BOUNDLESS OPPORTUNITIES:
FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATIONS ALIGNMENT

ARL Membership Meeting Fall 2014
Elements of Successful Fundraising
Concurrent Session - October 8, 2014
UTL IN THE BOUNDLESS CAMPAIGN
COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Mass Communications
Face to Face Communications
Personal, targeted approaches
Internal & External Communications
Library Communications vehicles
University Communications vehicles
U of T acquires General Wolfe’s letters

Correspondence of victor at 1759 Battle of Quebec bought from unidentified British family for almost $1.5-million

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It could be something of a gloomy gala, the so-called “conquest of New France.” Canada’s “dauntless hero.”

Writing from Scotland to his mother in late 1759, Major-General James Wolfe, whose victory at Quebec’s Plains of Abraham eight years later ensured British domination of most of North America at the same time as that battle claimed his life, bemoaned how an “winter years ago, do our four years and do not live itself. It matters little where a Man [spends] his days and what station he fills or whether he be poor or not, it enriches him something to look to his number of life this day am I five and twenty years of age, and all this is nothing...” Such mournful sentiments are found in 239 letters Wolfe wrote between 1746 and 1759 to his parents, letters now in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. Their acquisition, a feat accomplished in the face of enormous efforts to keep the trove in Britain, was announced this week in Toronto and Ottawa.

The price tag for what is believed to be nearly 80 percent of Wolfe’s extant correspondence? Almost $2 million, paid via Christie’s auctioneer to an unidentified British family that has held the letters since the death of Wolfe’s mother, Henrietta, in 1791. The fee’s share of the funds was provided by Toronto-based Helheston Investments, headed by philanthropist Virginia McLoughlin, with cash support from U of T Libraries and the Movable Cultural Property Directorate of Canadian Heritage. Admittedly not celebrated or admired in Quebec, Wolfe is indisputably a pivotal figure in Canadian history, more famous than in the country where he was born and from which he fought. It is not the first time Canada has spent big on Wolfe. In 1993, the federal government guaranteed the U of T a $1.5-million (U.S.) to buy a rare edition of Thomas Gray’s Flora. Written in a Country Church Yard that Wolfe annotated. Legend has it, in that the general declared “I would rather have written [the elegy]’ with his famous line “The paths of glory lead but to the grave” than take Quebec tomorrow.”

Until this week’s announcement of the acquisition, the Flora was the sole work in the Fisher collection with Wolfe’s autograph. The provenance of the letters has long been known. But it was only about 18 months ago that Christie’s Toronto told the U of T they were for sale.

“IT was for a lot of money, that we could afford to buy a regular budget,” Anne Donohoe, associate librarian, cry collections at the U of T said on Thursday. “So it was we would need to do some raising if we wanted to acquire it. In September last year, Ms. McLoughlin heard U of T’s librarian Larry Aylward speak desire to add the Wolfe letters the university’s historical Canton. Intrigued, “the company by the end of the year determined it would be able to participate with a lead gift.” U of T communications manager Margaret Wall said. (Ms. McLoughlin declined to be interviewed.) Historians in the U.K. urged the government to stay the export of the letters to allow a British buyer to match or exceed the price.

Eight years before the Plains of Abraham, the young general wrote plaintive letters to his parents, a historical trove that now resides at the University of Toronto after a long battle with British scholars.
ADVANCEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

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COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION (CASE)
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