

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 31, 2016

CONTACT: Pamela McLaughlin
315.443.9788
pwmclaug@syr.edu

‘Our Doors Opened Wide: Syracuse University and the GI Bill, 1945-1950’

Syracuse University Libraries’ fall exhibition, “Our Doors Opened Wide: Syracuse University and the GI Bill, 1945-1950,” will open Sept. 15 in Bird Library. Curated by University Archivist Meg Mason, the exhibition explores the dramatic impact of the GI Bill and the subsequent influx of veterans on the University campus following World War II.

Between 1945 and 1950, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI Bill, supported some 2.3 million students nationwide. Few universities in the country were more closely identified with the GI Bill than Syracuse University. Chancellor William Tolley promised servicemen and women that there would be places waiting for them at the University when they returned, and enrollment more than tripled in the years immediately after the war. Although still a small university by national standards, Syracuse ranked first in New York State and 17th in the country in veteran enrollment.

The exhibition features an array of materials from University Archives that document this critical period in the University’s history and the associated changes to the campus landscape, social and cultural life, and academic programs. Materials on view include:

- » photographs of temporary classrooms and housing for veterans, including old barracks and trailers, which filled the campus and surrounding areas
- » cartoons of veteran student life on campus
- » aerial shots of the Main and South campuses showing changes in the landscape
- » personal items from veterans who attended Syracuse University, including a cheerleading megaphone, a postcard about arriving at Syracuse and photographs of the inside of one of the trailers used as married student housing
- » Daily Orange articles about the impact of veterans on campus

An opening reception will be held in conjunction with Orange Central on Thursday, Sept. 15, from 4:30-6 p.m. in the gallery on the sixth floor of Bird Library.

For more information, contact Syracuse University Archives at archives@syr.edu. “Bill and I are pleased to be able to provide this gift to Syracuse University,” says Joan Brodsky. “This state-of-the-art facility is a critical component of the Libraries’ infrastructure for preserving and providing access to its very fragile treasures.” Fundraising continues for this and other library infrastructures and spaces.

The Brodskys have a long-standing relationship with the University, from which they each hold two degrees. Their three sons are also University graduates, as is Bill’s brother and both of Joan’s brothers. Bill is a Life Trustee of the University and served on the Law School Board of Advisors from 1995-2003. He is chairman of the Chicago Board Options Exchange, after beginning his career as an attorney in the securities industry. Joan is a member of the Syracuse University Libraries Advisory Board and a former member of the iSchool Advisory Board. She also serves on the boards of the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Foundation Board of the Lincoln Library in Springfield, Ill., and the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

###