Arthur Vining Davis was prominent in the industrial and business history of the United States and, through these foundations, the philanthropic world as well. His giving was broad in outlook but pragmatic in its goals. The original Arthur Vining Davis Foundation was organized in 1952 under a living trust established by the donor. Additional assets were dedicated to philanthropy in Davis’s will. The trustees were instructed to use the foundations’ earnings for programs that would strengthen the nation’s future. The foundations remain firmly committed to honorable service to society in memory of Davis, a man of vision, courage, and generosity.

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Endowment for Humanities supports the Hesburgh Libraries’ efforts to maintain existing collections in the humanities, to build retrospective collections in areas of more recent emphasis, and to expand current acquisitions efforts. Specifically, this endowment assists in the collecting of materials relating to foreign literatures, interdisciplinary fields which fall outside the traditional collecting parameters, and disciplines needing to be emphasized as researchers shift traditional foci.

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations also fund a second endowment at the Named level.