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Dear Friends,

Libraries are dedicated to the principles and practices of social justice, diversity, and equality among our staff, collections, and services. In an effort to further opportunities for education, benefit the good of the public, and inform citizens, the University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries commit ourselves to doing our part to end the many forms of discrimination that plague our society. We affirm our commitment to support students, faculty, and staff as they work to make the Libraries and the University a welcoming and inclusive community.

In coordination with campus efforts, the Libraries are moving forward with the approved recommendations for action that were developed as part of the UW-Madison General Library System’s Diversity Task Force Recommendations Report, November 2, 2015.

The task force recommendations include:

1. Create an Equity & Diversity Committee
2. Establish what the “inclusiveness” core principle of the General Library System’s strategic goals means in practice (how it is applied and how staff members are accountable to it)
3. Use the definitions of diversity and inclusion, recommendations of the task force, and understanding of the “inclusiveness” core principle to create both the GLS strategic diversity plan and an implementation plan for task force recommendations
4. Require ongoing continuing diversity and inclusion education for leadership/management staff
5. Communicate to staff the value and importance of diversity and inclusion training for all

The UW-Madison Libraries will continue to look for ways to eliminate undue hardship for the patrons who use our collections (print and electronic), services, and facilities. We are aware of the challenges presented by racial hate and bias incidents that have occurred on this and other campuses and through social media. All of us are harmed by these incidents. We know we have work to do. We must move beyond the platitudes. We will continue to work to ensure we provide welcoming and inclusive surroundings for all who wish to take advantage of our spaces and services. Actions meant to hurt, alienate, or divide this community will not be tolerated. We also strive to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive work place.

The library staff at UW-Madison will continue to work with each other, as well as campus partners, to encourage practices that promote education, equality, diversity, and social justice. It’s important not only that the UW-Madison Libraries provide a welcoming environment for patrons, but also that our practices are seen as a positive contribution to the community as a whole. Ongoing efforts and outcomes include being aware of our own personal biases and unconscious bias, refining our capacity to directly address culturally insensitive actions and statements, and learning how to set the tone and lead in a culturally competent manner.

Please join us in this work.

Sincerely,

Ed Van Gemert
Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian

A Planned Legacy: The Tradition of Endowment Funds Benefiting the UW–Madison Libraries

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries have been the beneficiaries of the foresight of numerous individuals, families, foundations, and companies that have established endowed funds at the UW Foundation. While each fund is unique in its own right, they are similar in that they provide a sustainable and regular stream of support for the UW–Madison Libraries.

There are over 50 endowed funds supporting the Libraries. The focus of each fund is based on the interests of the donor and the donor’s wishes in addressing a specific need of the Libraries. Funds range from supporting collection development to preservation, cataloging, digitization, engagement, and general or student support.

“Endowment funds provide predictable, independent support that is critical to the ongoing operation of the Libraries,” said Ed Van Gemert, Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian. “Typically, patrons think endowed funds are only for scholarships or faculty chairs. Donors are pleased to learn that almost any area of the Libraries can be supported through an endowed fund. The Libraries are currently interested in increasing endowment funds for staff positions, facilities, and collections.”

Doug Way, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Research Services, commented, “Our librarians are often presented with last-minute opportunities to secure unique and rare books and materials. The collection endowments give them the flexibility to pursue these items. We are fortunate to have had so many donors who established funds to help us build deep and rich collections.”

While each fund has its own story and focus, here are brief descriptions of three endowment funds that support the UW–Madison Libraries:

University Book Store
Our longtime neighbor, the University Book Store, established the University Book Store Undergraduate College Library Fund in 1991, in honor of its 100th anniversary. The fund was established with a $100,000 gift. Since then, the annual interest from the gift has provided $350,000. The Fund itself has grown to over $100,000 and provides approximately $8,800 to College Library each year.

Most of these funds directly support the recreational collections in the Open Book Café, which include genre fictions, graphic novels, travel books, video games, DVDs, and programming to support student interests. Carrie Kruse, director of College Library, said that, “Libraries have a role in promoting reading in any form, so we are thrilled to be able to provide books simply for the joy of reading. Students appreciate having materials for their extra-curricular interests also available to them in the academic library. Having gift funds available to purchase recreational titles makes it clear that this is not in competition for the funds that are necessary to purchase books that support academic research or scholarly journal subscriptions.”

Lyndon King Allin Fund
The family of Lyndon King Allin, ’63, established a fund in his honor after his death in 2000. Allin’s grandfather was the proprietor of the former Brown’s Books on the 600 block of State Street. Allin, a Madisonian known to all as Mort Allin, was a great lover of books, and this family tradition inspired the creation of the fund. Allin served as an advisor to Presidents Nixon, Reagan, and Ford, a role that was greatly enhanced by his deep curiosity and love of reading.

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Ben Strand,
Director of Development

"We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated. An absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation. Fear and anger can make us vindictive and abusive, unjust and unfair, until we all suffer from the absence of mercy and we condemn ourselves as much as we victimize others.”

— Bryan Stevenson, Just Mercy

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Allin and his wife Mary Ann Jennings Allin, ’66, met while students at UW–Madison. They often debated whether they noticed each other first in a Russian literature class or on the Union Forum Committee. In any case, they carried their mutual interest in politics, history, and Slavic Area studies into diplomatic assignments including promotion of international exchanges and cultural projects.

The fund’s purpose is to acquire, make available, and preserve materials for the collections of the UW–Madison General Library System in the areas of public policy, foreign relations, and Russian and East European studies.

Andy Spencer, the Libraries’ bibliographer for Slavic, East European, Middle Eastern, and Central Asian studies, has enjoyed getting to know the Allin family and sharing information on what materials are being purchased from the proceeds of the Lyndon LKA Fund. To our delight, Andy and other participating faculty members solicit our participation actively in briefings about the achievements of the group.

In the spring of 2016 Chris and Marge Kleinhenz created a new endowed fund, the Kleinhenz Medieval Italian Collection Fund, to support the purchase of books that further academic research, scholarship, and teaching of 13th and 14th-century Italian literature. As the Carol Mason Kirk Professor Emeritus of Italian at UW–Madison, where he taught Italian language, medieval Italian literature and culture for almost forty years, Chris wanted to enable the UW–Madison Libraries to serve the campus at large.

Kleinhenz Medieval Italian Collection Fund

When thinking of the Friends of the UW–Madison Libraries, it’s impossible not to note Professor Chris Kleinhenz’s role. In addition to serving on the Friends Board and being a long-time donor to the Libraries, he literally wrote the book on the Friends of the Libraries. His publication, The Friends of the UW–Madison Libraries: A History of the First Sixty Years published in 2009, helped to compile, preserve, and celebrate the many accomplishments of the group.

To think these phrases were almost lost to time. Thanks to John Heminge and Henry Condell, two of William Shakespeare’s friends and colleagues, the brilliant words of the playwright and his most famous plays not only live on, but are more celebrated than ever, including in the Badger State.

As the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death is marked this year, the University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries, along with its partners, the Chazen Museum of Art and the UW–Madison Arts Institute, have spearheaded the Shakespeare in Wisconsin 2016 initiative.

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The yearlong celebration honoring the influence of the playwright heads into its final act with First Folio!, The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare, in November. Before the First Folio arrives, the partners have organized a prelude of Shakespearian-focused experiences across the state.

“Shakespeare in Wisconsin 2016 is more than an exhibition of the First Folio. The UW–Madison partners have looked to the Wisconsin Idea as a framework,” said Susan Barribeau, UW–Madison librarian and Shakespeare in Wisconsin project manager. “We’ve joined forces with organizations throughout Wisconsin to bring to life a renewed view of Shakespeare through educational experiences, performances, and festivals.”

From high schoolers diving into the works of Shakespeare, to inmates describing how he impacted their lives; from the relevance of Shakespeare between the struggling Hutu and Tutsi tribes featured in the documentary “Rwanda & Juliet,” to the ongoing study of the Bard at UW–Madison through “Holding History” events, Shakespeare is alive in Wisconsin.
Ron Parker, Theatre Director at Appleton North High School, has helped guide the K-12 educational opportunities related to Shakespeare in Wisconsin. For three decades he has brought the wonder of Shakespeare to teenagers, and he was quick to offer his support to Shakespeare in Wisconsin.

