ON THE SPOT

DR. ARTHUR JAFFE
PROFESSOR EMERITUS,
FOUNDER AND CURATOR OF
THE ARTHUR AND MATA JAFFE
CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS

How did the Jaffe Center for Book Arts come about?
I came to FAU in 1995 as a library volunteer, and in 1998 my wife, Mata, and I donated our collection of books as aesthetic objects, built for more than 50 years, to FAU. I had an expertise they needed and I came free. We teach people how to make books - about binding books - and teach all kinds of classes and have an archive of more than 12,000 books. It's not a little operation. I'm 92 years old, and I'm here just about every day at 9 a.m. I'm still here even though I have difficulties getting around once in a while.

How has the Jaffe Center grown?
The Jaffe Center for the Arts has expanded into the Book Arts Studio, a setting for teaching workshops and classes in bookbinding, book structures and paper decoration. We also have the Letterpress Studio housed in the room that originally held the Jaffe Collection. The equipment in that room includes a variety of printing presses from the 19th and 20th centuries, wood and metal types and advertising cuts. Our paper mill is located at one of FAU's historic World War II-era buildings. It's the setting for instruction in hand-papemaking topics.

Where is the Jaffe Center for the Arts today?
We're located on the third floor east (wing) of the FAU Wimberly Library in Boca Raton. We make books, posters and gifts. The Jaffe Center has a program where visiting artists stay for six months, and we have a full staff here weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. I'm at a point in the collection where book artists are finding us. We have books you don't see in stores. Comic books, graphic novels... The book today is not words as much as it is visibility.