "No, I decided not to accept the invitation, as nice as it appears; but, I've been around town eating some of your Mexican food and it's just not the same kind of Mexican food I'm used to in El Paso." End of subject.

In succeeding years, I used the services of Carl to print brochures, broadsides, and even a book or two for my personal use.

Everything he did for me was completely satisfactory, including a miniature book I talked him into doing, despite the fact that he had many reservations about trying to tackle anything that small. He ran pretty late in delivery, and every time I called him, he replied by saying, "These pesky little devils are so small we can't hold them

long enough to get them bound. They pop right out of your hands. I'll never do another one of these all my life." As far as I know, he didn't. This, so far, has been about Carl Hertzog and me getting to know each other.

As the years progressed, I enjoyed his warm and kind friendship as well as his superb typographical judgement and taste which ranks with the best in the country.

My first interest in books came about when I went to college, and ate in the freshman eating hall which had formerly been the Harvard Union across from the presidential mansion. They had a remarkably good library up on the second floor which was labeled in big, capital letters, "A Gentleman's Library." Further information printed on the smaller sign said, "These are the books that a gentleman needs to own and read." I didn't actually believe that was true, but I thought it was a good idea. When I graduated and came back home, I tried to emulate this library that had so much influence on me.

In the library were probably some of the best Victorian novels of the day; there were copies of haklyuts, diaries, and John Evelyn's journals. There were all sorts of tidbits that people had the opportunity of reading before these days of acquiring pre-digested information from computers or video.

While I was getting through my first year at Harvard, I found that my monthly allowance from my Father was not adequate to take

care of my basic living expenses and also to buy books. I explained this to my Father, and he politely suggested that if I wanted to buy books, I should get a job and make enough money to satisfy my literary appetite. I proceeded to do this and started my first book venture. It was a search service that I offered to a wide group of people for assistance in locating books they were trying to find and volumes that were not readily available. I did make enough money to start me on the way towards a gentleman's library which I carried on for a couple of years until I had a good start on the building of my library.

Upon my graduation from Harvard, I was looking for some useful thing to do in the Neiman Marcus store, and I found a sympathetic person in the form of the Advertising Manager who encouraged me to study the store's typography and to feel free to make suggestions of changes in both type design as well as fashion art that illustrated our advertisements. While on this assignment, I got interested in having a trademark. It seemed to me that almost every successful company had a trademark.

On one of my trips to New York, I asked some friends in the art world if they knew anyone who could produce a trademark that expressed some idiom of fashion. They recommended a young man who had just come over from France and who was "starving" for work. I went to see him; his name was Raymond Loewy, who some years later became one of the three most famous industrial designers. I think I paid him \$150 or \$200 for the drawing in color, the purchase of which I confirmed the following day. I didn't see him for about 25 years later until one day when I was in Palm Springs, my host invited me to go over to Loewy's house for cocktails. I told him that I met him many years ago, and I wasn't sure that he would remember me. However, when we entered the living room, Raymond embraced me and said, "Well, we both have come a long way since last we met."

By 1970, my bookshelves were getting filled and I could see the time that I would eventually run out of space. I decided to switch to miniature books, that is, books not over 2 7/8" in height. I figured that I could bring those into the house by smuggling them in my pocket so my wife wouldn't even realize that I was increasing the size of the library. However, after having brought in over 3,000 volumes, she did begin to notice that somehow the bookshelves were fuller and messier than ever.

When I was trying to make a decision about my life's career and having taken a course under George Parker Winship in the Widener Library, I received the greatest thrills of my life when I, as a member of the seminar class, was able to pick up and turn the pages of the Gutenberg Bible and other important cornerstones in the history of printing from moveable type. I don't believe anything that I've ever done before or since gave me such a sense of satisfaction.

I told my Father that I might like to become a bookman or journalist or even a typographical designer, which my Father discouraged because he had made up his mind some 15 years earlier that I was going to be a retailer. He asked, "What would change your mind? I said, "Well, the more I see, the more apparent it is to me that retailers don't get involved in controversial subjects of community importance because they are afraid of alienating customers." My Father replied, "If that's all that's bothering you, I will assure you that you will never be required to do anything that you don't want to do freely and willingly, as long as you're supporting a legal cause."

And, my causes were always legal, and I enjoyed being a part of the team that made Neiman Marcus an internationally known institution.

Stanley Marcus

Stanley Marcus, former C.E.O. of Neiman-Marcus, is recognized as a merchandising innovator who brought the excitement of show business to the specialty store he headed from 1950-1976.