"Shakespeare’s presence can be seen in our movies and memes, in advertising, music, and, perhaps most noticeably, in our language. Each of us speaks a bit of the Bard every day. For thirty years the high school students I have directed in the Summer Shakespeare Theatre program have started their journey by hearing this fact. The reason Shakespeare is as relevant now as he was 400 years ago, if not more so, is because he focused on what it means to be human," Parker said. "We live in a world that Shakespeare could never have begun to imagine, even in his wildest fantasies. But while technology has changed, humankind has not. We still love and hate, dream and fear. Shakespeare wrote stories about all of us."

On the UW–Madison campus, Joshua Calhoun, an Assistant Professor of English, leads the effort to explore a different view of Shakespeare, with classes like Shakespeare in Medin, various MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and reoccurring “Holding History.”

"When audiences come in with curiosity, you can build out from there. People may come for information about Shakespeare or the First Folio, and then you tell them about Maya Angelou’s reading of Sonnet 29 or about Shakespeare’s Spanish contemporary Lope de Vega, who has some 500 surviving plays. By welcoming interest in one writer, you can inspire a much broader, ongoing engagement with literature and humanities.”

Calhoun explained that he has experienced the reach of Shakespeare not only in his classroom activities, but also in unexpected interactions that drive home the impact of the Bard.

"Sometimes the use of Shakespeare is misguided or bandied about for cultural status," Calhoun said. "But sometimes he pops up in unexpected, meaningful interactions. I’m thinking about a recent conversation with a self-described homeless street poet. He asked why I teach Shakespeare; I stated that answer to Shakespeare’s plays keep us guessing which character he sides with—he doesn’t show his hand. ‘Sure he does,’ Larry shot back. ‘Shakespeare is on the side of the underdog.’ It hit me like an epiphany because he’s absolutely right. Shakespeare has an affinity for telling the underdog’s story. The underdog doesn’t always win, but Shakespeare lets you see their eyes and hear their voices and hope they’ll pull through. And sometimes, that makes us confront our own roles in the scenes we share with others.”

As Shakespeare in Wisconsin 2016 draws to a close, the partners look forward to November 3, when the Chazen Museum of Art hosts the opening celebration of the First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare! exhibition. Calhoun will provide a lecture, followed by a reception hosted by the Chazen.

"To think this journey has been two years in the making is amazing," said Barribeau. "The work between our main partners, the countless educators, performers, and scholars around the state and the nation has been truly inspiring. We may be closing out 2016, but Shakespeare in Wisconsin is just getting started."
The University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries are always searching for ways to improve the user experience. This fall, graduate students have a new space in Memorial Library dedicated to their unique needs, with the unveiling of the Graduate Study Room.

Plans to renovate the 3,000-square-foot space, located on the fourth floor, began in 2014. With more than 9,000 graduate students at UW–Madison, Memorial Library group study room reservations (requested by both undergraduate and graduate students) regularly hover near 85 percent occupancy during the semester. The need for traditional library study spaces for use by graduate students, combined with the evolving nature of their work through technology and resource gathering, resulted in a growing need to create a modern, secure, drop-in, and collaborative space to facilitate work not possible elsewhere within Memorial Library.

"For too long our graduate students have been relegated to the famed cages. While those solitary and quiet areas are conducive to some aspects of graduate study, it’s not realistic to think they meet all the needs of our students," said Ed Van Gemert, Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian. "This space is designed to facilitate collaborative work with classmates, encourage cross-disciplinary conversations, and allow students to work in an open, yet professional environment."

With a maximum seating capacity of 80 people, the room allows for both solo work and work in small groups. The space offers an open floor plan, individual lighting controls in most work spaces, an abundance of power outlets, reservable space to practice and capture presentations for review, as well as lockers and display screens with wireless access. The modern layout and furniture are designed to reflect professional workspaces today, while offering a nod to the era in which Memorial Library was built.

The new graduate study room is just one example of the Libraries’ push to repurpose their spaces and reinvigorate the different ways in which the Libraries serve their users. Throughout the renovation process, the Libraries received enthusiastic responses from campus administration, faculty, staff, and students in favor of creating a space specifically for graduate students.

"A dedicated space for graduate students with workspaces able to accommodate groups of varying sizes, combined with ready access to the rich resources of Memorial Library, and especially the deep subject expertise and reference skills of library personnel, would be crucial to this enterprise," said Professor Florence C. Hsia, in a letter of support for the project. Hsia works in the Department of History of Science.

"We’re here to help build community and provide our users with a variety of valuable resources." ~ Ed Van Gemert, Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian
Over the last six months I’ve packed and overseen the move of the Silver Buckle Press collection—type, presses, and books—from the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus to its new home at Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. Surprisingly, this isn’t the first time I’ve had the responsibility of moving the collection: my first big job after being hired to run Silver Buckle Press (in 1994) was arranging its relocation from College Library to Memorial Library. 

The mission of the Silver Buckle Press, on behalf of the Libraries, has been to demonstrate and teach the craft and history of letterpress printing. The tools for this work were originally collected by a Michigan hobby printer, Robert Shaftoe, an art director at the Ford Motor Company. Along with his friend and fellow collector, Robert Runser, and their collection of primarily late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century letterpress printing materials has been used to show how books were made through a variety of press activities and productions. Staff have given countless tours, designed and published books and broadsides, curated exhibits, organized symposia, taught classes, and mentored students.

The Silver Buckle Press, UW–Madison. This small but distinguished collection of primarily nineteenth- and early twentieth-century letterpress printing materials has been used to show how books are made through a variety of press activities and productions. Staff have given countless tours, designed and published books and broadsides, curated exhibits, organized symposia, taught classes, and mentored students.

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In 1973, Department of Art professor Walter Hamady successfully encouraged the UW–Madison Libraries to purchase the Silver Buckle Press collection from the estate of Mr. Shaftoe. Robert Runser came to Madison and spent time helping the newly-hired library staff printer, Elizabeth Coberly Benforado, set up the collection in a room on the first floor of College Library. They researched and identified types and presses and printed a small edition of type specimen books showing the metal, wood, and ornamental types and decorative materials available for composition—producing essential reference works for anyone using the collection.

Together they also printed a handsome commemorative broadside announcing the launch of Silver Buckle Press. It reads, in part:

Mr. Shaftoe’s one expressed wish for his collection was that it not be broken up and disposed of piecemeal; that it be preserved intact and be established in and operated by a museum, library, or historical institution.

In providing a home for The Silver Buckle Press, the University has become the fulfillment of that wish. It should be emphasized, however, that the Press, despite its historical significance, is not intended as a museum piece, but rather as a working tool to be used to support instruction and to provide material access for a limited group of interested persons to the craft of hand-press printing.

This original mission statement has been a touchstone for me. It grounded my thinking about what Silver Buckle Press was, and helped me shape what it could do as a working museum of printing history dedicated to the idea of preservation through use. My mission has been to relate printing history to the life of contemporary students through juicy examples and provocative comparisons. Though working with letterpress printing materials is highly specialized, I’ve never thought of it as arcane or sentimental. Silver Buckle Press was never a Ye Olde Press—I didn’t have to dress like Ben Franklin. What was printed at the Press, exquisitely and well, were almost exclusively original texts with new designs. In rare cases, and then very deliberately, we reprinted a text or produced a facsimile. It’s been essential to my goals as an educator that our printing history collection be put to lively use for a current audience.

Stewardship of the Silver Buckle Press on campus has been my enormous privilege for more than two decades. With the General Library System’s decision to partner with Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum, and move the collection to Two Rivers, I have been in the unusual position of planning my own obsolescence. The decision to transfer the Silver Buckle Press collection to another institution was serious.

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By Tracy Honn

Movable type is a very modern idea—it’s basically a process of recycling.
cuts on campus, and their consequences, are sobering. Within that framework, and without reservation, I am convinced the General Library System has honored the spirit of the collection’s mission and potential by working with Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum to create a new home for Silver Buckle Press.

Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum has become a nexus for students of printing—at all stages and from many related areas of interest—in this country and internationally. The museum opened in 1999 and featured the founding work of what became a cabinet-making empire: Hamilton Equipment Company. The museum expanded from its original efforts to preserve wood type to include, among other activities, expanded class offerings, conferences, and the cutting of new wood types designed by renowned typographers and lettering artists. In 2017, the director, Jim Moran, and artistic director, Bill Moran, were invited to speak at the Association of European Printing Museums conference, explicitly because of their success in handset metal type and fine printing.

Students will get to work in a well-equipped, secure space surrounded by all the many exciting activities and collections at Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum. I’m excited about the future.

Over the course of my career at Silver Buckle Press I saw Hamilton Wood Type & Printing museum begin, and, was an early supporter. Starting around 2008 we had a renewed connection to the museum—as a sister institution. At Hamilton I had colleagues, met other printers and designers, and developed projects out of those relationships. I told many visitors to Silver Buckle Press about Hamilton; and after the independent movie Typhosface was released (its subject is Hamilton and the design revolution that was beginning to be apparent), visitors started to tell me about Hamilton! Our little sister grew up in delightful ways. I’m proud of the history of support and interest we have shared.

In its new home at Hamilton, Silver Buckle Press will continue to play a vital role in the education of students. The collection will be used for classroom teaching by staff and guest instructors, who will now have an opportunity at Hamilton to offer instruction in handset metal type and fine printing. Students will get to work in a well-equipped, secure space surrounded by all the many exciting activities and collections at Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum. I’m excited about the future.

Hand printing requires the stamina to stand in one place. You need doggedness as much as intelligence to stick with the work until it’s perfected. Most of the labor of a fine printer is invisible and sometimes tedious—proofreading and correcting copy; adjusting it by small increments: changing leading, hanging a letter by a hair space, adding ink to the press. Proofing and proofing again. All of these represent work that is apparent when absent, increments: changing leading, hanging a letter by a hair space, adding ink to the press.

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Working for the libraries at Silver Buckle Press allowed me to collaborate with extraordinary people on a rich variety of activities serving campus and the broader community. I’ve been surrounded by printing artifacts with fascinating stories, and it’s been my passion to interpret them. Over the last forty years Silver Buckle Press has published (often original) work by well-respected writers—Lorrie Moore, Audre Lorde, and Billy Collins, among others. We’ve supported campus events with projects honoring the UW’s Sesquicentennial and the Experimental College. Within the Library, our focus has been on collegially developing book arts and printing history programs and exhibitions that support our extraordinary collections.

Here are a few of my favorite things:

**Hot Type in a Cold World II: Recasting Gutenberg**
This symposium—on the origins of Johann Gutenberg’s types—highlighted emerging scholarship from the new application of digital technologies to the study of the earliest printed books. Among the presentations (one of which required the audience to wear 3-d viewing glasses), the most memorable was Stanley Nelson’s public demonstration of type casting in Room 126 of Memorial Library. The entertaining Stan, a retired Smithsonian Graphic Arts curator, brought his historic recreations of casting tools, and fired up a small crucible of molten lead, proceeding to cast type in a hand mould—making one piece at a time—as it stayed long after the demo and lecture, had been done in the 15th century. mould—making one piece at a time—as it made one piece at a time—as it had been done in the 15th century. The audience was mesmerized. Attendees stayed long after the demo and lecture, crowding around the front table, examining type objects, and asking Stan endless questions. Hot type, indeed!

**Book-Off**
Book-off was a public event produced by Silver Buckle Press for the 2006 Wisconsin Book Festival. Inspired by shows such as Project Runway and Iron Chef, we created a book arts performance. The Wisconsin Humanities Council’s Book Festival director, Alison Jones Chaim, generously supported this outrage. Our bookmaking event was held in Wisconsin Union Theater and featured six student artists, who competed in three themed elimination rounds over two hours, with a live audience and a final winner. The event’s success depended on months of advance preparation work with Professor Jim Escalante’s book arts students— who volunteered to participate—teaching structures and rehearsing. At the same time we gathered props and arranged for stage and technical support, including videography (we had a large rear-screen camera projection so the audience could see what competitors were doing in close-up detail). Graduate student Carey Watters (now on the art faculty at UW–Parkside) was tireless in helping the audience could see what competitors were doing in close-up detail). Graduate student Carey Watters (now on the art faculty at UW–Parkside) was tireless in helping to the history of printing that included a tour—one-hour introduction to the history of printing that included a demonstration of type composition and printing. Each student pulled a print during the class, and I customized tours to the area of study. History of Science students printed a piece that said “Smoked or Enlightened, Who Doesn’t Loves Bacon” (which I liked so much we re-worked and editioned it as a poster). Shakespeare students printed a miniature book with a quote from Love’s Labour’s Lost. Over the years I met with countless campus and community members. I assisted students with their research and showed schoolchildren and Scouts how to make an eight-page book from a single piece of folded paper. Additionally, the library supported me in teaching semester-long classes for the Department of Art.

**Small Printing Presses & Amateur Journalism**
I restored to working order several printing presses in the Silver Buckle Press collection. The neatest confluence of library collections with Silver Buckle Press programs came after we repaired and began to use our two smallest printing presses which come from the era of amateur printing in the nineteenth century. They spurred me to study the library’s remarkable holdings in amateur journalism in the Department of Special Collections and led to an illustrated talk called “Desktop Publishing in the 19th Century,” which I presented at the American Printing History Association conference in 2010. These little presses have done more than anything to capture the imagination of students—young and old.

**Teaching & Tours**
During my tenure at the library I refined one of the press’s bread-and-butter activities—a tour—into a solid one-hour introduction to the history of printing that included a demonstration of type composition and printing. Each student pulled a print during the class, and I customized tours to the area of study. History of Science students printed a piece that said “Smoked or Enlightened, Who Doesn’t Loves Bacon” (which I liked so much we re-worked and editioned it as a poster). Shakespeare students printed a miniature book with a quote from Love’s Labour’s Lost. Over the years I met with countless campus and community members. I assisted students with their research and showed schoolchildren and Scouts how to make an eight-page book from a single piece of folded paper. Additionally, the library supported me in teaching semester-long classes for the Department of Art.

**Students**
Silver Buckle Press has depended on student hourly staff since it began. It’s been my joy to work with these students. I knew how important the experience of studying at Silver Buckle Press was for me—my first teacher, Katherine Kuehn, who ran Silver Buckle Press in the mid-80s when I was a graduate student, was infinitely patient and generous. I deeply valued the opportunity, as a supervisor, to give back to students the kind of careful mentoring I had received. I’m proud of the impression working at Silver Buckle Press had on them, in many cases furthering their careers. For fifteen years, we printed a seasonal summer-themed poster. These small productions were often opportunities to give a student on staff the freedom and responsibility of art-directing a project. In 2005, graduate students Sabrina Ogle and Kathy O’Connell indulged my love for a photograph showing the composing room at Curwen Press (in England) in the 1950s, by swapping out the original workers’ portraits with snapshots of current and former student printers at Silver Buckle Press—with the boss overseeing from the rear.
Some of the oldest items in the Libraries’ collections are documents over 2,000 years old. They are still readable today because of the durability of the papyrus they’re written on. The Department of Special Collections also houses a large number of medieval manuscripts whose vellum pages can easily be read by scholars—provided they understand Latin.

Libraries around the world have been preserving materials like these by keeping them in climate-controlled facilities away from light, heat, and dust. For many works, however, careful storage is not sufficient to adequately preserve them. Most 20th-century books are printed on acidic paper, slowly (or not-so-slowly) disintegrating unless active efforts are taken to stop the damage or migrate the content to some new medium such as microfilm or, increasingly, a digital format.

Digitizing for preservation has some real benefits: it may be less expensive than intensive print conservation methods, perfect copies of the digital files may be made, and access to the digital files may minimize demand for handling the original materials. However, preserving digital content itself brings new challenges; one cannot simply put a disk or CD on a shelf and expect its contents to be preserved. The technical challenges fall into two main areas: medium and interpretability.

