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Special Collections Research Center plays central role in University's new graphic identity

The Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Libraries is pleased to announce that Syracuse University's new branding utilizes a Goudy-inspired typeface derived from original materials in the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC).

William La Moy, curator of rare books and manuscripts in the SCRC, has spent the last several years researching the deep relationship between Syracuse University and revered American printer and designer Frederic Goudy. La Moy's research revealed an important piece of University history and, ultimately, led to a distinctive new typeface to represent the University.

In 1934, Syracuse University School of Journalism Dean M. Lyle Spencer knew of Goudy's importance and thought it would be a good idea for the new journalism program to form an association with an important American type designer. Spencer approached Goudy, who lived in the Hudson Valley, and he became interested in the fledgling program. Along with being asked to join the faculty and become a consultant, Goudy was awarded a medal for typographic excellence by the journalism school and given an honorary degree.

Recently, as the University looked to enhance its brand identity, in collaboration with New York City design firm Pentagram, designers exploring the University's history visited the Special Collections Research Center to view Goudy's Sherman typeface. The typeface was gifted to the University by Goudy's niece and is largely unknown, having been used only in a few private press publications in the 1910s. The metal type has been housed in and safeguarded by SU Libraries for decades. "It is not only beautiful, but it has the lightness, the serviceability, and the range to serve a broad spectrum of publishing needs," explains La Moy.

"Typography plays such a central role in branded communications," says Rob Rayfield, executive director of digital and creative services in the University's Office of Marketing and Communications. "Its effect and the impression it carries requires careful consideration when identifying a font to align with an institution's identity. Sherman seemed to be patiently waiting in our archives to emerge and fill the role it's so perfectly suited for at Syracuse University."

“The Special Collections Research Center is delighted to contribute to Syracuse University’s new visual identity,” says senior director Lucy Mulroney. “The use of unique historical collections for the creation of a distinctive new typeface for the University speaks to our mission to support scholarship, creativity, and entrepreneurial endeavors.”

Chief Curator Andrew Saluti is currently developing an exhibition with La Moy that will highlight the University’s history with Goudy, his impact on typography, and his legacy as embodied in the University’s new typeface. The exhibition is planned to open in fall 2017 in the Special Collections Research Center in Bird Library.

Syracuse University, in partnership with Pentagram and production company DressCode, created a brief documentary video on the creation of the new typeface. “[Goudy and Syracuse: The Tale of a Typeface Found](#)” features La Moy, Michael Bierut of Pentagram, and type designer Chester Jenkins of Brooklyn, co-founder of Village Type.

Syracuse University has also issued a news story about the discovery, [Hidden Treasure in Special Collections Embodies Syracuse University Spirit](#), written by Kathleen Haley.

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