University Library Celebrates 14-millionth Volume

The Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has added the 14-millionth volume to its collections, *The University of Illinois: Engine of Innovation*. The book, published by the University of Illinois Press, is one of several major projects commemorating the university’s sesquicentennial.

*The University of Illinois: Engine of Innovation*, illustrated with more than one hundred images, is a collection of essays by experts and students that explore the university’s celebrated accomplishments and historic legacy, including the Mosaic web browser, the discovery of Archaea, and pioneering triumphs in women’s education and wheelchair accessibility. *Engine of Innovation*’s author is Professor Emeritus of History, Law and American Indian Studies Frederick E. Hoxie.

“This acquisition is especially noteworthy given the role of Professor Hoxie’s book in the celebration of our university’s 150th anniversary,” said William Mischo, acting university librarian and dean of libraries.

“I am honored to have *Engine of Innovation* honored in this way,” said Hoxie. “The book is a gratifying affirmation of the university’s century and a half commitment to innovation for the public good.”

A display recognizing all of the Library’s millionth volumes, including *Engine of Innovation*, will be permanently housed on the first floor of the Main Library on the Urbana campus next year. The display is made possible through a generous gift to the Library in recognition of the 14-millionth volume from Library Friend Paul Lisnek, ’80 LAS, MA ’80 LAS, JD ’83 LAW, PHD ’86 LAS. Lisnek, of Chicago, Illinois, is a multi-Emmy, Cablefax, Telly, and Beacon Award-winning television host and analyst. He has been the political analyst for WGN-TV since 2008 and currently hosts *Politics Tonight* and the *Behind the Curtain* podcast.

“I have been blessed with much success in my career. I’ve never forgotten that my success is due to the years spent at the U of I, and the countless hours doing research, writing, and studying in the various libraries around campus. I wanted to find a way to say thank you and commemorate all that the Library and university have meant to me. This seemed a fitting and lasting tribute to honor the continued growth of one of the largest libraries in the nation,” said Lisnek. “My hope is that others will think of their own success and find their personal way to say thanks and give back to where it all started.”

The Library will celebrate its 14-millionth volume milestone with a special event in the fall of 2018 upon the display’s completion.
John Wilkin Returns to Lead Library

John Wilkin, who fulfilled the role of interim vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost since February 18, 2017, returned to his position as dean of libraries and university librarian on January 16, 2018. Andreas Cangellaris, formerly the dean of the College of Engineering at Illinois, was selected by Chancellor Robert Jones as the campus’s permanent vice chancellor for academic affairs and provost.

William Mischo, The Berthhold Family Professor in Information Access and Discovery, served as acting university librarian during Wilkin’s 11-month absence and has returned to his post at the Grainger Engineering Library Information Center as head librarian.

“I’m both proud and enthusiastic about returning to the Library, and owe a great debt of gratitude to Bill Mischo for his outstanding leadership over the last year,” said Wilkin. “Ours is one of the finest libraries in the world, and Bill’s intelligence, hard work, and trustworthy partnership made sure we kept on course and I could attend to University-wide issues in the provost’s office. I want to thank Bill for all he did to help us through this period and to say that I’m looking forward to reconnecting with my Library friends.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Author and Scholar Viet Thanh Nguyen was on campus this past fall giving the Annual Mortenson Distinguished Lecture. Nguyen, a 2017 MacArthur Fellow, explored the conflicts and trauma brought about by war, forced migration, and the subsequent resettlement and integration of refugees in a new homeland and the memories that ensue. His novel *The Sympathizer* is a New York Times best seller and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2016.

The Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, the lecture’s sponsor, strengthens international ties among libraries and librarians worldwide for the promotion of international education, understanding, and peace.

For more information, visit library.illinois.edu/mortenson/lectures/viet-nguyen.

Nguyen (fourth from right) with Mortenson Center staff and friends
“Interdisciplinary” is the buzz word of the day in academic circles. 

