Above: Cora Miltimore, 1940s. ufdc.ufl.edu/uf00031341/00001
Above right: Aerial campus view of University Library, 1930s. ufdc.ufl.edu/uf00029855/00001

Very truly yours, Librarian: Cora Miltimore

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"It is a commonplace that the library has been called the heart of the university," wrote University Librarian Cora Miltimore in an undated piece of correspondence. Miltimore joined the University of Florida on November 1, 1918, as UF's first professionally educated librarian. Although not the University's first librarian, her professional training ushered in a new modern era for the library.

When Miltimore arrived in 1918, less than 500 students attended UF. The library at that time consisted of two small rooms on the first floor of Peabody Hall that held about 20,000 books, 130 periodicals, and a single office for the library staff that largely consisted of student assistants. In a 1923 letter to Dr. Albert A. Murphree, then university president, Miltimore reported, "Our students no longer ask 'where can we sit?' They sit on the floor when all of the chairs are full."

In 1923, UF heard Miltimore's pleas for a building on campus dedicated to the growing library.

That summer, she spent her vacation visiting at her own expense, as noted in her letter, "some of the largest and best planned college and university libraries" to get ideas for the University Library. Upon her return, she worked with the university architects in the planning of the interior of the building. "As far as the outside of the building is concerned, I am leaving that entirely to the architect."

By the time the University Library opened in September 1925, the library's holdings included 40,000 books and 285 periodicals, as well as numerous federal and state documents. With a new building and increased collections, Miltimore worked to expand the library's professional staff members and began organizing departments, starting with the Cataloging, Circulation, and Reference departments.

Over the next decade, Miltimore continued her efforts to professionalize the University Library and advocate for university students and library staff. Janice P. Hester, in 1977, recalled that "nobody ever worked harder to get a library in the first place. And nobody ever worked harder to get professional librarians to be considered faculty than she did."

Miltimore retired from UF in October 1937.