Digital storage costs are continually decreasing, but at the same time, storage media are continually becoming obsolete. The 5.25” floppy disks and 10Mb PC hard drives of the 1990s have been replaced by a dizzying array of storage technologies. An institution that needs to store digital content far into the future must plan for a continual migration of its files to new storage media, lest it be caught with all of its assets on the digital equivalent of 8-track tapes. This content must also be constantly monitored against “bit rot,” the gradual decay of individual bits on a disk that might irretrievably corrupt a file. Preservation systems typically store all content on multiple platforms, periodically checking the copies against one another to ensure their integrity.

Even the best storage program will not preserve digital content if the files have been created in proprietary formats by obsolete software. Files from some early word processing and spreadsheet software can no longer be opened and read, even if they’re in perfect digital condition. Although conversion software exists for many consumer-market formats, libraries and archives must continually audit their holdings to discover at-risk formats and, if possible, migrate content to newer, more standard formats.

The Libraries are trying to meet these challenges by relying on international standards for capturing, encoding, storing, and migrating digital content. However, because the digital landscape changes so quickly, we need to constantly monitor our content if we want to prevent the digital decay of millions of dollars’ worth of our cultural heritage. These systems come at a cost, however, at a time when base budgets are shrinking. Libraries and other heritage institutions are working together to find creative ways to fund and sustain critical preservation programs: developing efficient work flows, creating preservation endowment funds, and joining collaborative initiatives such as HathiTrust and the Digital Preservation Network. It will take a combination of these methods to ensure that our cultural heritage is preserved for future generations.
One of the many resources here at the University of Wisconsin–Madison for researchers is the Robinson Map Library, located in the Department of Geography. Headed by Jaime Martindale, a map and geospatial data librarian, she described her role in simple terms: “My job on campus is to support students and researchers in whatever they’re doing.”

Despite having its home in the Geography Department, the Map Library serves as a resource to students from many different backgrounds and majors. Martindale has met aspiring researchers on topics ranging from forestry and wildlife ecology to landscape architecture, and nuclear biology.

New technology has made it possible for all these different students to access the available resources. Martindale spoke about a new platform called GeoData@Wisconsin that has made it possible to use the data outside of the library. “This web-based application allows us to provide direct download access to our Geographic Information System (GIS) data collections, which means students don’t have to request it from us and we don’t have to compile tons of data requests every time someone needs something,” she said. “It’s a win-win! As a result, our workflow became streamlined and much more efficient, and students could get the data they needed with the click of a button.”

GeoData@Wisconsin was jointly developed by the Robinson Map Library and the State Cartographer’s Office, one of several collaborative projects between the two units. Powered by open source software and developed by students with guidance from Martindale and from AJ Wortley at the State Cartographer’s Office, the application not only facilitates data access, but also has served as a service learning project for multiple students while in development.

It is not only UW-Madison students who have benefitted from the application’s development. “This project has broadened access to our collections to the entire UW System as well as publicly accessible data sets for the public at large,” said Wortley.

In addition to developing GeoData@Wisconsin, the Map Library is also involved in a parallel geoportal effort involving ten institutions from the Big Ten Academic Alliance. The goal of this Geospatial Data Discovery Project is to make data from all participating campuses discoverable from one place. “Our experience has allowed us to participate in national conversations about GIS data management, metadata standards, long-term preservation, and access to geospatial content in an academic environment,” said Martindale. “This is a fabulous opportunity for us to work with UW researchers and help them document their data so it can be shared via this multi-institutional platform.”

As always, the main focus of the Map Library, as well as all the other campus libraries, is to serve as a resource for students. A library exists to make information accessible, and the invention of new platforms such as GeoData@Wisconsin has helped to make that an easier endeavor.

“In the end, our focus is on students and researchers and what they need to effectively do their work,” said Martindale. “Our goal is to facilitate access to the geospatial content they need, and provide them with avenues for sharing their own data so others can discover it.”

“Mapping a Path Forward: Geospatial Data”

From the first stone carvings of the early ages, to the Great Library of Alexandria, to the construction throughout the 20th century of the libraries we know and love today, the raw human need to share knowledge and stories has never diminished.

Even in the present day, libraries are evolving. The advent of new technology has transformed the ways in which people interact with resources and materials. Nowadays, information is literally available at the touch of a button. A three-second Google search will return thousands, sometimes millions, of results.

“Our goal is to facilitate access to the geospatial content they need and provide them with avenues for sharing their own data so others can discover it.”

~ Jaime Martindale, Map Librarian

By Erin Doherty

Jaime Martindale and her assistant at work in Robinson Map Library.

“UW–Madison Map Library pinpoints Sawyer County site of 1966 bomber crash”

Map and Geospatial Librarian Jaime Martindale helps find the site of a 1966 bomber crash in Wisconsin.

news.wisc.edu/uw-madison-map-library-pinpoints-sawyer-county-site-of-1966-bomber-crash

There’s nothing terribly unusual about finding a copy of Dante Alighieri’s The Divine Comedy in a library. A particular tome, though, has an interesting tale to tell—one that spans decades. In December of 2015, library school student and self-proclaimed “book nerd” Elle Rogers contacted Memorial Library reference librarian Laurie Wermter, via our chat service, to alert us that a copy of The Divine Comedy belonging to the University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries had been mistakenly returned to her Little Free Library. Given that the Little Free Library movement was begun here in Wisconsin, that didn’t seem surprising—until Rogers revealed that she lived in New Hampshire. Elle Rogers created the Little Free Library outside her home in Dover, NH, to make her neighborhood more neighborly, according to a 2012 interview with her published in The Foster’s Daily Democrat. After all, love of books and libraries runs in Rogers’ family: “When my paternal grandmother died, my father made sure to have a bench with her name on it donated to her library. When my maternal grandmother died [in 2011] at 100, she had a book buried with her!” So, it’s no wonder that this east coast bibliophile wished she had a book buried with her! But how did the book end up in New Hampshire? Read on to find out.

A careful perusal of the UW-Madison yearbook The Badger (which has been carefully digitized by University of Wisconsin Digital Collections), revealed that the only student with that last name at the time was an Arnold Serwer. The Badger yearbook staff distinguished Serwer as one of the University’s “Interesting Students: Not due to what they’ve done so much as to the fact that they’re the kind of people that you like to know.” A “prolific writer of satire, humor, and ironic prose,” Serwer was also noted to have been active in writing scripts for Haresfoot, the student drama club. He graduated from UW-Madison with an undergraduate degree in journalism in 1933.

After his time at UW-Madison, Arnold Serwer worked as a legislative reporter for the Wisconsin State Journal and served in the Army Reserves Air Corps during World War II. He also worked as a correspondent for the Reports Division of the War Relocation Authority (WRA), reporting on the lives of Japanese-American soldiers and families in internment camps. After living in New York City for a time, Serwer moved back to Madison with his family in 1962 and became heavily involved in both local and national politics. In fact, an August 10, 1979 article in the Capital Times, entitled “State Loses a Conscience,” lamented Arnold and Dora Serwer’s impending relocation from Madison to Reston, VA, to be near their son David, proclaiming that they “constituted the strength of a regiment to the progressive causes.” Throughout the decades, Serwer worked on the campaigns of Harold Stafford, Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern, and Morris Udall and was a strong supporter of Adlai Stevenson.

