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Contact: Pamela McLaughlin
Phone: (315) 443-9788
pwmclaug@syr.edu

Syracuse University Library Plastics Collection expands online presence

The Syracuse University Library has launched a redesigned and expanded website devoted to its extensive Plastics Collection. The new site now offers approximately 3,000 objects with high quality photographs, information about plastic materials and processes, and twice the previous number of biographies and company histories. Of particular note, viewers can now submit additional information about objects, people, and companies through the site.

The Plastics Collection supports research in the study and understanding of plastics in modern society, including its role in chemistry, technology, industry, marketing, health, art, design, and other fields. According to Sean M. Quimby, Senior Director of Special Collections, "the website makes available to a wide public instantaneously a complete listing of all the library plastics resources." Rich metadata allows for easy searching. High-quality, zoomable images permit even small details to be examined, while biographies and company histories provide context for the individual objects.

A team of library staff from the Special Collections Research Center and Library Information Technology worked collaboratively to develop the new website, which began as a joint project of the Syracuse University Library and the Plastics History & Artifacts Committee (PHAC) of the Plastics Pioneers Association. Continuing support has been provided by SU alumnus Harry Greenwald and the Greenwald-Haupt Charitable Foundation.

Prof. Jeffrey Meikle, Stiles Professor in American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and author of the authoritative book *American Plastics*, says that "while it's an entry point and guide to the collection, the new website is also a superb introduction to the history of plastics in general. Through the growing collection and the website, Syracuse has become the center of plastics history."

The Library maintains an active acquisitions program for all areas of the Plastics Center collection. Donors can support the SU Plastics Collection by making a gift to the Collection Development Fund or helping sponsor the new “version 2” website. To learn more about how to make a gift of support or give an artifact, see plastics.syr.edu/give/. For more information about how to support the SU Plastics Collection, please contact Assistant Dean for Advancement Ron Thiele at rlthiele@syr.edu.

The Special Collections Research Center is a hub for primary source research located on the sixth floor of Syracuse University’s Bird Library. It is devoted to collecting and preserving rare research materials in all formats and to connecting students, faculty, outside scholars and the community to its collections. For more information, visit scrc.syr.edu. Inquiries about the Plastics Collection may be directed to the curator, Samuel Gruber, at 315-443-3971 or plastics@syr.edu.

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