

“[A] first-rate program of continuing education is a university-wide responsibility. . . . Adult education is no longer a peripheral activity. . . . [but] an indispensable service of the greatest significance. . . . [I]t is difficult to see how an urban university can serve its area or discharge its function as a university without a first-rate program of continuing education.”

*Syracuse University Chancellor William Tolley,
April 1958*



Alexander N. Charters

“The third stage of Adult Education into which the world is now moving . . . might be called the knowledge-based stage. It is not to consider knowledge as a product but knowledge as the basis for knowing. Knowledge encompasses all aspects of learning, and it behooves all adults to continue to learn in areas and at levels appropriate for them.”

*Dr. Alexander Charters,
8 September 1996*

“Records reflect human activity. They give us knowledge of the past and a foundation for future efforts. The records of a profession . . . encourage a sense of identity and community among members of that profession.”

*Terrance Keenan, Special Collections Librarian,
8 September 1998*

Dr. Alexander Charters was born in Alberta, Canada. He earned his Ph.D. in adult education from the University of Chicago in 1948, and since then, both he and his wife, Margaret, who also has a doctoral degree, have been active in all aspects of adult education, from teaching and administration to organization, lecturing, consulting, and research. Dr. Charters began his career as assistant dean of adult education at Syracuse University in 1948, eventually becoming dean and then vice president for continuing education. He participated, often as a founding member and leader, in many international and national adult education associations and is personally acquainted with many influential individuals in the field. As a result, he has been instrumental in obtaining the papers of both organizations and individuals for the Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Library. Since his retirement in 1983, he has expanded his efforts to promote the collection and preservation of important documentation in the history of adult education, and to enhance access to this valuable body of material.

Designed by William T. La Moy.



The Alexander N. Charters Adult Education Research Grants-in-Aid Program

Special Collections Research Center
Syracuse University Library

The Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Library announces a grants-in-aid program for researchers interested in working with the Charters Library of Resources for Educators of Adults. The Charters Library is the world's most comprehensive compilation of English-language materials in the field of adult and continuing education. Up to four thousand dollars worth of grants-in-aid in this subject area will be awarded each year. The actual amount of each award will depend upon the scope of the research project outlined in the applicant's proposal. In order to apply, please submit a letter of intent outlining the proposed research topic and plan, including the term of stay, a current résumé, and one professional reference. Applications should be sent to:

Alexander N. Charters Grants-in-Aid Program
Special Collections Research Center
Syracuse University Library
222 Waverly Avenue
Syracuse, New York 13244-2010

The application deadline is 1 December of each year. Notification of awards will be given by 15 January. For additional information, please contact the Special Collections Research Center (telephone: 315-443-9763; facsimile: 315-443-2671; or e-mail: scrc@syr.edu).

THE CHARTERS LIBRARY

Since 1949, when Alexander N. Charters began collecting adult education materials, the library has continued to develop, with support from the U.S. government, foundations, corporations, and individuals. The library includes archival and manuscript collections (more than 55 collections), books (more than 2,100 titles), periodicals (50 titles, most of which are complete runs), newsletters (220 titles), pamphlets (80 boxes), Syracuse University Publications in Continuing Education (SUPCE) (400 titles), University Continuing Education Association Records (40 linear feet), sound recordings (400), video recordings (100), the Paul Hoy Helms Library in Liberal Adult Education (700 items), the library of the Clearinghouse of Resources for Educators of Adults (CREA) (more than 1,300 items), master's theses and doctoral dissertations on microfilm, and photographs (10,000). The material touches upon adult education in almost every country and extends over nearly one hundred years, although the bulk of it is from the United States and dates from the second half of the twentieth century. Both individuals and organizations are represented.

Manuscript collections, photographs, pamphlets, and other archival material relating to adult education are housed in Syracuse University's Special Collections Research Center, while the books, journals, dissertations, and other material reside in the library's general collections. Online finding aids for many of the adult education collections at the Special Collections Research Center can be viewed at its Web site (srcr.syr.edu) or through the Charters Library Web site:

[SRCR.SYR.EDU/CHARTERSLIBRARY](http://srcr.syr.edu/charterslibrary)

RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

Over the years, visitors have come from all over the world to pursue a wide range of topics. Examples are the literacy tours of Frank Laubach, workers' education in North America, and leaders in the field such as Paul Sheats and Cyril Houle. The collections that form the Charters Library are particularly rich in the following broad subject areas:



Detail of a 1985 World Assembly of Adult Education poster.

- History of adult education as a discipline—themes, research, changes over time, focus areas, perceived needs, and programs.
- Literacy, as evidenced by the collections of Laubach Literacy and the Literacy Volunteers of America.
- Training of adult educators—special requirements and unique needs in the education of instructors who will have adult students.
- Adult education organizations—history, focus areas, operation, projects and purposes, problems and achievements, and interrelationships.
- Federal and private sector concepts of education as vital for citizenship in a democracy—projects, issues, and subject matter.
- Comparative adult education—collections covering international adult education organizations and/or having material from many other countries.
- Important individuals—collections of the papers of many significant contributors to the field, including both personal and career information.
- Media and technology in adult education—educational television projects in various collections, and distance education.
- Education of various subgroups—women, correctional inmates, people with disabilities, those of low income, and the homeless.