

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LIBRARIES

ANNUAL REVIEW

2018-19





MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As we spent the last year planning for the 50th anniversary of Kenneth Spencer Research Library, we had the opportunity to experience firsthand a library's place in preserving university traditions and history. Our libraries house not only resources but archival materials that represent decades of student and faculty experiences through a range of campus climates.

Celebrating our library anniversaries by engaging with current and former employees, as well as campus and community members, reminds us of the impact KU Libraries have made on generations of Jayhawks and in preserving the Jayhawk experience.

At each library location across the Hill, faculty and staff dedicate their attention to advancing the ever-changing research needs of faculty, students, and scholars. Without this remarkable knowledge, we would not be able to provide the expert services and support on which we pride ourselves. This year has been one to remember, and I look forward to sharing the work of those in this remarkable organization with you in the following pages.

Kevin L. Smith, *Dean of KU Libraries*

“All of my work started from the motivation and the wisdom of KU Libraries faculty and staff.”

—Noah Ries, former KU Student Body President



ADVOCATING FOR AFFORDABILITY

Noah Ries never imagined beginning his senior year at the University of Kansas being sworn in as the 2018-19 student body president. The recent graduate, an economics major, with minors in business and Chinese, won a tight presidential race in April 2018. When considering political issues for which to advocate, Ries decided to include a hot-button topic that had personally affected him, as well as countless friends and constituents: textbook affordability.

“When I announced that textbook affordability would be part of my presidential platform, KU students loved the idea,” said Ries. “It makes sense that in order to provide quality education, we need to make materials affordable.”

After taking office, Ries scheduled a meeting with Dean Kevin Smith in hopes of learning how KU Libraries were supporting such efforts. At the meeting, Ries was introduced to Josh Bolick, scholarly communication librarian and open educational resources (OER) champion.

“In September, I didn’t even know what OER meant,” said Ries. “Kevin introduced me to this revolutionary idea and Josh was instrumental in my learning process.”

In addition to raising awareness among stakeholders and surveying students, Ries’ accomplishments include leading Student Senate to pass a resolution in support of OER in November 2018 and establishing the Student Senate Textbook Affordability Award in April 2019.

To honor these extraordinary efforts, KU Libraries inducted Ries into the Textbook Heroes initiative — a new effort that spotlights KU faculty, instructors, and students who advocate for the use of OER and low-cost materials in campus classrooms.

“All of my work started from the motivation and the wisdom of KU Libraries faculty and staff,” said Ries. “Future student body presidents and administrators must continue to make affordable textbooks and resources a top priority.” ■



Drew Vartia



Amy Rossomondo



Peter Bobkowski

TEXTBOOK HEROES

Textbook Heroes are identified among those who have adapted, adopted, created, or championed open educational resources (OER) and other low-cost materials for use in classrooms at KU.

The spring 2019 cohort of Textbook Heroes includes Noah Ries; Drew Vartia, assistant teaching professor, Department of Chemistry; Amy Rossomondo, associate professor, Department of Spanish & Portuguese; and Peter Bobkowski, associate professor, William Allen White School of Journalism & Mass Communications.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE IMPACT

Almost

\$650K

in estimated savings for KU students

Open Textbook Network estimates

\$100



saved per student impacted by OER



Approximately

6,443

students impacted by OER in the 2018-19 academic year

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Meeting needs through a variety of resources and spaces, KU Libraries are committed to advancing student learning, research, and scholarship.



HAWK WEEK WELCOME

As students arrived for their first week on campus, our faculty and staff hosted engaging events to teach new Jayhawks about library resources and services. From a scavenger hunt to a donut breakfast, students received a warm welcome to our spaces.



MAJOR UPGRADE

Anschutz Library, our biggest branch location and a favorite study spot, saw incredible renovations during the past year. With the addition of improved study rooms and modern furniture, the second floor of Anschutz is more popular — and useful — than ever.




8,407
KU students impacted by library instruction sessions in 2018

BOOKS ABOUND!

This year marked the 63rd anniversary Snyder Book Collecting Contest. Established by Elizabeth Snyder, the contest awards undergraduate and graduate students who boast breathtaking book collections. With cash prizes up to \$500 and gift certificates to the KU Bookstore, Jayhawks flock to participate in this tradition. The 2019 winner was undergraduate Elizabeth Wenger for the collection entitled “Notes on Sontag.”