And while the university has been at the forefront of this movement, actually accomplishing such work entails more than the will to do so. It involves logistical issues—such as coordinated lab space, technological tools, and efficient knowledge-sharing.

Leading the way is the new Allen and Elaine Avner Professorship in Interdisciplinary Research, a position through which meta-research will help identify ways that a major research library can best assist such work—either through existing resources or by providing new directions.

“One can argue that the first interdisciplinary research organization was an academic library,” said Allen Avner, who, with his late wife, Elaine, has been a longtime donor to the Library. “By its nature, an academic library cannot be an unchanging entity.”

And Avner knows a thing or two about change. He wet his feet in interdisciplinary research at the University of Illinois in the early 1960s while working with PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations)—the first interactive, computer-assisted, online learning program in the world. There, Avner learned that senior researchers had more than a pocketful of research techniques that were not readily apparent to others.

How do other scientists discover techniques known to advanced workers? The retired principal research scientist emeritus hopes the new professorship—which he views as a means of communication among various disciplines—will help. And as the Library serves as a focal point for many fields, it made sense to locate the new venture there.

“If we had some way of providing these insights to everybody, we would be able to advance lots of fields more rapidly,” Avner said. “That is the motivation behind this professorship and having it located as part of the University Library.”

Those sentiments are echoed by Scott Koeneman, assistant dean of libraries for advancement. “The great thing about gifts like the Avners’ is the impact it will have across the campus,” he said. “Library gifts are like a multiplier—they impact not only the library but units, faculty, and students in every college and department.

“And,” Koeneman added, “the way this gift is focused on multi-disciplinary work, it is even more so.”

The appointment, which covers a five-year span, is open to any Library faculty member at the associate professor or professor rank. The selection is currently underway.
Rescuing Black History

Students, archivists collaborate to save priceless documents

The work of an archivist is akin to conducting routine surgery—it involves careful planning, thorough checklists, and organized logistics.

Not so in the case of the original Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, where, this past June, a rescue “operation” ran less like a regular procedure and more like an emergency appendectomy.

“It was just a mad dash to get everything that we could,” said Anna Trammell of the Student Life and Culture Archives (SLC) at Illinois. “Ideally, when we’re going into a place like this, we want to be able to have time to make decisions about what we want to actually take, to create an inventory, but there just wasn’t time for that.”

While the crisis lasted a mere handful of days, the remarkable situation reflects a much longer history that united past and present, professionals and novices, and multiple generations of students.

It all started at Quad Day 2016, an annual event at which 1,000+ student organizations make their presence known. As an archival operations and reference specialist, Trammell reaches out to student groups to let them know that SLC—the only such entity in the United States—is interested in preserving their history.

“[Many of them] don’t know that we exist,” she said, “and that we want . . . this material they’re creating.”

One such group that Trammell connected with was Black Students for Revolution (BSFR), a relatively new organization that sprang up in 2015. Trammell gave members a tour of the Archives, brought exhibits to their meetings, and incorporated some of their content in her classes.

So the next year, when BSFR learned that the original African American Cultural Center—still full of files and documents—was to be sealed off in a matter of days due to environmental and safety concerns, the group knew just who to call.

“I will credit the Archives for forming those relationships with [us],” said Karen Olowu, a UI senior and co-founder of BSFR, “for taking the initiative to reach out . . . to tell us why it was so important that we document our history.”

Created in 1969, the Center has served to promote the well-being of African-American students for nearly 50 years. After decades of inhabiting temporary space, a new, permanent facility is set to open in 2019 on the very site of the original unit (708 S. Mathews Avenue).

Over the course of two days, Olowu and a cadre of four to five students sifted through documents in the old building, storing them in cars until Archives could accommodate them. The scene found upon entering the deteriorating structure was “kind of apocalyptic,” the African-American Studies major said.

