

November 1, 2006

Ms. Anna Maria Watkin
Chair
Consortium of College and Research Libraries in Illinois
616 E Green St, Ste 213
Champaign, IL 61820
Campus Mail Code 366

Dear Ms. Watkin:

The Field Museum Library respectfully petitions for Governing Membership in the Consortium of College and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). Our Library strongly supports the mission of CARLI and looks forward to becoming an active participant in its many activities.

For those who are not familiar with the Museum and its Library, permit me to share some highlights about our history, collections, and services.

The Field Museum was incorporated in 1893 as the Columbian Museum of Chicago, dedicated to the "accumulation and dissemination of knowledge, and the preservation and exhibition of objects illustrating art, archaeology, science, and history." The name of the museum was changed to The Field Museum of Natural History in 1905, in honor of its benefactor Marshall Field, and to emphasize its focus on the natural sciences, and it moved to its current site at the lakefront in 1921. The biological specimens and anthropological objects assembled for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition form the museum's core collections, which have been augmented by world-wide expeditions, exchange, purchase, and donation to a current total of over 22 million objects. These collections, held in trust for future generations, are a crucial part of the world's knowledge database for the sciences, humanities and the arts, and provide irreplaceable data needed to understand the nature of environmental and cultural change. The collections, including a world-class natural history library of over 275,000 volumes, are the basis for the educational programs, exhibits, and research conducted at the Museum.

The 275,000 volumes of the Main Research Collections concentrate on biological systematics, environmental and evolutionary biology, anthropology, archaeology, museology and related subjects. Three special collections supplement these holdings: The Mary W. Runnells Rare Book Room (7,500 volumes), the Photo Archives (over 250,000 images) and the Institutional Archives, which preserve actively used special materials. These collections document the development of the Museum and its collections and the history of its programs and of the scientific disciplines it pursues.



Our Library staff provides all necessary services, from collection development, organization and maintenance to patron assistance and reference service, in order to assure the most effective use of Library collections by the broadest possible public. Museum staff, interns, students, volunteers, and all visiting researchers, specialists and consultants are granted direct access to the Library collections, in-house borrowing privileges from the stacks, and specialized bibliographic and reference assistance from the Library staff as needed. The international research community has access to the Library collections through interlibrary loan, photocopy and electronic content provision services.

Our Reading Room and Reference Services are also available to the public 5 days a week.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of the strengths of our Library collections and services with you.

It is our sincere hope that you will look upon our petition favorably.

Sincerely,

Michael David Godow
Library Director and
Special Collections Manager