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## New library honors the chapters of Vonnegut's life



Written by

[Melanie D. Hayes](#)

Chris Moore has read all of Kurt Vonnegut's novels several times. When he heard about the new museum and library honoring the Hoosier author, he had to see it.

Moore, 22, drove from Linton on Saturday to attend the grand opening of the [Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library](#) in Downtown Indianapolis.

"I've always felt connected to his writings," Moore said. "My English teacher sophomore year (of high school) first introduced me to his work, and I've loved him ever since."

Moore and dozens of other visitors explored the library, which contains many of Vonnegut's personal items, including the Purple Heart he received during World War II, his writing desk and typewriter, reading glasses, books and even a pack of Pall Mall cigarettes.

The walls are covered with photos of the author, biographical information and famous quotes. One wall offers a timeline of Vonnegut's professional and personal

lives, along with another timeline showing events that were happening around the world during that same period. His novels also are available for purchase.

During the opening, Majie Failey, a lifelong friend of Vonnegut's, spoke to visitors about their friendship and his childhood.

She also unveiled her new book, "We Never Danced Cheek to Cheek," which portrays Vonnegut as a person and friend, rather than as a writer. Vonnegut died in 2007 in New York, where he lived. He was born and raised in Indianapolis.

The library is at the Emelie Building, 340 N. Senate Ave., in a space donated by the Katz & Korin law firm.

Family and friends donated items and photos of him, and a group of avid Vonnegut fans and donations from several local businesses and organizations brought the library to life.

Phil Watts, the director of the library and its

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Vonnegut book club, became friends with Vonnegut after the author visited the Athenaeum three times from 1996 to 2003. Watts is the former executive director of the Athenaeum. Vonnegut's grandfather, Bernard Vonnegut Sr., designed the building.

"He (Vonnegut) would be pleased with this library," Watts said. "He wouldn't give a damn about a place that glorifies his name, but if we educate others through it, he'd like it."

Bill Briscoe, 67, feels a connection to Vonnegut because they are Delta Upsilon fraternity brothers -- Briscoe was a member at Purdue University, Vonnegut at Cornell University.

Briscoe, who is the historian for the fraternity's headquarters, helped persuade the fraternity to donate the biographical card Vonnegut filled out and signed when he became a member in the 1940s.

"This is a great tribute to him," he said of the library. "All these personal belonging here bring you close to him. You can try to figure out what he was like, how he worked, where he came from."

Three months ago, the Carmel resident began attending the monthly Vonnegut book club meetings held in the library's building. The group read and reviewed Vonnegut's first novel, "Piano Player."

"It's amazing how relevant his books are to what's going on today," Briscoe said. "You

can pick out things that remind you of the 1950s, like technology references, but nonetheless, the messages are relevant."

The library is open daily, except Wednesdays, from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information or to make a donation, visit [www.vonnegutlibrary.org](http://www.vonnegutlibrary.org).

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