While ordinarily a rather quiet person, in 1968 Serwer was put in the remarkable position of leading a crowd of delegates and demonstrators seven miles through the streets of Chicago at the Democratic National Convention, negotiating with police, city officials, and the National Guard after they attempted to block the demonstrators from continuing on. In an August 31, 1968, interview published in the Capital Times, Serwer, who was serving as a McCarthy delegate, recalled, “The women were crying and some of the hotheads were getting restless. If we had all left them some would have tried to go on and been beaten, some would have sat down and been beaten anyway.” Serwer’s actions were credited with preventing further violence and ensuring the safe passage of the demonstrators and delegates to the gates of the convention. In addition to his political involvement, Serwer was also exceptionally active as a journalist, serving as the associate editor of The Progressive during the tumultuous years of 1967 to 1976 and as editor of The Wisconsin Democrat. Serwer possessed a witty sense of humor, as demonstrated in this March 22, 1963, letter to the editor of the Capital Times:
Arnold Serwer passed away in 1995, followed six months later by his son David, and then by his beloved wife and political partner-in-action Dora (Shulman) Serwer in 2001. I was able to contact, however, Arnold and Dora’s daughter, Cathy (Serwer) Zumberg, of Huntington Woods, MI. By coincidence, Cathy was already planning to travel to Madison in July 2016 to attend her high school class reunion. When we spoke, Cathy recalled that she had moved to Madison from New York with her family when she was 16 and enrolled at Madison East High School. Cathy then attended UW-Madison from 1966 to 1970, during the years of the Vietnam War (following in the footsteps of her older brother David, who had graduated in 1964). Adding another level to this tangled web is the fact that Cathy herself worked for the UW-Madison Libraries as a student, shelving books in Memorial Library—the same location where her father checked out The Divine Comedy three decades earlier. While she was in town for the Madison East High reunion, Cathy stopped by Memorial Library to see the book in person and walk once more through the famous stacks, pausing to take stock of the new and remnants of the old catalog and reminisce about her days on campus.

While we looked over old articles and photos of her family, Cathy shared personal anecdotes, noting, “Any sense of humor I have is from my dad and from David.” She also related a piece of family lore. According to Cathy, in 1948 her father developed a prototype for a baby doll with adoption papers, using Cathy’s infant footprints for the doll’s birth certificate. He attempted to sell his idea to the Ideal Toy Company, but, they were not interested. Remarkably, Arnold’s idea for a doll with adoption papers predated the popular Cabbage Patch Kids concept by thirty years.

Over the decades, Cathy’s family developed multiple connections to the UW. After they moved back to Madison in the 1960s, Cathy’s father Arnold worked as an adjunct faculty member in the School of Journalism. Dora worked on campus in the Graduate School as an administrative assistant to Dean Boch. While a student, Cathy would often trek up Bascom Hill to visit her mother. Reflecting on the memories triggered by this book’s rediscovery, Cathy said she hoped this article would serve as a tribute to her father and a testament to the multigenerational impact that UW–Madison has had on her family.

“If I’m so glad he went to Wisconsin,” she said. “I think it helped him grow. It certainly helped me grow!”

We may never discover precisely how The Divine Comedy landed in a Little Free Library in New Hampshire, though perhaps it changed hands while the Serwer family was living in New York. We may also never learn why Arnold Serwer chose to hold on to this particular volume—was it a required text checked out for an English class? A memento of his days on campus? Or more likely, a book that just never quite made its way back to the library? Thus, we find ourselves back in the present, holding a book that is just one among more than seven million printed-and-bound comrades—seven million opportunities to touch the lives of other Badgers in ways large and small. This, readers, is the lasting power of the Libraries—that knowledge gained here leaves here, and comes back in unanticipated ways to be shared again and again.

Speaking of things freely given: this copy of The Divine Comedy was originally due back in fourteen days, so at the time of its return it was 84 years, 10 months, and 5 days overdue. Granted, this can’t compete with George Washington’s 221-years-overdue book, but hypothetically it would still add up to a hefty fine. Good thing the staff members in the Memorial Library Circulation Office are understanding.

“Any sense of humor I have is from my dad and from David.”

— Cathy Zumberg

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Wisconsin Idea, A World Away

The premise of the Wisconsin Idea is that the reach of the University should go beyond its students and faculty and into the community. In 1904, former University President Charles Van Hise famously said, “I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University reaches every home in the state.” There are UW faculty, staff, and students all over campus who bring the Wisconsin Idea to life. Their work reaches outside the boundaries of the University and has a positive impact on people not only here in Wisconsin, but all over the world.

Among them is Southeast Asian and Hmong Studies librarian and Linguistics liaison Larry Ashmun.

Ashmun has three decades of experience as a librarian and a well-spent 30 years it has been. He started working for the UW Libraries as a Southeast and South Asian Studies Bibliographer in 2001. His current focus is on Southeast Asian and Hmong studies. During the late summer of 2015, he travelled to Cambodia and Thailand to run a training program for Cambodian librarians. “[The Center for Khmer studies] invited me to go to Cambodia for roughly a week’s work,” he said. “I went to Thailand too...Thailand is one of our big countries for Southeast Asia [Studies], and I just happen to be a specialist in that area, so it dovetailed nicely.”

The trip consisted of two parts. The purpose for which Ashmun was contracted was to serve as a consultant and trainer for the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) in Cambodia. He still provides assistance to them as they continue to develop their information services and library program, and his overseas colleagues had nothing but praises about his helpfulness and contributions to their work.

“Larry worked closely with the librarian team at CKS for two and a half days. This training helped us better understand the online resources,” said Daraneth Um, Head Librarian at CKS.

CKS Executive Director Krisna Uk, who also worked with Ashmun, expressed hope that he benefitted as much from spending time with them as they did from spending time with him.

“He is a very good instructor, very eager to understand the CRS Siem Reap and other libraries’ needs,” she said.

The workshop that Ashmun led took place in the capital, Phnom Penh, and was entitled “Building the Capacity of Cambodian Librarians.” There were fourteen Cambodian attendees, most of whom were information specialists and librarians from Phnom Penh. One was from the U.S. Embassy and three were from outlying “American Corners” libraries.

The second part of his trip took him to Thailand, where he went in search of new resources for the Libraries here at UW.

“My work is always ongoing, between helping faculty and students here and helping people learning around the world in some cases. Everybody and anybody is part of our audience.”

The impact of his work is just as great in Wisconsin as it is across the world. Every summer he works with the Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI), an intensive eight-week language training program on campus. Approximately 100 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students attend the program each year. At the beginning of each program, Ashmun meets with the students to talk about the Libraries and the resources we offer.

“I always want to connect to it because most of the students who are involved are from elsewhere; they’re not UW students.... in the summer, people from places that don’t offer these languages, at least on a regular basis or at the level they would like to study, will come here. I always make it a point to meet with them right at the beginning and just orient them to let them know that we have a lot of resources that [they] may not always have had access to,” he said.

“Thai Studies is presently the UW’s strongest area of Southeast Asian studies, so I always include time in country for liaising and networking with colleagues and resource contacts, as well as business with my principal Thai vendor, Thammasat University’s Bookstore,” he said. “Success this time included identifying new resources for acquisition and adding a new dimension to my arrangements with the Bookstore, namely that they will now acquire resources from Cambodia for the UW.”

This trip followed a number of others, including one in 2012, when Ashmun was the recipient of a Fulbright Specialist Program grant to Thailand, which also led to a series of U.S. Embassy-sponsored presentations in Laos.

Of his various trips, he said, “[My work] is always ongoing, between helping faculty and students here and helping people learning around the world in some cases. Everybody and anybody is part of our audience.”

The University is not the only beneficiary of Ashmun’s dedication. For the past ten years, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has facilitated the Sunrise Program, which involves students from Thailand coming to live around the state for a period of three weeks. Ashmun serves as a contact for the University and helps to organize the visitors. He also assists Olbrich Botanical Gardens with the organization of its Thai Fest, which first began in 2005.

Ashmun noted that Olbrich has the only Thai pavilion in North America.

In addition to all of this, he also manages an impressive collection of books and other resources, one which regularly receives monetary support for Southeast Asian studies from the federal Title VI program and now includes the leading academic Hmong studies collection.

Ashmun’s work, as well as the work of other librarians around the University, is valued by people not only in the geographical areas with which he is involved, but also by students and scholars all over the world. It is a living testament to the Wisconsin Idea; proof that the work done at the University does indeed span outside Madison, the state, and the country.
1. Tell us about the internship
I worked in the communications office of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), which is a legislative branch agency within the Library of Congress. I had several writing projects over the course of the summer, and I also got to attend a lot of meetings and lectures. One of my main responsibilities was taking notes for a series of meetings that took place over a few months, and I learned so much by just listening to people talk about their experiences. Another ongoing task I had was to put out about five tweets every day. CRS has a Twitter account that’s only open to members of Congress and their staff, so it was great for me to experience communicating via social media to such a specific audience.