“I looked around and saw how much . . . was in the building,” Olowu said, “photographs, sculptures, paintings, [phonograph] records. And it was eerie. Despite holes in the roof and porch, the inside of the house “looked like everybody had just stepped out for lunch,” with coffee mugs and pencils still scattered on desks.

But the sense of history was palpable. “You could feel [that] presence . . . in abundance,” said BSFR member Dimitri Love. “That really interested me.”

On the third day, Trammell—along with SLC Archivist Ellen Swain—ferried approximately 40 bankers-box-sized cartons from the house to the Archives in six carloads. Despite the rain, it was an invigorating experience.

“I could see pictures of black students,” Olowu recalled of a carousel of slides she discovered. “It was probably from the ’80s or early ’90s, and it was just so beautiful to see their faces.”
For Love, a history major, the occasion was a living lesson in his chosen field of study. “When you see these documents, when you hear the outcries of black students in the past,” lessons are learned, the sophomore said. “Let’s not mirror them. Let’s move forward.”

For Swain, the find was a historical treasure. “The Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center has played a critical role in the lives of African-American students and on the campus,” she said. “Making these invaluable records available ensures that future scholars and students will have a richer understanding of the university’s history.”

And that history means a great deal to the African-American students who learned of its existence. “Historically, black people have been denied access to mechanisms to preserve our history and to tell our own stories,” Olowu said. “So with the records that we’re able to find, we can show that . . . this is what they were doing, this is how they were thinking, this is how they were moving, this is the result of what they did.

“We can analyze the record that they’ve left for us. . . . And that gives a lot of strength to black students.”

The content retrieved from the site include documents, correspondence, news articles, plaques, awards, VHS tapes, and a program from each black congratulatory graduation ceremony. For the students, the next step is to help process the materials (see inset).

They want to offer their input, learn archival skills, and prepare a mobile exhibit to share with the local community, which historically has supported black students. The project will commemorate the 50th anniversary of Project 500—a 1968 plan that increased African-American enrollment at Illinois—and highlight Project 1000, a BSFR initiative.

Trammell hopes the events that spurred the emergency salvage will encourage other student communities to partner with the Archives. She also sees the experience as a model for other preservationists. “Look what happened when students get involved,” Trammell said, “when students are able to describe and create their own history and be involved in every part of the process—and it’s not just coming from an archivist’s perspective. The student perspective is something that’s incredibly valuable.”

Funds Sought for Student Input

The Student Life and Culture Archives seeks $800 to launch a collaborative project with students who helped salvage materials from the original Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center. Funds would be used for student wages to help arrange and describe the items, as well as design a physical and digital exhibit to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Project 500 in 2018 (see page 8). “I really want them to be involved in the vision of creating this narrative,” said SLC’s Anna Trammell, as these individuals—part of Black Students for Revolution—have been so invested in these materials. “We want them to play a key role in preserving, describing, and making accessible the records they helped save.”
The following donors have adopted items previously listed in Friendscript:

Allen T. Chang for his gift toward the transfer and digitization of thousands of hard-copy photographs in honor of RJ Lam (University Archives)

Nancy Clark for her gift to purchase a bench (Oak Street Library Facility)

Hal and Sarah Jane Dvorin for their gift to support rotating exhibits (Library Exhibitions Committee)

Melinda K. Miller for her gift to support the Copyright Chat Podcast (Scholarly Communications and Publishing Unit)

Susan L. Ross for her gift to support the Copyright Chat Podcast (Scholarly Communications and Publishing Unit)

Rosemary A. (Young) Singh and Dr. Bhagat Singh for their gift to support reading room exhibits (Illinois History and Lincoln Collections)

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$350 for artist John Baldessari’s Four Events and Reactions (1976), a prime example of early 20th century conceptual art practice. This unique and out-of-print book juxtaposes photographs of four “events” with images of a woman’s reaction to them. Linked to an exhibition held at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1975–76, the publication would augment the Ricker Library of Architecture and Art’s collection on contemporary artists—including Ed Ruscha, Yoko Ono, and Sol LeWitt.