CONSERVATION COLLABORATION

KU Libraries, in partnership with the Spencer Museum of Art, earned a significant grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to conserve valuable cultural materials housed at the University of Kansas. Dedicated to this effort, Jacinta Johnson fills the much-needed role of associate paper conservator, supporting the libraries and the Spencer Museum.

Since joining the university in January 2019, Johnson has spent time building relationships with colleagues across campus, seeking

to understand collection priorities, and finding linkages between the museum and the libraries.

“Everything about KU was brand new to me. I knew that Whitney Baker was here, but it all became more exciting as soon as I started to investigate the facets of the position,” said Johnson. “A wealth of resources exists at KU Libraries and the Spencer Museum, and we are able to assist in sharing that knowledge.”

Funding from the Mellon Foundation, along with support from other KU

departments, also contributed to the creation of a state-of-the-art conservation lab. Located in Kenneth Spencer Research Library, the new lab is outfitted with specialized equipment and supplies.

As the libraries endeavor to bring the work of cultural conservation to a wider and more diverse audience, teaching students about the resources available at KU is key. In her second year, Johnson will implement a teaching component as part of the grant requirements.

“I’ve always wanted an opportunity to teach, and

teaching on a university campus is even more impactful because conservation can offer great learning opportunities no matter a student’s career path,” said Johnson. “If faculty have students who are interested in ways to merge the arts and sciences, they can send them to us and we can help guide them.”

With a team of knowledgeable, passionate staff and the ultramodern lab, conservation work at KU Libraries will continue to advance. ■



FACULTY FEATURE

Whitney Baker, head of conservation services, was named an American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works Fellow in 2018. As a fellow, Baker has a responsibility to share her expertise through conservation treatment, publications, and the education of students, staff, and interns.



GIVING BACK

Once a Jayhawk, always a Jayhawk. That saying rang true for Martha A. “Matt” Mueller, a proud KU alumna. This year, KU Libraries were elated to receive half of an estate gift of more than \$1.4 million from Mueller, who passed away at age 83 in 2018.

Mueller’s substantial gift to the university will be divided to not only provide support for KU Libraries, but to create scholarships for undergraduate students with financial needs — preferring students from Joplin, Missouri, and Eureka, Kansas.

Mueller worked as a student employee at KU Libraries while pursuing a degree in education from the university. In her memoir, she wrote that “While working as a part-time student assistant at two of [KU’s] libraries, I saved every penny of the 55 cents an hour I earned.”

Mueller grew up in Joplin, graduating from high school at only 16 years old. She received her degree from KU in 1955. After earning a master’s degree in library science from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1958, she worked as a junior high English teacher in Eureka. Mueller would later feel the call of the Crimson and the Blue and return to KU, where she worked at the libraries for another four years.

“This meaningful gift from retired librarian Matt Mueller will make a difference for future generations of Jayhawks,” said Christy McWard, executive director of the libraries’ Office of Communications & Advancement. “We are truly honored to receive funds from a former library employee. It is clear that her time with KU Libraries meant a lot to Matt, and we are dedicated to honoring her memory.”



SHARING OUR GRATITUDE

“I was honored and surprised to receive the Dean’s Award for Student Employee Excellence. It’s a great feeling to know that the work I do is valuable and appreciated.”

—Lauren Stich, senior in mathematics and environmental studies

As one of the largest student employers on campus, KU Libraries rely on the hard work and dedication of this group. To show that appreciation, outstanding students are selected annually to receive the Dean’s Award for Student Employee Excellence. This year, awards of \$500 went to three students: Dyamond Hutton, Lauren Stich, and Bahozhoni White.

“Working for the libraries as a student employee has been a great opportunity in many respects,” said Stich, a senior majoring in mathematics and environmental studies. “I am appreciative of the opportunity I have had to be part of the library team.”

Stich was nominated for the award by her supervisor Rhonda Houser, GIS and data specialist, in recognition of her work on a large-scale

geographic information systems and mapping project.

