Harley L. McDevitt (’29) was a philosophy and Spanish major who also served as the business manager for the campus magazine, Scholastic. After graduation, he received a graduate degree in corporate law and in 1933 became director of advertising at the National Geographic Society, where he worked for 35 years until his retirement in 1968. In 1942, Harley joined the Navy. Before being honorably discharged in 1945 as a lieutenant commander, he served as executive officer of the Naval School of Military Government and as officer-in-charge of Navy civilian orientation courses. At Notre Dame, Harley was a member of the Edward Frederick Sorin Society and the Stephen Theodore Badin Guild. He was also extremely devoted to St. Theresa, the Little Flower.

Fifty years ago, Libreria Porrua, possibly the best known rare book dealer in Spain, purchased a collection of books on the Spanish Inquisition from a private collector. The Porrua family continued to acquire materials until the collection grew to 550 items, and its quality rivaled the nationally-known Inquisition collections at the University of Pennsylvania and Indiana University. In November 1996, through the estate gift of Harley McDevitt, the Hesburgh Libraries acquired this important research tool.

The McDevitt Collection can be divided into distinct sets of materials: the Holy Office’s manuals of instructions, indices of banned books, autos de fe, certificates of familiars of the Holy Office, trial proceedings, early works commenting on the Inquisition, and a selection of secondary works from the 1960s to the present.

Harley also funded a second library endowment at the Prize level.