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University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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On June 15, 1978, a few hours after he had participated in ground-breaking ceremonies for the first-phase expansion of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus, Nelson Poynter died of a stroke.

Within a month, the State Board of Regents voted unanimously to name the planned library at the Bayboro Harbor campus in honor of the late chairman of the board of The St. Petersburg Times and Evening Independent.

The memorial to Mr. Poynter was proposed by Regent Chester Ferguson of Tampa, who stated in his proposal:

"I do not know any single person in the state of Florida who has done more for the cause of higher education in our state. It would be a small token of our appreciation for all his efforts. It would perpetuate the memory of this giant of a man who has been a dynamic and contributing force for good in Florida and the nation for more than 50 years."
This would have been a very special occasion for Nelson Poynter. Not because he was a man who loved the limelight, though it would have been rightfully his to share. Nelson Poynter was a man of vision. One of his visions came to him over 30 years ago when he began devoting much of his energy to establishment of a major university campus in St. Petersburg.

Now that dream has come true.

During his lifetime, Mr. Poynter probably had seen more dreams become reality than most people do. The reason is simple. He was not just a dreamer. He was a doer. Born December 5, 1903, in Sullivan, Indiana, he started doing double duties as a newspaper carrier and cub reporter after his father bought The St. Petersburg Times in 1912. He wrote his first story for The Times in 1914. It was about Tony Jannus, the pioneer of double duties as a newspaper manager of The St. Petersburg Times in 1927.

In 1925, he received a BA degree from Indiana University, in 1927 an honorary doctorate of human letters from the University of South Florida with a citation saying, "Your readers know the excellence of your newspapers, but they may not understand that you inspire your employees to maintain your own high standards in their daily work and that they produce the best newspapers they can because that is your goal."

Mr. Poynter knew from an early age what he wanted to do. Journalism was in my blood from childhood."

Before he became general manager of The St. Petersburg Times in 1938, he was editor and publisher of the Clearwater Sun and the Kokomo (Ind.) Dispatch, advertising and business manager of the Washington Daily News, editor of the Columbus (Ohio) Citizen and business manager of the Minneapolis Star.

In 1935, Mr. Poynter began buying stock in The St. Petersburg Times from his father and by 1947 he had become the majority stockholder. After having been editor of The Times since 1939, he became president of The Times Publishing Co. in 1953, on his father's death, and chairman of the board in 1960, a post he held until his death at the age of 74.

Mr. Poynter's favorite slogan was that St. Petersburg and the West Coast of Florida should be "the best place in the world to live." He committed his newspapers to the pursuit of that goal in all areas, including campaigns for good government at all levels.

He and his newspapers championed many causes, not all of them popular or successful, but all of them vigorous and plain-spoken. His editorial independence and innovative journalism brought him national renown. An article in The New York Times described him as "tough as a railroad spike."

The Washington Post paid tribute to him in an editorial that stated in part: "Nelson Poynter was a marvelous, energetic, responsible journalist who believed, quite simply, that the purpose of journalism is to serve democratic self-government. He found three important ways to put this belief into effect during his lifetime."

"Mr. Poynter was best known for having established Congressional Quarterly," continued the editorial, describing how Mr. Poynter and his late wife Henrietta founded the chronicle of Congressional activity.

"Meanwhile, Mr. Poynter was sharpening the family paper, the morning St. Petersburg Times (which later acquired the Evening Independent), into an instrument of high professionalism and progressive politics. He made The Times a combative crusader for racial equality, long before Pinellas County started warning to that cause, and he was equally a crusader for honest, enlightened local and state government."

"For him there was no contradiction between running a national news service and a local newspaper. He believed there really is a federal system, with a national government and strong local decision-making powers, and he sought to provide the information necessary to make the system work at both levels."

"To the same end, he set up the Poynter Fund, which was his third principal enterprise. Its purpose is to provide special professional training for journalists and to bring them into contact with universities and various civic groups."