“The best of our students bring some combination of energy, creativity, reliability, and productivity to the libraries,” said Houser. “It’s important to recognize anyone who is doing excellent work — whether student, staff, or faculty.” ■



DEDICATED DONORS



The importance of university libraries has always been obvious to George Wilson. Serving as the Higuchi Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry from 1987 until his retirement in 2010, as well as associate vice provost for research and graduate studies from 2004-10, Wilson quickly realized that introducing students to the services of the libraries was essential to their success.

"Students need to understand the concept of information literacy — the ability to locate, evaluate, and use resources effectively — the minute they arrive on campus," said Wilson. "No matter what a student's

discipline, being able to access the resources they need is key. KU Libraries have undertaken this effort, and it's very exciting to see."

Wilson and his wife Beverly, a retired faculty member in the KU School of Business, have ardently supported KU Libraries for years. Wilson currently sits on the Board of Advocates, the chief volunteer group that actively promotes the libraries' mission and vision. Wilson and his sister, Susan Bynum, have also donated rare items to the physical collections in the libraries.

"During a conversation with a former dean of libraries, I mentioned that the library would disagree. That's how I ended up on the board," said Wilson. "Advocates have a responsibility to get involved and support the many efforts that the libraries employ for student and faculty success."

Recently, the Wilsons provided a major gift that contributed matching funds toward a grant encouraging

"I have always been interested in the necessity of preserving things. If we don't do it now, we might never have the chance."

—George Wilson, donor

Materials undergoing treatment at Kenneth Spencer Research Library in the new conservation lab, funded in part by a gift from the Wilsons.

collaboration between KU Libraries and the Spencer Museum of Art. Their gift went specifically to support the creation of the new conservation laboratory on campus.

"If you want insight into history, you learn about the past through objects, art, and literature — and those items exist in libraries and museums," said Wilson. "I have always been interested in the necessity of preserving things. If we don't do it now, we might never have the chance." ■

INTERNATIONAL INTERSECTIONS



“I found an academic ecosystem at KU Libraries that nourished me and gave me a new perspective on the development of my research.”

—Paloma Vargas Montes, visiting scholar

During a shift in both her life and career, Dr. Paloma Vargas Montes received a surprising call from colleagues in the United States, offering an opportunity that she couldn't pass up: a visit to KU Libraries.

In April 2019, Vargas Montes, assistant professor at Tecnológico de Monterrey, School of Humanities and Education in Mexico, spent two weeks as a visiting scholar on the KU campus. Her visit was supported by a general research fund grant awarded to Betsaida Reyes, librarian for Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American, & Caribbean Studies, and Brian Rosenblum, digital scholarship librarian and co-director of the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities (IDRH).

During her visit, Vargas Montes presented on three innovative topics — each with a digital humanities focus — that highlighted her research on the ethnohistory of the Mexican indigenous people.

Vargas Montes holds doctoral degrees in history from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and Hispanic literature from the Universidad de Navarra.

“KU Libraries are fortunate to house the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities because libraries are a natural space for bringing together the academic community and



flourishing digital humanities scholarship,” said Vargas Montes. “I was able to get into a mindset that allowed me to see with clarity the intersection between my work on digital humanities and my research on colonial studies.”

Throughout her time on campus, Vargas Montes worked on various research projects with librarians at Watson and Kenneth Spencer Research Libraries. In addition, she connected with faculty from departments across KU and at Haskell Indian Nations University.

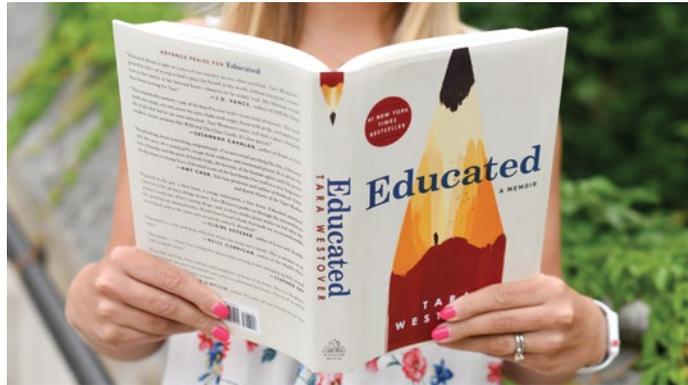
“Recognizing the expertise of the librarians, their profile as researchers, and the richness of their projects was a great experience,” said

Vargas Montes. “I returned home with concrete ideas about my next research project, and I am so grateful for the opportunity.”

