April 8, 2010

Dear Friend of the Press,

Today’s publishing landscape is nothing short of revolutionary. New printing technologies, online bookselling, and electronic books provide us with both challenges and opportunities. At the University of Washington Press, we are eager to embrace new technologies while treasuring the work that we do to produce some of the best scholarly books in the country.

But today’s publishing marketplace makes high demands in technology. To keep up requires investment capital not easy to find for a nonprofit, scholarly publisher with limited resources. We are writing to ask you to be an investor at the intersection of technology and publishing.

The University of Washington Graduate School has presented us with an opportunity to invest in our future. The School will match a maximum of $20,000 money raised by UW Press thus creating a $40,000 dedicated Technology Investment Fund. Our fundraising deadline to make our match is June 30, 2010. We have received several lead gifts from patrons and friends, but we still remain about $12,000 shy of our goal.

Our immediate need is to raise funds to acquire new publishing software needed to streamline our procedures and improve our ability to work in the electronic landscape. Specifically we have targeted a new customized publishing database. This is a one-time investment that should serve us for the next 10 years and more. We currently work with a creaky home-grown system that lacks the flexibility and scope to meet the demands of the digital future.

What does a press-wide database do? It can generally be thought of as a user-friendly information system designed to track information in a publishing house. It synchronizes information shared by all departments and tracks the publishing process from manuscript submissions through receipt of printed inventory to final close-out and archiving. A presswide title management system is not only required to simplify processes and improve productivity, it is necessary to engage fully in the information exchange now needed in the publishing industry. It will allow us to work more effectively as a team in-house as well as with our fulfillment agency and other booksellers.

Although our immediate need is to upgrade our information systems, our goal is to create a permanent Technology Investment Fund that will allow us to invest in new technologies as they are needed. We welcome your assistance and support. All gifts to the University of Washington Press are tax deductible within IRS rules. For further information please call Nina McGuinness, Director of Advancement, at 206-543-4053.

Sincerely,
Pat Soden
Director