You can judge
a book by its cover
in Arthur Jaffe's collection
of 10,000 volumes
selected for their status as
aesthetic objects.

To the best of Arthur Jaffe's recollection, his father, Max, only yelled at him twice. The first time was when Arthur was a young man, and made the mistake of saying he was going to slough off some drary task.

"Always try your best." thundered Max Jaffe.
The other time was when Arthur was 50 years old and his father berated him for being insufficiently generous to the United Jewish Appeal.

In a roundabout way, these are two of the three test poles that have supported Arthur Jaffe's life. The other, certainly no less and perhaps slightly more important than the others, is art.

When he served in Army intelligence during World War II, Arthur Jaffe traded cigarettes and chocolate, not for female favors, but for books. Art was more important than sex, and it would be fair to say that Arthur Jaffe's quietly remarkable American life has been defined more by the life of the mind than the life of commercial transaction.

Today, the result of that mind set is enconced in a gleaming top-floor area in the Arthur and Mata Jaffe Center for the Book Arts in the Wimberly Library of the Florida Atlantic University Campus in Boca Raton. Partially, the Jaffe Center holds its founder's book collection—a very unusual book collection. There are around 10,000 volumes here, from a Peanuts pop-up book to one-of-a-kind books, but they are all

LITERARY WORKS OF ART: Items on display in the collection include the Book of Common Prayer by artist Miriam Scharf (front), which is a transfer on dyed paper, cut by hand, and Radio Silence by artist Julie Chen, Flying Fish Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1995. The book is letterpress printed with anatomical charts and bound in paper wrapped boards.
distinguished by their status as aesthetic objects, irrespective of their actual literary content.

There was a 1,000-year-old Coptic Bible that Jaffe found in a market in Kusco, Peru, accompanied by a copy of a Bible in the language of the Incas. The Bible was written in the language of the Incas, which is still spoken by the Quechua people of the Andes.

Once again, Jaffe had done his best.

**Sneep away with Crosses**

The famous first book Arthur Jaffe remembers reading was *Robinson Crusoe*. He was a small child in Cruden Bay, Scotland, but he was swept away.

The first book, *Robinson Crusoe*, was very expensive and rare. Jaffe had it in a small town in Scotland, where he grew up, and he treasured it. When he was 15, he gave it to his younger brother, who had the same interest in literature.

In 1937, Jaffe was offered the job of editor of the *New York Times*.

**FAU’s rarest acquisitions**

Books always have been a crucial part of the life of FAU donor Arthur Jaffe.

**Good looks, U.S. passport**

When he was training young soldiers, Jaffe was using his good looks and American passport to avoid suspicion. He then decided to move to the United States, where he became a naturalized citizen.

**Back to the States**

After he got well, Jaffe and his brothers took up the family retail business, which was located in the heart of downtown Miami. It was the path of least resistance. His aesthetic interests became a sort of added value to the business of buying wholesale and selling retail.

**Disstrictive collection**

"It’s such a distinctive collection," says William Miller, the director of the Library of Congress. "It’s highly unusual in the world, and it’s one of the few that’s accessible to the public. It adds a different dimension to an appreciation of the book as an art form and the way books and art are put together. It’s also my belief that 50 or 100 years from now, books and art collections will be very much the same: all works will be approached as objects. What will make a library distinctive is collections like this one."