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The Penn Libraries Receive Archive of the Running Press Book Publishing Company

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The University of Pennsylvania Libraries is pleased to announce the gift of the archive of the Running Press Book Publishing Company. Presented by co-founder Stuart (Buz) Teacher and Janet Bukovinsky Teacher, the archive includes the complete catalog of Running Press publications from 1972, when it began, to the present. Along with correspondence, contracts, business records, and other materials, such as advertising and promotional brochures, this gift documents the history of an independent publishing company based in Philadelphia.

The Running Press archives will allow scholars at Penn to study commercial American publishing at a crucial time in its history. During the last three decades of the twentieth century the medium of print was beginning to give way to digital formats. The industry was moving from small, personal publishing houses running on slender profit margins to large-scale operations whose profit goals were much more ambitious. Running Press both anticipated and participated in many of these industry-wide transformations. Niche publishing and the increased emphasis on design and marketing became integral to the firm's success.

The Running Press archive is also noteworthy in that it documents the history of a publishing firm that was conceived as a business. Running Press purposed itself to serve specific consumers with publications intended to appeal to real, immediate, and often tangible needs. Considered as business history, this archive preserves materials that show how, as the twentieth century neared its end, the American publishing industry began to change in significant ways

The Penn Libraries have a long history of preserving the archival, printed, and other remains of Philadelphia's arts and cultural institutions, businesses, and individuals. Among the various collections cared for at Penn are the records of the Curtis Publishing Company, the Philadelphia Art Alliance, the Philadelphia Musical Fund Society, and the Stokowski and Ormandy years at The Philadelphia Orchestra. The records of Running Press complement these collections and document important aspects of Philadelphia's intellectual and esthetic history.

In recent years, the University of Pennsylvania has become a center for book studies. Opportunities to study the history of books and printing, as well as of design, marketing, and other



aspects of traditional publishing, attract scholars from the humanities and from business and education programs. Book studies have become a field that crosses many disciplines at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and are an important part of Penn's curriculum. The Running Press archive joins resources for book studies that are extremely strong and heavily used.

"Running Press rode the crest of the publishing industry wave of the late 20th century," notes Dr. Daniel Traister, curator in Penn's Rare Book & Manuscript Library. "Its records document a unique era of bookselling history and of Philadelphia history. This generous donation is a very welcome addition to Penn's Special Collections."

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