$495 for A Descriptive Catalogue of the Etchings by Rembrandt (2011), a lush catalog of the finest and largest collection of the Dutch master’s prints in a private collection. Produced in actual size—often with fold-out panels—the luxuriously-illustrated images are reinforced by new research by a leading Rembrandt scholar. “This tome will be a great complement to our rich collection of materials on the artist,” says Head Librarian Melanie Emerson at the Ricker Library of Architecture and Art, allowing scholars “a closer look at prints not often on view in museums or reproduced in other publications.”

$500 for a limited-edition facsimile of On Kawara: Pure Consciousness 1998–2013, a series in which the Japanese painter created a new picture every day from January 1–7, 1997. This extremely rare item—packaged in a box designed by Kawara—includes installation photos, texts by the artist, and booklets accompanying the images’ exhibition. The item is sought by the Ricker Library of Architecture and Art.

$1,000 for an exhibit case. You’ve heard of flash mobs—the Oak Street Library Facility staff envisions “flash exhibitions” highlighting items or collections of interest from deep within its vaults. Designed to increase public awareness of the facility’s diverse contents, these small, flexible displays would promote access to the largest concentration of physical resources held by the University Library.

$1,520 for Le Corbusier (2017), a four-volume collection on a leading 20th century architect. The publication—which follows the Swiss-French pioneer from early training to final project—explores specific buildings, themes, and legacy, and includes writings by Le Corbusier and other scholars. Requested by the Ricker Library of Architecture and Art, the collection’s primary source material, critical interpretation, and extensive illustrations would assist students and faculty alike.

$2,000 for the Undergraduate Library Media Commons to purchase a pen touch display for the Media Editing Lab’s loanable technology program. Wacom Cintiq Creative 27” Pen Display screens allow students to use a multi-level touch pen to draw directly on a monitor—perfect for graphic design, 3-D modeling, or fine-arts digital painting tasks. Increasingly popular with students, such products create high-end digital arts projects with cutting-edge color performance and diverse graphical options.

Up to $3,000 for the Preservation Services Unit to help defray costs for its Biennial Conservation Colloquium. Funding would help lower travel and lodging expenses—as well as lend the donor’s name to the colloquium. Set for Fall 2018, this event has drawn more than four dozen book and paper conservators from around the nation. Tentative plans involve a three-day intensive workshop on preserving and conserving digitally-printed materials found in libraries and archives.
I want to help ensure the Library’s excellence with a gift to the Library Annual Fund.

Enclosed is my gift of: ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $150 ☐ Other $ __________________________

Make checks payable to UIF/Library Annual Fund (11332260).

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  bequests, charitable trusts, charitable gift annuities, and life estates.

Questions? Please call (217) 333-5682 or e-mail friends@library.illinois.edu.
Upcoming Events

13th Annual C-U Edible Book Festival
Participants celebrate the book arts and create edible books that are exhibited, documented, and then consumed. Check out the website or follow the event page on Facebook for details as they are announced.
- April 7 (time forthcoming)
- Lincoln Square Mall, 201 Lincoln Square, Urbana
- Visit library.illinois.edu/ediblebooks or facebook.com/CUEdibleBooks

Exhibition in Recognition of Project 500’s 50th Anniversary
This exhibit, assembled by the Student Life and Culture Archives with volunteer help from the Black Students for Revolution, will focus on black student activism as it relates to Project 500 (or Special Educational Opportunities Program), the first extensive effort by the university to offer equal educational opportunities for all Illinois residents. The Project 1000 initiative will also be highlighted.
- May 1–31
- 1st Floor Main Hallway, Main Library
- For more information, call (217) 333-7841

We encourage you to visit the Library’s online calendar at go.library.illinois.edu/calendar for the most up-to-date information about events happening in and around the libraries at Illinois.

The Library is Social
Stay connected for the latest news and events (and photos!) from the University Library.

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