



# Insights: The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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## Center for Book of Mormon Studies Created

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# INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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## Center for Book of Mormon Studies Created



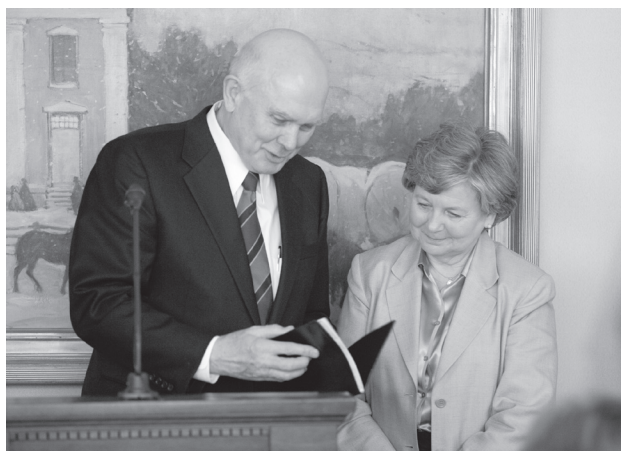
Laura F. Willes. Photo by Mark Philbrick.

Accompanied by Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Cecil O. Samuelson recently announced the formation of the Laura F. Willes Center for Book of Mormon Studies, a research center that promises to bring national and international distinction to the study of the Book of Mormon.

President Samuelson made the announcement at a luncheon attended by Mark and Laura Willes and their family.

“The Willes Center,” President Samuelson remarked, “will form an integral part of BYU’s Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.”

In commenting on the establishment of the Willes Center, Elder Oaks said, “It’s a remarkable combination to have the resources, the inspiration of what to do with them, and the faith to do it, and that’s the story of Mark and Laura Willes in bringing this Willes Center to Brigham Young University.



Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presents Laura Willes with an inscribed copy of the Book of Mormon. Photo by Mark Philbrick.


... That trio ... comes to fruition in a place that stands for the same thing.”

Mark Willes, the former CEO of Times-Mirror, noted the counsel from President Hinckley when Brother Willes received his call to serve as a mission president: “Just read the Book of Mormon.” That counsel, and a lifetime of devoted reading in the book, helped to spark Willes’s interest in founding a center whose purpose would be to encourage and support the pursuit of research on this volume of scripture. He chose to name it for his wife, Laura F. Willes, who, Brother Willes remarked, “has taught [their] children and [their] grandchildren and [their] missionaries to love the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon.”



Mark and Laura Willes hold a copy of the Book of Mormon inscribed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. Photo by Mark Philbrick.

In her response, Sister Willes said that the idea came as a complete surprise to her, especially because she prefers to remain out of the spotlight. But, she said, she hopes that she represents “all of the brothers and sisters in the Church and all of the men and women in the world who desperately need the Book of Mormon and its teachings.”

The Willes Center will begin functioning immediately according to Andrew C. Skinner, the executive director of the Maxwell Institute. “We want to open opportunities for capable researchers to begin and continue research efforts on the Book of Mormon.” Skinner added that the Center will “promote the study of the Book of Mormon both as an ancient text and as a publication in the modern world.” The Willes Center “will award scholarships, sponsor lectures and symposia, and assist in publications and media productions.” S. Kent Brown has been named as director of the Willes Center. 

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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