2. What’s the most interesting thing you encountered during your experience?
There are so many things that come to mind, because DC is such an endlessly fascinating city. The Smithsonian museums are always interesting, to say the least. It would take days to see everything in even just one of them. One of my favorite places to go was Eastern Market, which is a public market on Capitol Hill that has everything from fresh produce to handmade jewelry. They have an outdoor flea market on Sundays that reminded me a lot of the Farmer’s Market here in Madison.

3. Name an interesting fact about the Library of Congress that would surprise most people.
It’s so much more than just a library. It’s a massive public institution full of people coming from many, many different backgrounds. There’s always something going on—an event, a lecture, a concert, you name it. The people there are incredibly passionate about what they do and I’m so fortunate to have spent my summer working alongside them. What most people might not know is that anyone can apply for a Library of Congress card. My staff badge got me access to the buildings, but I got a card anyway just because I thought it was cool. I still carry it in my wallet.

4. How has your time in the UW-Madison Libraries helped prepare you for positions like you had this summer?
The writing projects I work on here at the Libraries turned out to be tremendous preparation for my job in DC. When I was given writing tasks to do there, I was usually able to get them done quickly because I already had the experience. I’m looking forward to taking those skills with me into future positions as well.

5. How did this experience help you when you returned to Madison?
Seeing new places and getting outside your comfort zone is almost always of great benefit, in my opinion. I’d lived in the Madison area all my life before going to DC, and I’m so glad I took the opportunity to go live somewhere else for a few months. I’m graduating in December, and whether I choose to stay in Madison, go back to DC, or go somewhere else entirely, I’m better, smarter, and happier for having spent my summer there.

6. What do you miss about DC?
There’s always something new to try in DC. I arrived at the beginning of the summer expecting that I would have more than enough time to do everything I wanted to do, and I did get to do a lot, but I don’t think that even a year would be enough to see and do everything there is to see and do in DC. It’s an incredible city. It’s almost like being on a giant college campus in that there’s always a fascinating guest speaker here or a concert going on there. It’s constantly buzzing with new stories and information, so there’s very little opportunity to be bored.

7. Where is your favorite place in DC?
I love Georgetown. I could probably spend days walking around there and spending way too much money, because there are just so many great restaurants and shops. On one of our last days in DC, my roommate and I went there to visit the cat cafe, which was really fantastic. Probably my favorite thing to do in DC, though, is hike up and down the National Mall. Biking is a great way to see all the sights and monuments. DC isn’t a huge city and it’s actually pretty bike-friendly, so I really enjoyed getting to cover more ground that way than I would on foot.

8. Most interesting person you met?
As part of the UW program, we had the opportunity to meet with a number of accomplished UW alumni while we were in DC. One of them was Dick Cheney. My favorite, though, was former U.S. Trade Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky. She spent most of her time with us talking about the current state of the U.S. economy and how the future depends so much on the outcome of the election in November. She was fascinating to listen to.

9. Least expected piece of knowledge you picked up?
I got to learn how to navigate the tunnels between the Library of Congress and the House and Senate buildings. One of my responsibilities was helping run events and lectures put on by CRS in various places around Capitol Hill. Figuring out how to get to all those places was a bit of an adventure. I got lost once or twice, but I had gotten the hang of it pretty well by the end of the summer. That wasn’t a skill I was expecting to gain!

I would highly recommend experiences like this to other students. At least once during college, you should do something that’s outside your comfort zone. That will mean something different to everyone—it might be traveling, joining (or even starting) a student organization, or taking a class on something you know nothing about. If you take a chance on a great opportunity, it might just end up being the best thing you ever did.
By Erin Doherty

Lending a New Perspective

Student Library Ambassadors: 

What do you want to know about the libraries at the University of Wisconsin-Madison? How many are there? Where is each located? How do I request an article from a library located? How do I request an article from a library? We are ready to grow the program even more. Our purpose is to have a positive impact on campus by encouraging interaction with our libraries and staff.

The Library Ambassador program was started in 2015. Ambassadors are students, both undergraduate and graduate, who work to share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the Libraries and let you know that it’s a friendly place where you can get help with research.

Currently around twenty students make up the Ambassador program. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds and majors, but they all share an affinity for the Libraries. “For the first year, we were really focusing on recruitment and getting the word out since it is a brand-new program,” said Hughes. “Now that we have a solid batch of students, who are very engaged and invested in the Libraries, we’re ready to grow the program even more. Our purpose is to have a positive impact on campus by encouraging interaction with our libraries and staff.”

Over the next couple of years, the program aims to expand its recruitment efforts and attract even more participants. Hughes said that it would be ideal to have representation from every department, including international students. She also hopes that the program will serve as a resource to Library staff members as well as students. “There’s lots of different ways, both formal and informal, to take advantage of this group,” she said. “Our job is to continue making the Libraries as accessible as possible to our users. Part of that starts with getting them in the door, and showing them what our libraries are all about. What better way than having a fellow student offer that opportunity.”

Should any student or staff member have questions or comments about the Library Ambassador program, Hughes can be reached at keili.hughes@wisc.edu.

I’d like to thank you for your support for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, and remind you that all donors to the Libraries over a basic amount of $40 are automatically welcomed into the Friends of the Libraries – as of last year, a separate gift to the Friends is no longer necessary. Why the change? Well, we realized that by giving to support any fund at the UW-Madison Libraries, you’re showing yourself to be a true Friend of the Libraries. From now on, each year that you donate to the Libraries at or above that level, you’ll continue as a Friend. And rest assured that your help really does make a difference to the Libraries in this time of tight budgets and heightened awareness of needs across the UW-Madison.

The Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries was formed in 1948 to support campus libraries and has worked ever since to showcase and bolster them through events, grants, and other programs that take place throughout the year. As a Friend of the Libraries, you’ll continue to receive our bi-annual magazine as well as invitations to Friends-sponsored events, outlined in the Fall Calendar. I hope that you’ll join us as many of these events as you can; we aim to bring a wide variety of interesting programs to the University and Madison community.

The Friends Board continues to direct specific Friends funds to programs within the Libraries. This includes a long-standing grant program that supports the acquisition of special materials and preservation needs for the Libraries, which are often unbudgeted through other ways. You can, of course, still direct your Library gift to the Friends of the Library Fund – 12544310 for these purposes. We would welcome your help, and also ask that you continue your support for the larger library funds for collections, preservation, and other critical needs. And please contact us if you’d like to become more involved with the Friends group! There are opportunities to help the group in multiple ways, including involvement with our various planning committees.

Meanwhile, we hope to see you in the near future – and hope that you join us in helping our great UW Library system.

Sincerely,

Michael Chaim
President, Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries
Grants Awarded in 2016

Each year the Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries offer grants to a variety of libraries, programs, projects and scholars. This year’s grants include:

- Reinstated Rare Book School scholarship for School of Library & Information Studies student, to Kelsey Sorenson. Read Kelsey’s report on her experience at the Rare Book School, taking a course in 15th Century Books in Print and Manuscript, on the Friends website.
- $12,039 in Grants to Scholars to travel to Madison for research from the Collection, digitization project of Mills Music Library
- Support of the Great World Texts program
- Support for the purchase of Decorating Papers, Special Collections
- Support of the Great World Texts program
- Support for the digitization of materials
- $ 17,500 in Grants to Scholars to travel to Madison for research from the Americana Sheet Music
- $12,039 in Grants to Libraries to fund purchase, preservation, and digitization of materials
- $ 17,500 in Grants to Scholars to travel to Madison for research from the Americana Sheet Music
- $ 17,500 in Grants to Scholars to travel to Madison for research from the Americana Sheet Music
- Support for the digitization of the Americana Sheet Music Collection, digitization project of Mills Music Library
- Support of the Great World Texts program
- Support for the purchase of Decorating Papers, Special Collections

Library Note

As of July 1, 2016, Wondt Commons Library, part of the College of Engineering, officially merged with the General Library System. Along with the library, the General Library System will also oversee Wisconsin Tech Search, which provides article delivery and research services to organizations and individuals not affiliated with the University. This merger provides an opportunity to think broadly about the science and engineering library services across campus. The merger not only expands our capacity for taking on new functional roles that align with campus research priorities, but it also supports the effort to re-imagine the footprint of our campus libraries. Tapping into the collective expertise of a larger community of science and engineering librarians will enable us to explore new service delivery models that align with the Libraries strategic goals, and provide expanded and improved coordination in supporting our science and engineering community. Deborah Helman will serve as the Director for Science and Engineering Libraries.