"A good number of us at this newspaper knew Nelson Poynter as a friend as well as a professional colleague and leader in our business. We respected him for his unique many-layered contribution to both journalism and politics. It is good that the work he did will be sustained in the institutions he created," the editorial concluded.

One of those institutions, The St. Petersburg Times, has won Pulitzer prizes for public service and reporting and both The Times and Evening Independent have received hundreds of other national and state professional honors for excellence.

"Education was a passion with Mr. Poynter," James Reston affectionately called him "a great headmaster." He set himself a goal of paying back a million dollars each to Indiana and Yale for the debt he felt he owned them for training his mind. He was convinced cheap printing techniques could contribute to literacy once new kinds of reading materials are created for mass distribution. From local school bond issues to ground-breaking for new universities, he could be found leading, for he was a firm believer in the axiom that the future belongs to the young.

These references to Mr. Poynter are only a few highlights of a life that was full of a wide variety of experiences. For example, during World War II he helped activate the U.S. Information Agency that founded the Voice of America. During his lifetime, he was honored in many ways for his special contribution to the betterment of our society. He was past honorary president of the Society of Professional Journalists/Sigma Delta Chi and an Associate Fellow of Silliman College, Yale University.

In 1958 he received the Distinguished Alumni Service Award given by Indiana. He also received honorary doctorates from Stetson University College of Law in 1963, from Florida State University in 1970 and from Eckerd College in 1973.

In 1978, a few days before the ground-breaking ceremonies at Bayboro Campus and his untimely death, Nelson Poynter received an honorary doctorate of human letters from the University of South Florida with a citation saying, "Your readers know the excellence of your newspapers, but they may not understand that you inspire your employees to maintain your own high standards in their daily work and that they produce the best newspapers they can because that is your goal."

For his many achievements and his devotion to the pursuit of excellence, The University of South Florida pays tribute to Nelson Poynter in the dedication of the library that bears his name.
A dream fulfilled

With the official opening of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, students and other patrons will have easy access to over 75,000 books neatly arranged in an environment that encourages learning and academic achievement. The new library is not only spacious and functional, but also very attractive and comfortable. Nelson Poynter would have been most proud of it.

The original library at the Bayboro campus was located in two small rooms. When it opened for business in 1968 with then librarian Doris Cook, it had a grand total of about 200 books, mostly leftovers from the Tampa campus. At that time, University of South Florida classes were held in old military barracks that still house the university's graduate Marine Science Department and some classrooms.

The barracks date back to 1940 when the U.S. government established a Merchant Marine training base at the Bayboro Harbor site. Soon after the base was deactivated in 1990, Nelson Poynter's dream of a Bayboro campus came to fruition.

St. Petersburg Progress provided effective liaison with business, financial, governmental and educational groups in planning and bringing the dream to reality. Together with Mr. Lake, Nelson Poynter arranged a tour of the area for Cecil Mackey, then president of the University of South Florida. In 1968, Mr. Poynter's idea of a Bayboro campus was approved by the Board of Regents.

Still, the site had to be expanded to facilitate the full scope of university buildings Mr. Poynter envisioned. He committed himself to donating $900,000 to help buy the land needed for expansion. He also was principal contributor and fund raiser for $250,000 to build a library. St. Petersburg Progress played the major role in collecting additional funds from various other civic donors.

On June 15, 1978, business and civic leaders, educators and students took turns with eight gold-painted shovels to break ground for the $7.5-million first-phase expansion of the USF St. Petersburg campus. This university and this campus will develop into something we all will be proud of," USF President John Lot Brown predicted.

Tampa attorney Chester Ferguson, representing the Florida Board of Regents, echoed President Brown's predictions. "How I wish I could return 50 years from now just to see what will be in existence then," Mr. Ferguson said.

During the ceremonies, Mr. Ferguson turned to Mr. Poynter and said, "You know, Nelson. I've waited 14 years to see this happen.

