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Contact: Shelly Hoffman
(614) 247-4748

Ohio State Athletics contributes to library campaign
\$5 million commitment to aid in Thompson Library renovation

COLUMBUS – The renovation of Ohio State’s William Oxley Thompson Memorial (Main) Library received a significant boost with a \$5 million gift from the Ohio State Department of Athletics in an announcement made today by President Karen A. Holbrook and Athletics Director Gene Smith.

“The renovation of the Main Library is a top priority for the university, and this contribution will play a major role in that effort for the benefit of our students and faculty. It is yet another way that our strong athletics program provides substantial financial benefits to our academic programs each year,” Holbrook said.

“We think this is an ideal way for the athletics program to serve the entire academic community,” Smith said. “Our commitment to national leadership and excellence extends across this university.” He explained that additional revenues to be generated from Big Ten television rights, including the Big Ten Channel to be launched in 2007, make this gift possible. The money will be disbursed to the library project over five years.

“Intercollegiate athletics is a part of the culture of this university and all of Ohio State benefits from an athletics program that is integrated into our academic mission,” Holbrook said. “This generous support of the library from the Department of Athletics is a lasting demonstration of this greatly valued relationship.”

The Main Library is an Ohio State landmark, ranked 21st among the 113 members of the Association of Research Libraries. Still, while its resources and services remain strong, the library’s aging facilities no longer meet the needs of Ohio State students. Composed of three buildings, the original building opened in 1913, the stack towers were added in 1951 and the most recent renovation was a 1977 addition. The current renovation project, to be completed by 2009, will create a facility that serves Ohio State students and faculty well into the 21st century.

The library renovation has a budget of \$108.9 million – some \$70 million of which will be requested from state capital funds, \$30 million of which will be generated from private sources, and \$8 million of which will come from University sources previously set aside for this purpose. The commitment from the Department of Athletics brings the total private dollars raised thus far to \$20 million.

Ohio State is one of a handful of universities in the country with a completely self-sustaining athletics program. From the revenues it receives for sports events and broadcast contracts, it transfers about \$20 million each year to the university.

“The library has a long tradition of support from Athletics, from individual donations by Buckeye fans to leadership provided by Coach Jim Tressel and his wife, Ellen, who chair our capital campaign,” said Joseph J. Branin, director of Ohio State Libraries. “With construction set to begin in January, it is our hope that commitment from the Department of Athletics will encourage others to step forward and support the library renovation.”

The \$5 million gift is the second largest gift to the library renovation project. The Ohio State Libraries also received \$7 million from Thomas E. and Patricia A. Duke Robinson of Troy, Ohio, longtime friends of the university and avid Buckeye fans who were introduced to the library renovation project by the Department of Athletics.