Friends Spring 2016 Events in Review

John Tedeschi Book Talk and Signing

Italian Jews Under Fascism, 1938-1945: A Personal and Historical Narrative

Over 85 people attended the John Tedeschi Book Talk and Signing at the University Club Thursday, March 17th. This event, hosted by the Friends of the Libraries, featured speakers John Tortorice, Giuliana Chamedes, and John Tedeschi, who spoke about his recently published book Italian Jews Under Fascism, 1938-1945: A Personal and Historical Narrative. Copies of Tedeschi’s book are available through UW-Madison Libraries Parallel Press.

Annual Douglas Schewe Lecture

Over 200 people attended this year’s annual Douglas Schewe Lecture, which featured speaker Kathy Cramer, UW-Madison political science professor and Director of the Monfort Center for Public Service. On April 28th, Professor Cramer presented on rural resentment towards cities, the important role of respectful discourse in politics, and her book, The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker.

Mayrent Yiddish Music Collection Sound Salon

A capacity house of 120 guests enjoyed a performance and presentation of the historic Mayrent Collection of Yiddish Music on May 15, in Evanston, IL, through a partnership with the Chicago Chapter of YIVO. YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institute) was founded in 1925 in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania) and based in New York City since 1940. Today, YIVO is the world’s preeminent resource center for East European Jewish Studies. Director of the Chicago YIVO Society, Jacob Morowitz, noted that the event, “was a wonderfully successful collaboration to further the preservation of historic Yiddish music.”

The collection is housed at Mills Music Library, thanks to Sherry Mayrent’s founding of the Mayrent Institute at UW-Madison in 2010. Since the establishment of the collection, Mills Director Jeanette Casey and her staff have been busy cataloging, preparing the material for easier access for patrons, and working with the Mayrent Institute to forge a unique partnership with the Library of Congress. “We continue to work with our campus and national partners to make this important, culturally significant, and musically diverse collection available, to the community,” said Casey.

Henry Sapoznik, Director of the Mayrent Institute, spoke on the background of the collection, describing the Yiddish cylinder recordings created by the Lambert Company of Chicago. These are believed to be the earliest known recordings of Yiddish music. Sherry Mayrent joined Henry on stage to play selections from the collection. Following the performance, a reception was held that gave alumni and friends time to share their own remembrances of the music that had an impact on their lives. The Mills Music Library exhibited sample materials from the collection and answered questions regarding the difficulty in preserving formats of recorded music.
Bob Karrow, ’71, a Chicago resident and member of the UW-Madison Library Advancement Board, attended the event, commented, “I was fascinated to learn about the technology available to help sound librarians preserve these fragile artifacts.” The presentation was sponsored by the Friends of the Libraries, the Mayrent Institute with support from the Chicago chapter of YIVO.

Year of Shakespeare in Wisconsin
In April, the noted American actress, playwright, and professor Anna Deavere Smith ushered in the Year of Shakespeare in Wisconsin with an energetic and complex one-woman show in Shannon Hall (Memorial Union). After an introduction by Associate Dean Susan Zaeske, Smith took the audience on an emotional roller coaster of diverse dramatic monologues, which she developed by interviewing individuals often marginalized in American society. Her performance aptly demonstrated the breadth of Shakespeare’s reach and brought to life how those themes and voices still resonate today in her own professional work.

Student members of the Wisconsin Union Directorate Publications Committee also adopted a Shakespearean theme for their annual Lit Fest, hosting free artistic workshops in Wheelhouse Studios and several other featured events—all in Memorial Union and including a sonnet contest to end the evening. Madison’s own Young Shakespeare Players performed a selection of scenes from a variety of Shakespeare’s plays in the Fredric March Play Circle.

American Players Theatre (APT) hosted an exhibit that demonstrated their history and craft of putting their performances together, from designing and building costumes, sets, and props, to casting, to rehearsals and performances. Guests were encouraged to don costumes, take selfies, and record a short video as part of the international “We Are Shakespeare” Digital Video Festival, sharing their Shakespearean thoughts. APT’s artistic directors Brenda DeVita and Carey Cannon presented “Why Shakespeare?” delighting a rapt audience with an hour of witty dialogue and personal reflections on their own experiences with these plays.

Support for the Year of Shakespeare is provided by the Madison Community Foundation.

Friends of the Library Annual Dinner
Friends of the Libraries gathered for fellowship, fine dining, and, faculty member William P. Jones’ intriguing talk on his long-standing usage of the collections of the UW–Madison Libraries and Wisconsin Historical Society. Professor Jones spoke on the importance of civil rights and labor collections on campus that were integral to his books on African American industrial workers and the March on Washington. Michael Chaim, President of the Friends of the Libraries, addressed the gathering and gave a special “thank you” to Lis Owens, who retired after numerous years of service to the UW–Madison Libraries and the Friends. Also acknowledged for their service and dedication to the Friends were Annette Mahler and Eleanor Albert, who retired from the Board this summer.

Amateur Journalism Conference
Individuals from Wisconsin, across the United States, and as far away as Austria, participated in a three-day conference that focused on the history, present, and future of amateur journalism. The conference was sponsored by three national amateur journalism organizations and hosted by the UW–Madison Libraries with sponsorship support from the Friends of the Libraries. The Fossils (dedicated to the history of amateur journalism), the National Amateur Press Association (NAPA), and the American Amateur Press Association (AAPA) collaborated to host joint panel sessions, a banquet, an auction, and numerous opportunities to meet other individuals interested in the craft, history, and practice of amateur journalism. Over 50 individuals attended parts of the conference.

A detailed description of the journey the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ) took before finding a home at UW–Madison was presented by panelists Ken Faig, president of the Fossils; scholar Jessica Isaac for librarian Robin Rider. Additional panels included a history of “Little Magazine” by librarian Susan Barribeau; a discussion of H.P. Lovecraft’s role in amateur journalism with T. S. Joshi and David E. Schultz (co-editors of 15 volumes of Lovecraft letters), and Ken Faig. Local Wisconsin writers Russell and Delores Miller discussed family tales of their life on a farm outside Hortonville, Wisconsin. The Department of Special Collections also hosted a hands-on exhibition of rare and unique materials from the LAJ Collection.

Jessica Isaac, a recipient of the Friends of the Libraries visiting scholar award, presented the keynote lecture that detailed her research on how amateur journalism provided an early opportunity for American youth to share, find, and voice their opinions. She shared how amateur journalism got its start with the invention of small printing presses following the Civil War and described the appeal that writing, editing, and printing one’s own paper had for young people of the time. The presentation highlighted well-known amateur journalists, including L. Frank Baum, as well as the stories of ordinary young people. At the closing banquet, Michelle Klosterman, president of NAPA, announced that the organization would be donating $5,000 to support the Library of Amateur Journalism at UW–Madison: $2,000 for work underway cataloging and preserving the collection and $3,000 for the Leland M. Howes endowment. Another member of NAPA, William Boys, pledged a $3,000 challenge match to encourage other members to also contribute. An additional $1,500 in gifts were raised as part of this challenge before the evening ended. The Fossils and AAPA also donated their share of the auction—over $800—to the Howes endowment. “We are most grateful for the generosity of the amateur journalism organizations and their members in establishing an endowment fund for the long-term care of the LAJ Collection,” said Robin Rider of Special Collections. “The Howes Fund and other gifts will help preserve fragile materials in the LAJ Collection and support creation of more detailed finding aids to facilitate use of this large and complicated body of materials from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.”

For more information visit:
- aapainfo.org/aajconference
- thefossils.org
- uwlittlemags.tumblr.com
- amateurpress.org
- library.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03

For more information visit:
Each year, several women from the University of Wisconsin–Madison are honored with an award as Outstanding Women of Color. They’re a diverse and accomplished group; all from different backgrounds and with different stories to tell. Among this group in the 2015-2016 was subject specialist librarian Emilie Songolo, who recently shared her thoughts on her life, the Libraries, and what receiving the award meant to her.

