JAY I. KISLAK CENTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

OPENING SOON
At the heart of the University of Miami Coral Gables campus, a former lecture hall is being renovated and transformed into a place of learning and discovery to benefit the entire community, the Jay I. Kislak Center. This revival of a historic community space in the midst of the campus’ cultural hub will also serve as an attractive and accessible new home for the University’s Special Collections and Archives (SPARC), which have outgrown their current homes on the eighth floor of Otto G. Richter Library.

The Kislak Center’s establishment is occasioned by a transformative landmark gift to the University of Miami, the Jay I. Kislak Collection of the Early Americas, Exploration and Navigation, currently housed in a private gallery at the Kislak Foundation in Miami Lakes. It is the largest and most important collection of materials in the southeastern United States on themes related to the history of the early Americas, hemispheric cultural encounters, and global exploration. The Collection is the product of the personal interests and acquisition efforts of Jay I. Kislak, a developer who came to the Miami area in 1952. It has evolved over the course of his collecting career to comprise 4,000 materials, including rare books, manuscripts, maps, photographs and artifacts beginning with early Native American cultures and extending to modern times. As announced to the public in January 2017, the Jay I. Kislak Collection of the Early Americas, Exploration and Navigation will come to the UM’s Special Collections.

The Kislak Center, in addition to housing SPARC and the Kislak Collection, will support the public programming for the UM Libraries, as well as for the University’s centers, institutes, schools, and colleges. The facility will include a grand reading room and gallery for SPARC to showcase items from the collection vaults. The space will also host events during the evening and weekend hours, with a capacity for 275 guests and the state-of-the-art acoustics and technology infrastructure to support a full range of lectures, panel discussions, and musical and theatrical performances. The Kislak Collection, a conference room, and a curatorial office suite will be located on the Center’s mezzanine level, accessible from the first floor by means of a new staircase and elevators.

The Jay I. Kislak Center will serve to spark a heightened and mutually sustaining dynamic between University of Miami intellectual and cultural programs and the communities of greater Miami.

Images from top left counterclockwise: Otto G. Richter Library; historic photo of Richter Library southeast wing dedication, June 10, 1962; renderings of the Kislak Center’s main hall, featuring lecture style and banquet style seating; renderings of the Kislak Gallery, including the entrance and multipurpose room.
Image of an early sixteenth century map illustrating European footholds in Florida and the Caribbean from the Jay I. Kislak Collection of the Early Americas, Exploration and Navigation.