Eduardo Lozano has built a renowned Latin American Collection

When Eduardo Lozano started working at Hillman Library, he was faced with a huge responsibility—to establish a Latin American collection at a time when the idea of studying Latin America as an area was just beginning to take form. Planning to stay in Pittsburgh no more than a year, he moved from his native Argentina to take the job in 1967. After that year was up, he found the work too compelling to leave. Thirty years and more than 340,000 volumes later, Lozano is still in charge of the collection.

He says that until the Cold War, much of the interest in Latin America was limited to literature and history. Then came the Cuban Revolution. “After that, Latin America was recognized as something to be careful about,” Lozano says. “A real interest grew in the universities to study what was going on there socially, politically, and economically.”

He recalls those early days at Pitt: “a marvelous experience.” The University already had a small group of Latin American scholars, the seed of today’s prominent Center for Latin American Studies. Lozano says they immediately put his expertise as former director of two Argentinean research libraries to work.

Lozano’s hands-on approach to purchasing materials has helped make the collection distinctive among the growing number of universities with Latin American studies programs. Every year, he visits South and Central America, returning with what he calls a “treasure trove” of materials that would either be much more expensive here or not available at all. “I bring back a lot of noncommercial material—government documents, publications from research centers and nongovernmental organizations.”

The Latin American Collection is internationally renowned for its resources on Bolivia, Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina. “People from these countries come here for their research,” Lozano says with a smile. For the past 17 years, the U.S. Department of Education has recognized the strength of the University’s Center for Latin American Studies by awarding it competitive research grants, a portion of which goes toward Lozano’s book purchases.

Thirty years after his first day at Hillman, is Lozano thinking about retirement? No. Though his life outside Pitt is more than full—Lozano is well-regarded as a painter and writer of poetry, fiction, and essays—he sees no reason to move on. Gesturing to the shelves around him he says, “When I go home, there are books all around me. When I come to work there are books all around me. So this is also my house. Why would I need to retire?”