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Dedication of the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
marks the beginning of a new chapter at Penn Libraries

Philadelphia, PA On Wednesday, November 20, over 200 guests joined the Penn Libraries to celebrate the dedication and naming of the *Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts*. The new space, centrally located on campus, is named in honor of Jay I. Kislak and his family, who were on-hand for the celebrations. Jay Kislak and the Kislak Family Foundation donated $5.5 million to the Penn Libraries to complete the $17 million renovation to the 5th and 6th floors of the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. This is the largest cash gift given to the Penn Libraries from a living donor. Mr. Kislak is an avid collector of books and artifacts and a longtime supporter of the University. A graduate of the Wharton School in 1943, he is the first of three generations of his family to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania. Younger generations include his son Philip T. Kislak, who graduated in 1970, and his granddaughter Elizabeth Kislak, a 2010 graduate. The Kislaks' donation also will include a number of rare books and manuscripts from the family's collections.

The Kislak Center dedication included an inspiring lecture on the importance of special collections and their role in generating new knowledge from Dr. William Noel, Director of the Kislak Center and Schoenberg Institute; Dr. Rita Copeland, Penn Professor of Classical Studies, English and Comparative Literature and the Sheli Z. and Burton X. Rosenberg Professor of Humanities; and Michael F. Suarez, Director of the Rare Book Schools and Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

In her remarks to dedicate the space, President Amy Gutmann presented Mr. Kislak with a symbolic key sharing, "For centuries—and still in some places today—archives faced inward. They were secretive, protective, and guarded. In fact, in eras preceding ours, some books were considered so valuable and knowledge so scarce that volumes were physically chained in place—an outward manifestation of the ethos of the archive. With the creation of this Center, unfettered access to knowledge is more strongly than ever our defining philosophy. Jay, I am so pleased to present you with this key, a symbol both of our deep gratitude and of the worlds of knowledge you have unlocked through your great generosity to this University. You have made vast resources accessible in a profoundly transformative way for generations to come."

The Kislak Center has been specially redesigned to reflect the new requirements of a field that is being transformed for the 21st century. It includes several small and large group learning spaces to allow different groups to interact with objects of study simultaneously, increasing the use of primary resources in the

University's curriculum and access to the Penn Libraries' resources for the larger scholarly community. The Kislak Center also incorporates all of the latest technology, showcasing the importance of the digital humanities in the Kislak Center programming. Over the next several months the Kislak Program Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives of the Kislak Family Foundation, faculty and staff from the Kislak Center, will be developing new and innovative programs to continually push the boundaries of how special collections can be used, adding to the Center's already impressive list of programs and exhibitions. Additional details about the new programming will be shared publically in the months ahead.

About the Kislak Foundations

The *Kislak Family Foundation* is a private philanthropic foundation established in 1993 to support education, arts and humanities, and other worthwhile charitable endeavors in the United States and abroad. Based in Miami Lakes, Florida, the foundation provides donations to a wide range of nonprofit organizations and projects.

The *Jay I. Kislak Foundation*, established in 1984, is a private nonprofit cultural institution engaged in the collection, conservation, research and interpretation of rare books, manuscripts, maps and indigenous art and cultural artifacts of the Americas and other parts of the world. Kislak collections are rich in primary research materials on the history of Florida, the Caribbean and Mesoamerica, with special emphasis on native cultures, their contact with Europeans and the colonial period to about 1820.

About the Penn Libraries

Building on a tradition that began with the University's founding in 1750, the Penn Libraries serve a world-class faculty and the students of Penn's twelve schools. The collections comprise more than seven million volumes, a million of which are in electronic form; over 100,000 journals; and extraordinary rare and unique materials that document the intellectual and cultural experience of civilizations, ancient and modern. These resources are organized into fifteen separate libraries that serve the humanities, social and physical sciences, and Penn's programs in medicine, nursing, dentistry and veterinary science. Today, the Libraries play an instrumental role in developing new technologies for information discovery and dissemination and are noted for groundbreaking work in digital library design. To learn more about the Penn Libraries, visit www.library.upenn.edu.

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Images from the Kislak Dedication

Image 1: (From left to right) H. Carton Rogers, Vice Provost and Director, Penn Libraries; Jay I. Kislak; Dr. Amy Gutmann, President, University of Pennsylvania

Image 2: Members of the Kislak Family

Image 3: Guests of Kislak Center dedication viewing materials from the Jay I. Kislak collection on globalization in the Henry Charles Lea Library

Image 4: Guests of Kislak Center dedication listening to the lecture