Vargas Montes will return to campus in October 2019 to attend IDRH's ninth annual Digital Humanities Forum, themed “Bodies, Justice, Futures.”

“Visiting scholars from abroad such as Dr. Vargas Montes benefit KU Libraries and the campus community in general by strengthening our connections to international institutions, raising KU's visibility, and advancing collaborative scholarship built on KU collections and expertise,” said Rosenblum. ■

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS



JAYHAWK BOOK CLUB

In partnership with the KU Alumni Association, KU Libraries leveraged social media to launch an online book club that connects Jayhawks across the nation over interesting reads. Featuring a new book each semester with opportunities to discuss via Facebook and at select events, the Jayhawk Book Club is a great opportunity for bibliophiles everywhere.



GREAT AMERICAN READ

KU Libraries, in partnership with Lawrence Public Library and Kansas City Public Television, held an exciting series of local screenings and discussions inspired by PBS's "The Great American Read" program. The series showcased the expertise of KU faculty members. "The Great American Read" explored America's 100 best-loved novels, which were chosen by a national survey.



ROCK CHALK CHAMPIONS

The 2018-19 traveling exhibit from KU Libraries, "Rock Chalk Champions," gave alumni and friends the opportunity to celebrate Jayhawk success stories — from athletics to academics on the Hill and beyond. Alumni and friends from coast to coast joined us, along with our KU Alumni Association partners, to view iconic photographs and memorabilia from the University Archives.





ENGAGING OUR AUDIENCES

FOR THE PEOPLE

In 2019, KU Libraries marked 150 years in the U.S. Government Publishing Office Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The FDLP ensures the public has free access to federal documents in participating libraries across the nation. KU Libraries were designated a Federal Depository Library in 1869 and a Regional Depository Library in 1976.

To commemorate this anniversary, the libraries debuted a transdisciplinary exhibition highlighting its expansive collection of government documents. “For the People: KU Libraries celebrate 150 years of publicly accessible government information” showcased research and creative work exploring the intrinsic value of government resources.



READ ACROSS LAWRENCE

KU Libraries joined forces with the Lawrence Public Library in support of the 17th annual Read Across Lawrence program — an initiative that encourages community members to read a common book and explore its themes. This year, the adult selection was “Sourdough” by Robin Sloan, who visited Lawrence and appeared at Liberty Hall in March 2019.



DOCUMENTED

In September 2018, KU Libraries revealed “Documented: Perspectives on Migration and Creation.” The exhibition showcased programs, initiatives, art, and scholarship that explored intersections among migration, immigration, and creative identity.

“Creativity — in all its diversity and the risks that creators take as they express themselves — is a core value of libraries and a key element for education at all levels.”

— Kevin L. Smith, Dean of KU Libraries

LIBRARY LEGACIES

“Spencer’s 50-year milestone offered us the opportunity to reflect on the many ways this library and our collections have touched the lives of our visitors.”

—Beth Whittaker, associate dean for distinctive collections and director of Spencer Research Library

The 50th anniversary of Kenneth Spencer Research Library was a celebration to remember. All that glittered truly was gold at two individual anniversary celebrations honoring this unforgettable library. The first display, “50 for 50: Celebrating 50 years of Kenneth Spencer Research Library,” featured a collaborative exhibit of most memorable collection items. “Meet the Spencers: A Marriage of Arts and Sciences,” highlighted the philanthropic history of library benefactors Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer.

During its first 50 years, this special collections library made a remarkable impact on students, researchers, and scholars across the globe and will continue to serve the community for decades to come.

As these anniversary celebrations draw to a close, we look down the road to another great milestone. Dedicated on September 11, 1924, Watson Library opened to serve Jayhawks across the Hill. In five years, the university will celebrate Watson’s centennial — an opportunity for us to honor the legacy of another beloved campus building. ■





KU LIBRARIES

The University of Kansas

lib.ku.edu



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