Under his direction, the Neiman-Marcus buyers pursued a constant, worldwide search for the fines and most exciting merchandise available. His devotion to quality was only surpassed by his standards of customer service.

His interests transcended his business career, for he found time to devote to cultural organizations and educational institutions. He is a collector of contemporary and primitive art, a writer, and a world traveler, in addition to actively pursuing his second career as a marketing consultant.

He was graduated from Harvard University in 1925 and has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Gold Medal of the National Retail Merchants' Association, the Tobe Award for Distinguished Service to American Retailing, the 1978 B.A.M.B.I. "Flying colors award" for outstanding service to the apparel industry, and the "Adam Award," the American Image Award presented by the Men's Fashion Association of America.

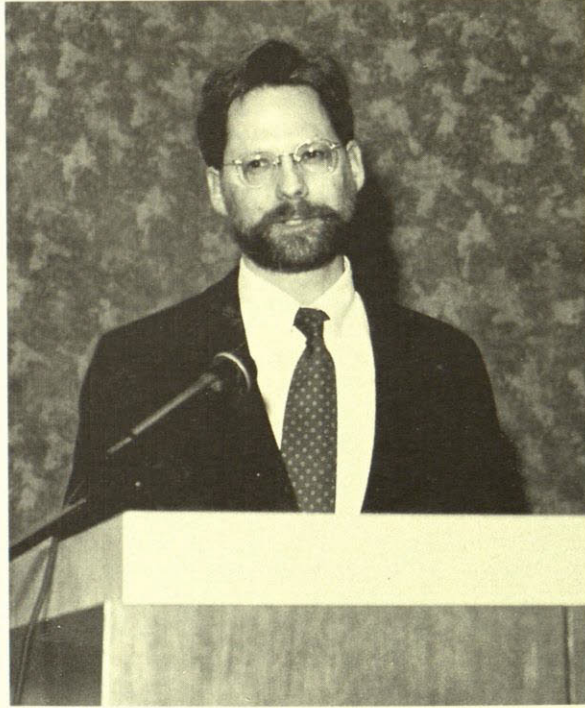
He is an Officer of the French Legion of Honor, a Grand Officer of the Italian Star of Solidarity, and Honorary Officer of the Civil Order of the British Empire. He holds Honorary Academic Degrees from Southern Methodist University, North Texas State University, and the Pratt Institute of Brooklyn.



Stanley Marcus
Chairman Emeritus of Neiman Marcus
Author and Fine Book Designer

Stanley Marcus Publications

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**Mark Argetsinger
Rochester, New York
1997-98 Recipient of the Carl Hertzog Award
for Excellence in Book Design**

Title: An Oak Spring Flora: Flower Illustration From the
Fifteenth Century to the Present Time

Author: Tomasi, Lucia Tongiorgi

Publisher: Oak Spring Garden Library
Upperville, VA

Printer: Hull Printing Co, Meriden, CT

Mark Argetsinger

(From remarks given during award ceremony February 8, 1998)

“I offer my heartfelt thanks to President Natalicio to Dr. Phillips and to Mr. Moore and the Associates of the University Library for this distinct honor bestowed on my work.

I thank you for selecting my work in particular, but I also commend you for providing a national forum for the art of book design. Such forums have languished in this country in the face of rising confusion regarding how to fit the book into a general scheme of art. Amidst the remarkable sea-change that art and architecture have undergone since the beginning of the century, misguided attempts have been made to conflate movements of modern art and the world of the book. The devices of these movements - - manifesto, revolution, and the inversion of taste - while effective in revivifying the arts, tend to make aesthetic eunuchs of once-sound judges of the book. Who is to say which conservative design is effete, and which innovative design avant-garde? Taste, that mightiest of all tyrants, is also easily deposed.

Yet a book partakes of two worlds: that of graphic art and that of useful craft. Just as architecture is not pure plastic art, typography must never be seen simply as a work of decorative art.

