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EIU's Booth Library To Host Traveling Exhibition About Queen Elizabeth I

Feb-09-2004

The story of Queen Elizabeth I of England has fascinated and inspired the world during the four centuries since her reign. She claimed to have "the heart and stomach of a king," like her father, Henry VIII, and a long line of Tudor monarchs. But she also had a brilliant and cunning mind that guided her judgments, ruled her actions and helped her transform England into one of the most powerful countries in the world.

A new traveling exhibition - "**Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend**" - which opens at **7 p.m. Thursday, March 4, at Eastern Illinois University's Booth Library**, examines Elizabeth's long and colorful life and reign. The exhibition will be on display at the library until April 16, 2004.

Organized by the Newberry Library's Center for Renaissance Studies, in collaboration with the American Library Association Public Programs Office, the exhibition is made possible through major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, with additional support from the Vance Family Fund and the University of Illinois at Chicago .

It is based upon a major exhibition of the same name mounted by the Newberry Library in 2003 to commemorate the reign of Queen Elizabeth I on the 400 th anniversary of her death. The Newberry Library, Chicago, is an independent humanities research library which is free and open to the public.

"We are pleased to have been selected as a site for this exhibition," said Allen Lanham, dean of Booth Library. "Elizabeth I was a remarkable historical figure, and the Elizabethan Age is filled with many fascinating topics of interest to audiences of all ages. Through the exhibit and library programs, our community will learn more about the woman who became a monarch at 25 and exerted such a strong influence in government, religion, the arts and the exploration of the world."

At the beginning of Elizabeth 's reign in 1558, many questioned whether a woman could rule England . But during nearly 45 years on the throne, Elizabeth won her subjects' allegiance through wise decisions, courage in the face of conflict and court intrigues, and skill in maintaining a strong public image.

Elizabeth 's accomplishments as queen were outstanding. When she came to the throne, she immediately took action to create a reliable government. She adopted a moderate stance toward religious practices within the broad framework of English Protestantism. In continuing conflicts with Spain , Elizabeth prevailed, winning respect and admiration for vanquishing the Spanish Armada in 1588. Her fiery character was apparent in a passionate speech to her soldiers in which she resolved to live and die amongst them as they prepared to battle the great Spanish fleet.

"Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend" is based upon images reproduced from rare books, manuscripts, maps, letters, paintings and artifacts in the Newberry Library collections, and from significant items held by the British Library, the collection of Queen Elizabeth II and distinguished private collections. It was curated by Clark Hulse, professor of English and art history and dean of the Graduate College at the University of Illinois at Chicago .

Booth Library will be sponsoring free programs and other events for the public in connection with the exhibition. Contact Booth Library at (217) 581-6061 or csced@eiu.edu , or visit <http://www.eiu.edu/~booth> for more information.