

Willy Ley Memorial Collection

DEDICATION AND OPENING

Friday, 16 April 1971, 9:00 a.m., UAH Library, Second Floor

Introduction

Dr. Benjamin B. Graves, President, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Remarks

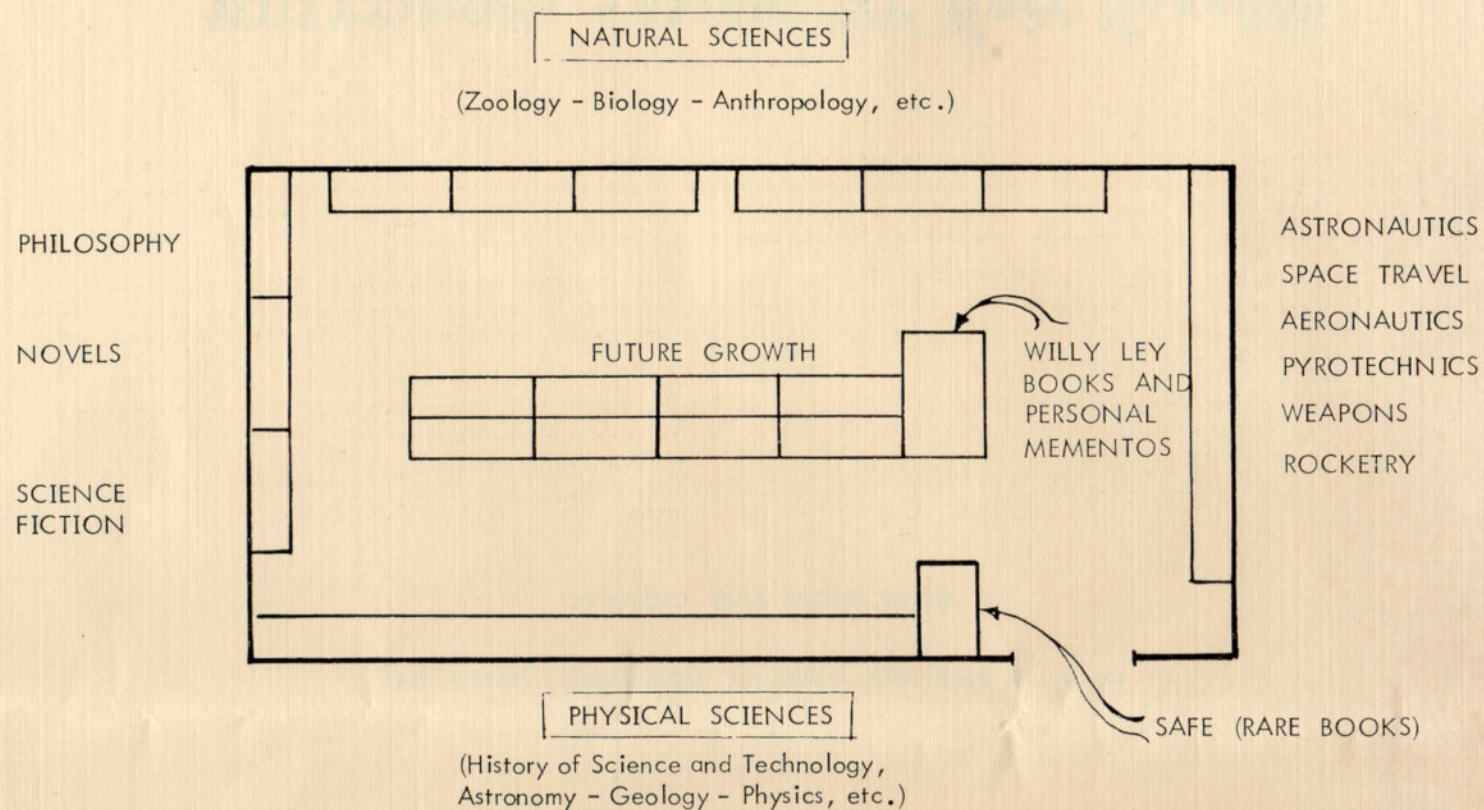
Dr. Wernher von Braun, Deputy Associate Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington

Dr. Arthur Rudolph, former Manager of Saturn 5 Program, NASA — Marshall Space Flight Center; now consultant

Mr. David L. Christensen, Division of Graduate Programs and Research, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Opening of Collection

Mrs. Willy Ley



GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF WILLY LEY DOCUMENTS

Located on second floor of UAH Library

ABOUT WILLY LEY

Willy Ley was born in Berlin on 2 October 1906 in Germany and studied at the Universities of Berlin and Königsberg in East Prussia, where he concentrated on paleontology, astronomy, and physics. He had planned at one time to become a geologist, but then became interested in the theoretical work being done on rockets and space travel; in 1927 he became one of the founders of Verein für Raumshiffahrt, the German space flight society, which pioneered in rocket research.

Ley came to the United States in 1935. His career in this country included such positions as science editor for the New York newspaper PM and research engineer at the Washington, D.C. Institute of Technology. A free-lance writer since 1927, he was also an information specialist for the Office of Technical Services of the United States Department of Commerce. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1944.

Willy Ley was a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society and a member of the Society of American Military Engineers. He also taught as a professor of science at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. His many books include *Die Fahrt ins Weltall* (A Trip into Space); *Die Möglichkeit der Weltraumfahrt* (The Possibility of Space Travel); *Watchers of the Skies: An Informal History of Astronomy from Babylon to the Space Age*; *Beyond the Solar System*; *The Conquest of Space*; *Rockets, Missiles, and Men in Space*; with Wernher von Braun, *The Exploration of Mars*; and many works on zoology. He died in New York on 24 June 1969.

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

This special collection was purchased by The University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1970. It consists of all Willy Ley's books and journals dealing with rocketry, space travel, astronomy, history of science and technology, aeronautics, physics, chemistry, mathematics, the biological sciences, anthropology, evolution, geography, exploration, philosophy, science fiction, etc.

Arrangements for the UAH purchase of the library were made by Professor Frederick I. Ordway during a series of meetings in New York in March and April 1970 with Olga Ley, Willy Ley's widow. Professor Ordway spent an entire week in early May at the Ley home on Long Island organizing the collection, most of which had been stored in the attic, and supervising the packing and transport operations. At the same time, he organized and arranged for shipment to the Smithsonian Institution all of the Ley papers, clipping files, memorabilia, manuscripts, and the like in accordance with an agreement reached between Mrs. Ley and Mr. Frederick C. Durant, Assistant Director—Astronautics, National Air and Space Museum. Strong support for UAH's acquisition of the Ley library was given by Dr. Wernher von Braun, Dr. Eberhard Rees, Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger, and Dr. Arthur Rudolph, all of NASA; President Benjamin B. Graves and Dean John F. Porter, both of UAH; and Dr. Rudolf Hermann, then director of the UAH Research Institute.

The collection in its present form was arranged by Professor Ordway and Mr. David L. Christensen of the Division of Graduate Programs and Research. Over 5000 volumes have been placed on display including many rare and classic books on astronomy, astronautic, zoology, anthropology, science fiction, and geology.

It is planned to further organize and catalog the collection for scholarly research and reference efforts and further emphasize the extremely broad range of interests and knowledge of Willy Ley.

Friday, 16 April 1971, 10:15 a.m., UAH
Science and Engineering Building, Room 127

Mr. John S. Beltz, Saturn Historian,
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Commentary and Discussion



Frederick I. Ordway and David L. Christensen
Division of Graduate Programs and Research
The University of Alabama in Huntsville