Songolo is a native of Cameroon, a central African country located on the Gulf of Guinea. She was excited to share that she’s currently working with a UW student who is studying Bassa, her native language.

“It’s not very often that I get to text with someone in Bassa!” she laughed.

Songolo started working for the Libraries in 1991 as a reference librarian, co-coordinating the Memorial Library Instruction Program. In 2001, her job changed and she found herself in charge of collection development for print reference. At the same time, the Libraries created the position of Francophone Studies Bibliographer and added it to her duties. This role would follow her into 2007, when she became a full-fledged bibliographer of Social Sciences and African Studies.

“It’s been a metamorphosis, really, meeting all my professional dreams,” she said. “There’s still a lot to do; a lot of goals that I need to reach.”

Nevertheless, her achievements thus far are both numerous and impressive. She is deeply passionate about her work and devoted to the idea that learning and serving go hand-in-hand. One of the things she loves the most about being at a large university, she said, is having the opportunity to play a mentorship role for students. Back in the early 1990s, she helped create an internship program for undergraduates, which then morphed into the Information Specialist Internship Program (ISIP).

“Library work as a profession is not well-known. People think all kinds of things about it that are not real. I like helping students learn what it’s really about from my little corner,” she said. “We’re fortunate to be at a place like UW.”

She went on to explain that for students interested in studying areas of the world outside the United States, many of the most useful materials are not in English and not found on the Internet. Thus, a multi-lingual librarian coupled with one of the largest library collections in North America is an extraordinary asset.

“I see my role as a holistic subject specialist, and that’s really how I live and work wherever I am….I think languages are very important,” Songolo explained. “When you read many languages, you go all over the planet. To other planets, even! Your mind opens wider; you learn a lot more. This opens a lot of doors.”

By no means is Songolo’s work limited to written materials. One of her biggest ongoing projects is a collection of commemorative African fabrics. She started gathering them about 30 years ago and donated them to the Library to make them accessible to others.

“To me, [fabrics] are important documents. They can help us understand society in a lot of ways,” she said. Songolo explained that fabrics can serve a variety of different purposes, from celebratory and educational to propagandistic. In Africa, they can represent political parties, holidays, people, causes, and countless other things. Songolo describes them as a medium of communication in their own right.

“They bring people together,” she said. Songolo recalled that at her daughter’s commencement ceremony from UW–Madison, all of her guests wore a certain kind of fabric to honor her daughter. “When people wear fabric in this way, they feel a deep sense of belonging. It’s a uniform….Nobody wants to be left out. It’s just that powerful of a tool.”

“To me, [fabrics] are important documents. They can help us understand society in a lot of ways.” – Emilie Songolo

Emily Songolo: The Fabric of an Outstanding Career

By Erin Doherty
Songolo told a story of another time when she was travelling in South Africa, and came across a piece of fabric from Mali, one that she had never seen before. After bringing this fabric back to the United States and studying it, she discovered that it told the story of the massacre of Malian youth in March 1991.

The fabrics are a way to document something that might not be written down; a method of visually capturing a story or a moment that might not otherwise have been discovered. Songolo has started working to take advantage of the technological advancements of library work and store them digitally.

"The goal is to preserve them in this digital repository of fabrics because they might disappear," she said. "You have to be there when they come out, to capture them. They are very ephemeral."

Technology has influenced her work in other ways as well. For example, she creates online research guides for courses that she teaches at UW so that students can access their materials easily. She does feel, however, that there is a great deal of responsibility that comes with having information as easily accessible as it is today.

"Technology today enables us to deliver materials in a timely manner. I think we need to be more critical because information gets to you faster and easier," she said. Songolo explained that technology can be used to create new resources and to help people communicate more effectively with each other if they are lucky enough to have access to it.

Even outside the Libraries, Songolo is a force for goodwill in the Madison community. She works to raise awareness about issues affecting people in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country in central Africa that has been ravaged by war. She also organized and led an informational town hall meeting and documentary series about U.S.-Haiti relations after the Haitian earthquake in 2010. Her volunteer work is, in part, to further the legacy of her younger brother, an avid philanthropist who was killed in a car crash.

"I like working for a cause, I like doing things about situations. There's a lot to be said for the therapeutic aspect of doing something when there is a need," she said. "Often, helping people can be as simple as keeping them company. Your time is one of the best gifts you can give. It can make the biggest difference in other people's lives. When something terrible happens, it's sad. But we're not going to stay deep in sadness. We have to get up and do something about the event, something that can make a difference."

Songolo emphasized the vital role that libraries play in a university, as well as how fortunate the UW community is to have access to such a vast wealth of resources. She had finished her undergraduate studies in Cameroon before she even set foot in a library, and she hopes to continue helping students see the many ways that libraries can help them.

Receiving the award and joining the ranks of other Outstanding Women of Color, she said, was a great honor.

"There's a lot of good that I've benefitted from, and I try to give that good back right here in Madison," she said. "I grew up somewhere else, but this is my home and I have to make it better. The award, for me, affirmed that."

There is no doubt in the minds of anyone who has met or worked with Songolo that she has, indeed, made her communities better both inside and outside the University. She is the embodiment of the idea that libraries are more than collections of books, but rather endless repositories of information where one can discover how to do anything, from compiling a report to speaking Bassa. The Libraries would cease to function without hardworking and dedicated people, like Songolo, who share their own expertise and experiences for the good of others.
It’s the story of eight Milwaukee families faced with losing their homes. It’s also a powerful analysis of a little-known epidemic affecting people across the country living in poverty. Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City, the best-selling book by alumnus Matthew Desmond, is the 2016-17 selection for Go Big Read, UW-Madison’s common-reading program. “This book provides us an opportunity to talk about a little-understood facet of poverty and the profound implications it has for American families, particularly in communities of color,” Chancellor Rebecca Blank says.

“I’m proud that an alum has brought this issue to the forefront and I look forward to conversations in our community about this important subject.” Desmond received his doctorate from UW–Madison in 2010. He is an associate professor of sociology and social studies at Harvard University and an affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the UW. In 2015, he received a MacArthur “genius” grant.

In his book, he writes that in the early 20th century, evictions in the U.S. were somewhat rare and popularly contested. Now they have become a frequent occurrence for low-income families, especially those headed by black women.

Milwaukee, a city of roughly 105,000 renter households, sees around 16,000 adults and children evicted in an average year, according to Desmond’s research. This is equivalent to sixteen eviction cases a day.

“Providing stable housing and lowering evictions is a human capital investment analogous to education or job training — one that has the potential to decrease poverty and homelessness and stabilize families, schools and neighborhoods,” Desmond says. “Evicted is astonishing — a masterpiece of writing and research that fills a tremendous gap in our understanding of poverty,” says previous Go Big Read author Rebecca Skloot. “Beautiful, harrowing, and deeply human, Evicted is a must read for anyone who cares about social justice in this country.”

Go Big Read has a history of choosing timely topics that are part of the national discussion. This past year’s Go Big Read book, Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson, highlights racial inequality and the need to reform America’s justice system. That success offers a bridge to a campus dialogue on Desmond’s central question: “Do we believe that the right to a decent home is part of what it means to be American?”

Initially, “immigration and community” had been chosen as the theme for the 2016-17 academic year, but Evicted, with its new insights on strengthening communities and its relevance within and beyond Wisconsin, made it a timely selection, Blank says.

Copies of the book were given to first-year students at the Chancellor’s Convocation for New Students, and to students using the book in their classes. UW–Madison instructors interested in using the book can request a review copy.

The Go Big Read program is an initiative of the Office of the Chancellor.
You’re building something, one day at a time.

You’re not just living; you’re building something. You understand that it all adds up. You’re the architect. You’re the owner.

To discuss your goals, and ways to give back to the UW, contact the Office of Gift Planning at the University of Wisconsin Foundation: Ben Strand at 608-308-8405. ben.strand@supportuw.org

supportuw.org/gift-planning
Save the Date

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Special Presentation: “History of the Transformation of UW–Madison campus libraries”
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