those in institutions with a strong liberal arts curriculum.—*Ruth Ann Jones, Special Collections Cataloger, Michigan State University Libraries.*

Alan Gribben. *Harry Hunt Ransom: Intellect in Motion.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. 356p. ISBN 978-0-292-71704-6. \$60

Alan Gribben's *Harry Hunt Ransom: Intellect in Motion* was a labor that involved eighteen years of research. This full-length biography (356 pages with notes and index) serves as a comprehensive guide to Harry Hunt Ransom's life, with a focus toward Ransom's activities at the University of Texas at Austin (UT).

The book begins with a sketch of Ransom's childhood and young adulthood and then transitions to detailing primarily Ransom's professional life. During his time at UT (1935–1971), Ransom served in several capacities: moving through the ranks as professor, assistant dean, dean, vice president, provost, president, and, finally, chancellor. Most remarkably, while climbing the academic ladder, Ransom also found the time to build up the rare books collection and establish a humanities research center at UT that would bear his name, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center (HRC).

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Regarding Ransom’s part in developing the rare books collection at UT, Gribben discusses the circumstances surrounding some of Ransom’s most notable acquisitions: the Edward Alexander Parsons Library, the T. E. Hanley Library, and the Norman Bel Geddes collection. Gribben discusses how Ransom successfully pursued the acquisition of these prized collections and others, noting how Ransom’s vision for the future HRC to be “a live center for research and writing, not merely a museum of books,” played into his overall collection strategy.

Gribben’s chief source of information was UT’s Dolph Briscoe Center for American History as well as, assumingly, the Hunt Ransom Personal Papers at HRC. Gribben also heavily uses quotes from Ransom himself and people around him to give dimension to who Ransom was beyond just relating the facts of his life. Some of these quotes are entertaining; one anecdote from Ransom’s secretary illustrates his sometimes informal style of recruiting new faculty: “In the later 1950’s Ransom might meet someone in an airport, talk to him, and offer him a job on the spot—with no resume ever seen ... [and] the recruit would turn up at UT asking for an office and a parking space ... Ransom expected [staff members] to straighten things out—and ‘they always did.’” (82).

One of the strengths of this biography is that, along with discussing all of Ransom’s laurels, it does not shy away from noting his areas of weakness. In Gribben’s own words, he “prepared to honor what was original and commendable about Harry Ransom’s career but willing to register his trials and shortcomings.” Indeed, Gribben keeps this intent in mind, as in one example in the text, which noted Ransom’s preference for the collecting aspect of rare books, not so much the

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cataloging part, which may explain why Ransom piled new purchases in closets in buildings outside the Rare Books Collection (115).

Gribben gives the reader a strong sense of time and place by giving reference to the historical events that took place in the United States during Ransom's life. An example of this is the ample discussion of Ransom's role as a university administrator during two of the most significant periods of time on a 20th-century American college campus: racial integration of UT in the 1960s and the student protests during the mid-1960s to the early 1970s during the Vietnam era. A colleague of his recalled that Ransom, upon watching students protesting the Vietnam War depart peacefully and without a violent incident on the UT campus, "was nearly tearful with relief and he impulsively patted the shoulders of several worried UT officials and staff members whose own children had been among the marchers" (239). Such descriptions also serve to humanize Ransom, as, in this and many other career-centered biographies, one can get lost in the details of the person's life on paper rather than how this person felt and acted. Gribben goes on to discuss how the stress of this tumultuous time in history was one likely factor in Ransom's unexpectedly leaving the chancellorship in 1971. The book concludes with a chapter discussing the lasting legacy Ransom left at UT after his death in 1976.

The chapters in the book are organized chronologically, with separate entries for each significant point in Ransom's life and career. Although organized impeccably in the text, it would have been helpful to the reader if a chronological outline of Ransom's many positions and notable accomplishments at UT had been provided somewhere in the book.

Gribben wrote *Harry Hunt Ransom: Intellect in Motion* out of a sense that Ransom's contributions to academia should be noted so that current and future students, teachers, and administrators could gain valuable insight from Ransom's life. Gribben never met Ransom; but, in *Harry Hunt Ransom: Intellect in Motion*, he managed to wholly capture the academic luminary with balance, dimension of personality, and depth of content.—*Kate McMillan, Catalog/Reference Librarian, Special Collections, Indiana State University.*