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## UNI Rod Library Acquires Alumna's Special-Edition Concrete Poetry, UNI News Release, January 15, 2009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Clint Wrede, catalog librarian and bibliographer, Rod Library, (319) 273-3654

Vicki Grimes, University Marketing & Public Relations, (319) 273-6728

## UNI Rod Library acquires alumna's special-edition concrete poetry

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa -- The University of Northern Iowa's Rod Library recently acquired several works of concrete poetry by **Mary Ellen Solt**. The collection features a special-edition of "Flowers in Concrete," Solt's best-known work, and also includes "A Trilogy of Rain" and "Marriage."

Solt, from Gilmore City, earned her bachelor's degree in English literature from Iowa State Teachers College (UNI) in 1941, where she was a classmate of **Mona Van Duyn**, a 1942 ITSC graduate from Eldora, and former Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress (1992-1993).

Solt went on to earn her master's degree in English literature from the University of Iowa in 1948.

With her husband, Leo, Solt moved to Indiana and taught comparative literature at Indiana University where she retired as professor emerita in 1991. She also spent one year in Poland teaching American poetry at the University of Warsaw. After Leo's death in 1994, Solt moved to Santa Clarita, Calif. to live with her daughter, Susan. With declining health, Solt passed away in June 2007 from a stroke.

Solt's widely recognized works live on. Her work has been displayed at the Venice Biennale, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Jewish Museum in New York. Several of her pieces also were featured on the CBS cultural program, "Camera Three."

"Concrete poetry invites us to consider words not only as symbols that convey meanings, but as things themselves," said Solt. "Concrete poetry asks us to contemplate the relationship of words to each other and the space they occupy." This form of poetry is distinctive in its irregular typeset that is aesthetically pleasing and creative. The way the words are displayed on the page create another dimension of description for the poem beyond the words alone.

-MORE-

UNI MARY ELLEN SOLT POETRY COLLECTION/ADD ONE

Rod Library's collection of Solt's work is located in the Special Collections area on the third floor. It may be viewed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. The one-in-forty, special-edition of "Flowers in Concrete" features each poem printed on a 24-by-36 inch poster, with each page signed by the author.

Rod Library's collection of Solt's work was purchased with donated funds administered through the UNI Foundation. For more information on Solt, or her collection at UNI, contact **Clint Wrede**, catalog librarian and bibliographer at Rod Library, at (319) 273-3654.

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Mary Ellen Solt Poetry Collection 0109  
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