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Poynting the Way

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POYNTING THE WAY

On June 15, 1978, a smiling Nelson Poynter—editor of the *St. Petersburg Times* and a proponent of education in all its forms—wielded a gold-painted shovel and joined the groundbreaking ceremony for one of USF St. Petersburg's first buildings. Hours later, he was dead of a cerebral hemorrhage. There had been no warning signs. Poynter had left instructions as to how his newspaper should cover his death: "...a one-column head, no comment or a bunch of silly tributes." The tribute he received instead was the one he would have valued more: the Board of Regents elected to put his name on the new building, hereafter known as the Nelson Poynter Library.

The doors opened to students in 1981. "We would like to think," says Jim Schnur, today's Special Collections director, "that Poynter at least died at a happy moment. The establishment of this campus was one of his greatest dreams."

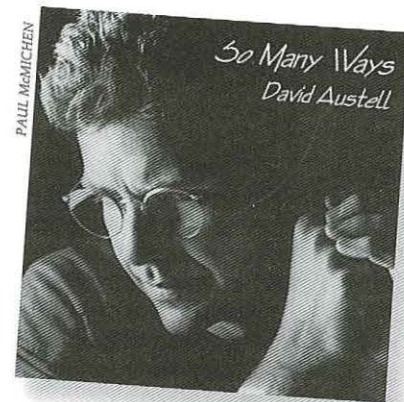
But even Poynter probably couldn't foresee how fast the student population at USF St. Petersburg would expand. "We were simply," says Poynter Library Director Lanny Greaves, "bursting at the seams." By 1995, the collection contained more than 170,000 books, 1,200 periodicals and 6,000 videos and cassettes. Quarters were more than tight. "We had one particular closet," recalls Schnur, "that was filled to within inches of the ceiling. When the fire inspector came we'd lock it up, smile brightly and swear it was never used..."

Plans for a new building began in 1992, and on

August 18, 1996, the new Nelson Poynter Memorial Library opened its doors. Its three stories of stacks, reading rooms and classrooms circle an atrium that fills the building with light and air. At 81,000 square feet, it has twice the available space of the old facility. The view from huge windows takes in the Dali Museum, the neighboring Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and of course, the bay. It is postcard-perfect. "Actually, it's a real problem," says Schnur. "When you're up on the third floor, you can't get anything done because you keep staring out the window..."

Even as they settle into a new building, the Poynter staff are focusing on the future. The new facility has more than 20 PC terminals designed for network databases. All will be connected to the Internet, and will also be able to access data from a central CD-ROM bank. Upstairs, a classroom is specially equipped as a broadcast-learning studio, where classes can be transmitted from the Bayboro campus to others.

But Schnur says that his department, Special Collections, takes the 'most-improved' award. Up from a "desk and a broom closet," he now has "a reading room for 15 or more people, a climate-controlled space for over 7,000 books," and that distracting third-floor view. Stored alongside a nationally known Marine Science Collection and a developing collection of oral histories are the collected papers of Nelson Poynter. Since carbon paper was the technology of Poynter's day, anyone who cares to can visit the library that carries his name and see, in black and white, the story of his contribution to USF.



WITH A SONG IN HIS HEART

"So Many Ways," a Christian music CD, featuring original songs and vocals by David Austell was released just prior to Christmas '96. Austell is the director of USF's International Student and Scholar Services.

With help from his friends and family, Austell spent two years recording his original compositions at Coastal Recording studio in Tampa. The friends include USF Engineering Professor Geoffrey Okogbaa, USF graduate student T.J. Glowacki, musician/recording technician Mike Conway and lead singer Gerald Alderman, who recently won a Gospel Music Association award in Nashville.

The CD begins with Okogbaa reciting the sixth chapter from the Book of the prophet Isaiah. This prologue segues into "The Prayer of the Lark," with Austell singing and playing acoustic guitar and keyboards.

Other original songs on the CD are "My True Self," a tribute to Biblical heroes such as Daniel, Ezekiel and Jonah; "When the Water Changed to Wine," a remembrance of his wedding to wife Amanda; "Little Lamb," dedicated to daughters Evie and Sarah Jeslyn; and "Talitha Cumi," a skillfully performed instrumental piece. The only non-original composition is "Adoro Devote," a Benedictine plainsong (or chant) from the 13th century with lyrics from a prayer attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas.

Although his lyrical thoughts cover the scale of human experience, Austell said the CD is relatively light-hearted. Austell plans to play with drummer Mike Conway and bass player Glowacki at local coffeehouses and churches in the new year.

"Our purpose is to promote the faith and bring it to people who may not know anything about it or might not be able to learn about it any other way," Austell said.

CAN YOU DIG IT?

Ever wonder what West Tampa or Ybor City residents of the 1920s ate, cooked and bought? USF Anthropology Professor Brent Weisman does.



An inside view of the new Poynter Library on the St. Petersburg campus, as guests celebrate its opening.

DEBBE PHIPPS