

**" THE PASSIVE APPROACH TO BOOK CONSERVATION  
AND THE ROLE OF CONSERVATION ETHICS IN PRESERVING  
THE RARE COLLECTIONS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

Frederick Bearman

Columbia University Libraries houses a variety of rare materials, including substantial collections of medieval manuscripts, early printed books and modern publishers bindings. The conservation requirements of these collections are undertaken by the in hours conservation laboratory. Through documenting a number of treatments, including the conservation of vellum bindings, this presentation will explain the interrelationship be-

tween 'passive' and 'ethical' conservation practises as they are performed at Columbia University. The contradictions inherent in repairing physical damage and preserving bibliographical evidence, plus the distinction between "restoration" and "conservation" work will also be explored.