Mr. Poynter replied, "Well, Chester, I've waited 30 years." A few hours later, Nelson Poynter suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. He died that same evening.

Only a few hours before Mr. Poynter's death, Mr. Ferguson had written a letter to Regents Chairman James J. Gardner proposing that the regents seek legislative approval to name one of the university buildings after Nelson Poynter.

In his letter, Mr. Ferguson said that Mr. Poynter "was tireless in his efforts to bring into being the University of South Florida and has continuously supported its every effort for the past 20 years. He almost single-handedly started the movement which brought into being the Bayboro campus and has given generously of his time and money to achieve its establishment and progress.

The Nelson Poynter Memorial Library stands as a lasting and fitting tribute to a man who, during his lifetime, devoted much of his energies to enriching the minds and lives of the young.
The role of the library

With a sincere expression of thanks to all who have contributed to the establishment of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, we warmly welcome you to our new facilities.

This library is much more than a storehouse for books. It is a home for all people with a thirst for learning, for all seekers of information and for those who want to study in solitude.

The interior has been designed with people in mind. Throughout the library easy access and informality prevail. There are open stacks for books, comfortable reading and browsing areas, special facilities for music appreciation and many other amenities. It's an ideal environment for encouraging higher learning.

We, the library staff, view our role in this process of learning as a threefold function: to arouse interest in books, encourage familiarity with them, and provide training in the art of using them.

With the dedication of the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, we dedicate ourselves to a renewed commitment of excellence and service.

SAMUEL Y. FUSTUKJAN
Director of Library Services

Library services

From Abalones to Zuni Indians, the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library houses over 75,000 books, including a wide variety of works on marine science, business and teacher education.

There are also about 6,000 volumes of reference books, numerous titles on microform, and an up-to-date collection of nearly 600 journals and periodicals. The photos on the following pages highlight some of the principal services provided by the library.

Microform room

In Room 115 on the first floor, the library keeps many back issues of periodicals on microform. This combination format of microfiche and microfilm has been chosen for reasons of space and cost efficiency.

In addition to periodicals, microforms are also available of other specific collections, including Dissertation Abstracts International, Ph.D. Fiche, Eric Documents, National Union Catalog, Books for College Libraries, American Culture Series, The New York Times and Wall Street Journal. Copies of any of these microforms can be obtained by contacting the reference desk in the lobby.
Bibliography service

A computerized bibliographic searching service will be in full operation in the library by the Fall of 1981. This computer service enables librarians to find needed information on a wide variety of subjects, from business to biology, politics to psychology and marine science to sociology. Computer printed bibliographies are available upon request. Students who need help in finding sources for research projects can take advantage of the Personalized Library Use Service (PLUS). For complete information on these services, contact the reference desk.

Interlibrary loan service

Books or articles in periodicals not available in the Poynter Library may be obtained through our interlibrary loan service. With the aid of our computer system, we have immediate access to the resources of the USF Tampa campus library and a growing number of other libraries across the country.

This service is free, but there's a minimal charge for reprints of requested articles.

For music lovers

To promote music education and appreciation, the library is accumulating a growing collection of classical recordings. Although these records can't be checked out, music lovers can enjoy listening to their favorite compositions with the audio equipment and earphones provided at the library Reserve Room.

Media Center

The library makes every effort to use the latest available technology for more effective classroom instruction, communication and individualized study.

The hub of these activities is concentrated in the Media Center, that also will be used for all future projects in communication networking and on-line computer based instruction.

In addition, the center provides audio and video equipment as well as software to aid teaching and self-study endeavors.

Classroom instruction

To aid students in the effective use of the library facilities, Poynter librarians are available for classroom instruction in library research resources and techniques. USF instructors, who feel their students could benefit from this classroom instruction service, can make arrangements with the library's Instruction and Bibliographic Searching departments. The sessions will be tailored to the subject matter and specific needs of each class, and students will be provided with published bibliographies for future reference.