

THE MARGARET ROOT BROWN CHAIR OF ROBERT BROWNING AND VICTORIAN STUDIES



Seeking an established Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, or Victorian Studies scholar, with substantial article and book publication in one or more of the aforementioned fields, to hold the position of The Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies at the Armstrong Browning Library, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. The Chair holder will conduct research in the Armstrong Browning Library collections during the majority of the appointment and, through teaching and representation, enhance the international scholarly profile of the Library, a world center for Browning and related Victorian scholarship. The length of appointment and teaching responsibilities are flexible and negotiable with the Dean of University Libraries and with the Baylor English Department. Typical appointments are for one year with one course taught during one semester. Further duties may include grantsmanship, public presentations before scholars and prospective donors, and hosting scholarly meetings concerned with the Brownings or Victorian culture.

Chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas, Baylor University is the oldest university in Texas and the world's largest Baptist University. Baylor's mission is to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community. Baylor aspires to become a top tier research university while reaffirming and deepening its distinctive Christian mission as described in Baylor 2012 (www.baylor.edu/vision/). Baylor is a Baptist university affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. As an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer, Baylor encourages minorities, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities to apply. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. To ensure full consideration, applications should be completed by 31 August 2010. The position requires that a letter of application (including the preferred dates of appointment and a 2-page research proposal emphasizing the relationship of the Armstrong Browning Library collections to the proposed project), a curriculum vitae, and two letters of recommendation be sent to Rita S. Patteson; Director, Armstrong Browning Library; Brown Chair Selection Committee; Baylor University; One Bear Place #97152; Waco, TX 76798-7152.

MISSION OF THE ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY

The primary mission of the ABL is to serve as a "library of record" of research materials relating to Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning; to acquire, preserve, and provide access for effective use of these materials and its other collections; and to promote opportunities for the study, appreciation, and understanding of the Brownings and the wider field of 19th-century literature and culture by the Baylor community, the larger academic community, and the general public.

BACKGROUND:

The Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning Studies was established in 1971 by the Brown Foundation of Houston, Texas, to “finance Browning research and administration of Baylor’s Browning program in perpetuity.” The first Chair holder was Dr. Jack W. Herring (1971-1984) and the distinction has since been held by Dr. Roger L. Brooks (1987-1994), Dr. Mairi Rennie (1996-2002), and Dr. Stephen Prickett (2003-2008). In 2003, the title was broadened to “The Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies” to more accurately reflect the Victorian collections that have been added that enhance the study of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Each of these Chair holders also served as Director of the Armstrong Browning Library (ABL).

Due to the overwhelming success of the ABL since its establishment in 1951, as well as the growth of its Robert Browning and Victorian studies collections (dating back to 1918), it is no longer feasible for one person to fulfill both the administrative needs of the Library and the necessary scholarly research, teaching, travel, and other activities. Therefore, in 2009, a formal separation of duties was approved by the Baylor administration in consultation with the Brown Foundation. A Director, fully funded by Baylor University, has been appointed to be responsible for all administrative decisions including the ABL budget, maintenance, collection development, and the preservation of the collection. The Director, who at this time also holds the title of Curator of Manuscripts, is assisted by the Curator of Books and Printed Materials.

The person selected to be the holder of the Margaret Root Brown Chair for Robert Browning and Victorian Studies—essentially, a scholar-in-residence—will concentrate on scholarly research and publishing related to the ABL focus, teach and promote interest in research related to the Library’s holdings, and participate in events and other ABL activities to promote and support the Library.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES:

The holder of The Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies should be an established scholar with an extensive knowledge of and thorough understanding of Victorian literature and culture. Robert and/or Elizabeth Barrett Browning scholars are preferred. He or she must be sympathetic to Baylor’s mission as a Christian university and demonstrate an active Christian commitment.

The holder should seek to promote the ABL as the world center for Browning studies, relate positively with scholars and students, and be able to teach the Browning course, seminars, or other special lectures or courses as determined by and in cooperation with the Baylor English Department. The Chair holder is encouraged to identify and recommend to the Director and the Curator of Books and Printed Materials any manuscripts, books, periodicals, databases, or other materials that will further the mission of the ABL.

The candidate is expected to be in residence, to conduct research in the ABL collections during the majority of the appointment, and to end the appointment with a 45-minute formal scholarly presentation regarding some aspect of his or her research and a written summary of accomplishments during the appointment period. Travel to special Browning events is also an important aspects of the position (and fully funded). Therefore, it is important to project a good public image as the representative of the Library and to generate a thoroughly professional interest in Browning studies at every level of the Library’s operation. At times there could be requests to attend and/or organize professional meetings and conferences or to interact with the media by writing press releases and articles. All media contacts must be coordinated with the Director of Marketing/Communications and approved by the Dean of University Libraries.

In order for the Chair holder to be able to develop and follow his or her own research interests, the length of appointment and teaching responsibilities are flexible and negotiable with the Dean of University Libraries and with the English Department. Typical appointments are for one year with one course to be taught during one semester. The period of appointment can range from one semester to one year (with the possibility of renewal for a second year).

The Chair holder works cooperatively with the Director of the ABL and the Dean of University Libraries to seek funds for the Library’s development from grants, foundations, and donors. Previous successful fundraising experience is preferred; a willingness to promote the Library and to assist with fundraising is required. In this aspect, he or she works with university fund-raising officers.

The recipient of “The Margaret Root Brown Chair of Robert Browning and Victorian Studies” will report directly to the Dean of University Libraries. Teaching effectiveness will be evaluated by members of the English Department, and the results will be provided to the Dean of University Libraries for inclusion in the Chair holder’s final evaluation.