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The Walter Kaiser Reading Room Fund

*A project to reevaluate and
revitalize one of I Tatti's
most significant spaces in
memory of Walter Kaiser*
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The Walter Kaiser Reading Room

It has long troubled me that the room we know as the 'Big Library' – a beautiful space with so much potential – should be so seldom used by our Fellows and the many visiting academics who consult our extensive collections. Scholars have specific requirements of a reading room that this space currently does not meet, and despite the room's location at the very heart of the Villa it sits unused for much of the year.

My vision is that the 'Big Library' will become the Walter Kaiser Reading Room: a comfortable, functional space and the hub of our Center. In order for this transformation to occur the room must first undergo extensive refurbishment, including the installation of a new heating system to replace the bulky radiators that currently occupy much-needed space; desks and work stations to accommodate numerous

scholars; adequate lighting, electrical outlets, and more. Every gift earmarked for the Walter Kaiser Reading Room Fund will be used to transform this room for the benefit of our scholarly community.

Walter Kaiser was dedicated to the intellectual well-being of our Fellows, and I look forward to the day when the room named in his honor abounds with intellectual energy of the sort that can only be generated when scholars work and study together.

ALINA PAYNE

Paul E. Geier Director, Villa I Tatti

Alexander P. Misheff Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University



Walter Kaiser and Villa I Tatti

Walter Kaiser (1931–2016) was Director of I Tatti from 1988 until 2002. Born in Bellevue, Ohio, he won scholarships to Phillips Academy, Andover, and Harvard, remaining with Harvard until his retirement. Walter Kaiser's influence on I Tatti was profound, and much of what I Tatti is today is owing to his vision, taste, and indefatigable fundraising.

Today, his spirit lives on at I Tatti, the place where, in his own words, he was at his happiest.

In honor of this Director to whom fellowship and the sharing of knowledge meant so much, the largest single space in our library will be renamed the 'Walter Kaiser Reading Room' and equipped to meet the needs of our Fellows and visiting scholars.

