Hillman Library and the Eduardo Lozano Latin American Collection: Thirty Years of Growth, Ready for Thirty More!
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Nineteen sixty-seven was a watershed year for the University of Pittsburgh. This was the year that Eduardo Lozano arrived in Pittsburgh to begin the process of building the Latin American library collection. This coincided with the transfer of the library system from its cramped quarters on several floors of the Cathedral of Learning to the newly constructed Hillman Library building on the corner of Forbes Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard.

The site for locating the building and the money required to construct it were secured in 1957 and 1958—with $7 million provided from the General Services Administration and a critical $3 million donated by the Hillman family and Hillman Foundation as a memorial to the coal/steel/gas entrepreneur John Hartwell Hillman Jr. Because of delays in demolishing buildings on the site and changes in plans and design, construction did not actually begin until June 1965. According to Pitt: The Story of the University of Pittsburgh: 1787-1987 (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986) by Robert C. Alberts, “The library was designed to hold 2.5 million bound volumes on self-service open stacks, to serve 2,400 readers at one time, and to contain administrative offices, student and faculty carrels, rooms for reading, conferences, conversation, smoking, and contemplation, and departments to hold periodicals, rare books, special collections, large research collections, files of government documents, archives, and audiovisual equipment” (page 264). The core of any great university is its library, and the design and facilities of Hillman Library were state-of-the-art.

As Hillman Library began to fill with books, the Latin American Collection was growing with donations of books from Mexican, Bolivian, and other Latin American scholars. Many of these collections were secured by Cole Blasier (founder of the Center for Latin American Studies) and James Malloy (a distinguished political scientist who has been associated with the Center since its creation). The Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) was founded in 1964, and no one could have projected the degree of interest, support, or success that CLAS would eventually attain. Over the last 34 years, CLAS has become nationally and internationally known for its achievements and successes. It is ranked among the top Latin American studies programs in the United States and has been recognized by the US Department of Education as a National Resource Center since 1979. The Latin American Library Collection continues to be the core of Latin American studies at Pitt. It contains exceptional collections on Bolivia and Cuba, as well as extensive holdings on Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. This impressive collection is attributable to the dedication of CLAS faculty and staff and, especially, to the efforts of Eduardo Lozano.

As the Hillman Library celebrates its thirtieth year, the library system’s collections have outgrown the confines of what was once a state-of-the-art facility. Who could have dreamed in 1967 that there would be such a significant growth of the library system, particularly in the special and area collections devoted to international studies? As the Cold War fueled the need for international information and knowledge, budgets expanded accordingly. The University of Pittsburgh was poised to take advantage of this opportunity because of its commitment to international programs and its outstanding library facility. The dedication of Eduardo Lozano increased the Latin American collection from less than 30,000 volumes in 1967 to over 350,000 in 1997 (not to mention periodicals, microforms, and other media).

From the beginning, for reasons related to the interdisciplinary nature of Latin American studies at Pitt, the decision was made to integrate the books on Latin America into the general collection of the Hillman Library. Because Hillman Library contains approximately 1.9 million volumes of the university library system’s total of 3.7 million, the Eduardo Lozano Latin American Collection accounts for about 18 percent of the volumes on the stacks. While this integration is helpful to scholars engaged in comparative research, the result is that one will search Hillman Library in vain for a spatial referent to the Latin American collection in spite of the fact that it is arguably the largest specialized collection in the library. As Eduardo Lozano pointed out during the reception to celebrate the naming of the collection in his honor, his biggest frustration has been the lack of a common reading, contemplating, and conversing space for people interested in Latin American studies. As he put it, “Latin Americans and Latin Americanists like to be together in a space where they can exchange ideas and thoughts.”
Plans are now being made for an addition to the Hillman Library to prepare it and the University of Pittsburgh for the next millennium. Eduardo Lozano plans to be active in continuing to build the Latin American collection in the expanded Hillman Library. One of his dreams is that the expansion will include a Latin American Reading Room—providing visibility for the collection and a comfortable space in which students and faculty can meet and converse. We share his dream and hope that the Eduardo Lozano Reading Room of the Hillman Library will be decorated with the paintings of the man who has built the collection.