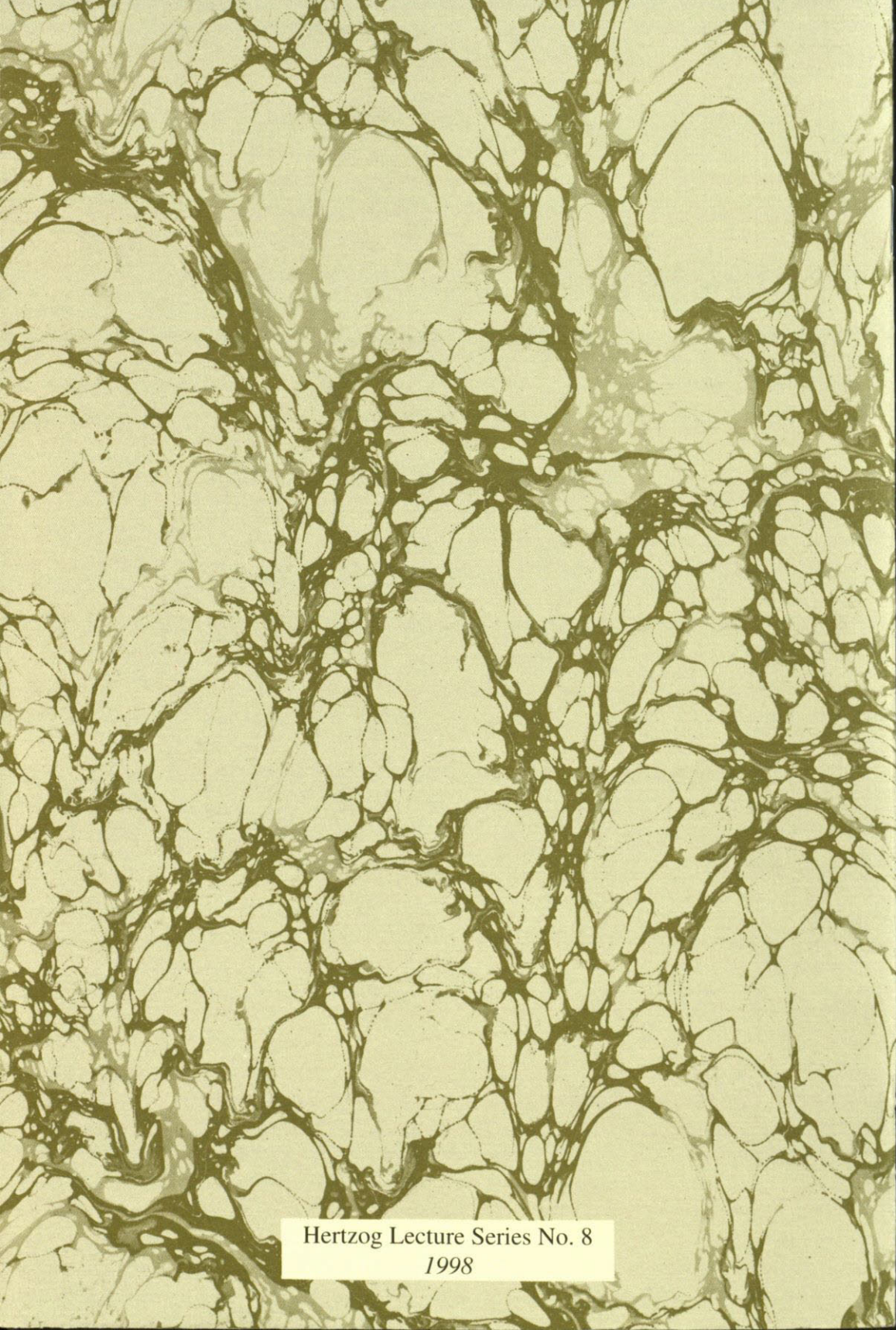
Architecture must look to the functionality of the space it encloses, and typography must look to the functionality of the conventional symbols of the alphabet. These - - the alphabetic symbols - - are the minor gods that any act of design, any sense of style, must serve. These symbols, in turn, serve words and ideas. And it is only by association with words and ideas that book design is made great, by the act of clothing a worthy text. There are, then, objective virtues to reinforce in typography: service to the text, legibility, clarity of visual presentation for the sake of clarity of

thought. All of these precepts of the book are bound in tradition, that is, they are discovered by practice and are handed down through time.

For a book to succeed as a work of visual art, two elements are necessary, and three are ideal. To a base of traditional knowledge an artisan must add his own taste and sensibilities, and in order for the object to be made - - let alone manufactured to a high standard - - this individual must also enjoy the support of a knowledge patron, whether an institution or private person. And, to complete the triad, there must be an audience to appreciate the work. Of this last, the great eighteenth-century typographer, Fournier le jeune, remarked:

“. . . it is greatly to be wished that every literary man were in a position to form a sound judgement upon the typography of his books, for in that case the artists concerned with it would be obliged to have sufficient respect for their work not to disfigure it, as they too often do, with the results of their ignorance and want of taste.”

I have been very lucky indeed in my inspired patron, Rachel Lambert Mellon, whose knowledge, taste, and vision have created the book honored today. I am also exceedingly lucky to have found such an audience in this Award, established in honor of Carl Hertzog, which does such great service to the republic of readers.



Hertzog Lecture Series No. 8
1998