

Publication Review  
*William Anthony Fine Binder,*

Lawrence Yerkes ed., Iowa City: University Libraries, University of Iowa, 2005.

William "Bill" Anthony, was arguably one of the most influential bookbinders and conservators in the US, one whose impact cannot be measured by his work alone, but also by that of his legacy as demonstrated by all those he trained, many of whom are now leaders in the field in their own right. Lawrence Yerkes' forward and Helen Ryan's introduction to the catalog describe not only Anthony's life and work, but also the emotional bond they had with him and his spirit that touched so many.

Anthony began his life as a binder at the age of seventeen when he served a seven-year apprenticeship with his father in Dublin, Ireland, and later worked as a journeyman binder in London, UK, studying at the Camberwell College of Art and exhibiting with the Guild of Contemporary Bookbinders, the precursor organization of Designer Bookbinders. He emigrated to the United States in 1964 working first at the Cuneo Press in Chicago, and then partnering with Hungarian-born binder Elizabeth Kner, which he managed after her retirement as Anthony and Associates. The spectrum of his work was broad, encompassing edition binding, fine binding, and conservation.

To honor Anthony, the University of Iowa Libraries held a retrospective exhibition at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, April 15-July 31, 2005, in which not only the breadth and beauty of his creative work were shown, but also examples of his conservation treatments. The catalog to this exhibition depicts 41 of Anthony's "fine bindings" which demonstrate his great technical skill and keen aesthetic sensibilities. While most of these works are executed in full leather with onlays, blind, and/or gold tooling there are also several examples of his work in vellum. While his background and training were English, it is clear from looking at Anthony's work that he studied, admired, and was influenced by the work of binders through Europe blending their ideas with his to develop his own timeless style. Throughout, his work is always technically and proportionately precise and polished. Also depicted are examples of some of his edition bindings and conservation treatments.

While the medium has changed dramatically over the past decades, away from traditional craft-based bookbinding to "artist's books" and more alternative structures, the skills and sense of design exemplified by Anthony's work remain as relevant as ever, even as aspects are slowly fading away because those with the skills to teach at this level are retiring and no longer teaching - and the time required to master them is hard to fit into today's world of non-linear cafeteria-style learning and weekend workshops, which have replaced the rigid apprenticeship models experienced by Anthony and his students, master craftsmen and artists in their own rights.

Beautifully designed by Julie Leonard and Sara T. Sauers, with photography by Jill Tobin, this catalog is a fitting tribute to Anthony and makes an exceptional addition to the reference collections of binders and bibliophiles.

The catalog can be ordered online from the University of Iowa Bookstore at <http://www.iowabook.com/wianfibi.html> for \$39.95 + sh.

---by Peter Verheyen