Edmund Stephan (’33) played an integral role in Notre Dame’s history and formation as a great Catholic university. He was elected chairperson of Notre Dame’s Board of Trustees when the board was reorganized in 1967 during the changeover to lay governance, and he served in that capacity until becoming chairperson emeritus in 1982. In 1968, he was awarded the Edward Frederick Sorin Award, and in 1983, he and his wife, Evelyn, received the Laetare Medal, the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics.

Ed was senior counsel to Mayer, Brown and Platt, a law firm in Chicago, and he served as chairman of the firm from 1977 to 1984. A member of many legal and business associations, Ed represented Notre Dame internationally a number of times. He was awarded honorary degrees from Notre Dame (1967), Rosary College (1990), and Loyola University (1991).

The collection in his honor provides a much-needed multidisciplinary resource for scholars in American studies, history, journalism, sports, government, economics, and business, among others. By steadily acquiring the retrospective years (1849–1920 and onward) of the Chicago Tribune, along with the indexing as it becomes available, the libraries meet researchers’ great need for printed sources of 19th-century serials and add to their collections an invaluable tool for the study of the history and culture of the entire upper Midwestern region of the United States.