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## KU Libraries' Statement on Recent Theft of Materials

June 10, 2009

Many members of the KU community have read or seen news coverage of the thefts that occurred recently at Watson Library and have expressed their concern and dismay at this loss. We at KU Libraries share that concern and want to assure our users that we are working with KU Police to find the culprits and ensure we're doing all we can to protect these resources.

In collections of this size (more than four million volumes overall), a certain amount of repair and replacement of damaged, lost or stolen materials is expected, but this type of theft is unusual. Our most valuable and rare books are housed in Spencer Research Library (containing 400,000 volumes) and the Library Annex (containing 800,000 volumes), which are climate controlled sites with restricted access.

Our librarians and archivists are continually evaluating our holdings and moving more valuable materials (as well as items that are fragile and therefore need greater protection or more active preservation) to Spencer and the Annex.

We do keep some relatively valuable books in open stacks; this is a common practice among many academic research libraries, because we must balance protecting the materials in our collections with fulfilling our mission of making them accessible to students, faculty, and other researchers and scholars.

The investigation of these thefts is ongoing; anyone with information about the thefts should call the KU Public Safety Office (785-864-5900), or KU Crime Stoppers (785-864-8888).

Please direct media and other inquiries to Rebecca Smith ([rasmith@ku.edu](mailto:rasmith@ku.edu), 785-864-1761), director of communications and advancement at KU Libraries.

We would like to thank the KU community and friends of KU Libraries for their concern and continued support.

Sincerely,

Kent Miller  
Associate Dean of Operations and Access

### Contact

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