

2024-25

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LIBRARIES

# ANNUAL REVIEW



KU  
LIBRARIES  
The University of Kansas







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# A MESSAGE FROM LIBRARIES LEADERSHIP

Each year, as we gather the stories that reflect the work and meaning of KU Libraries, I'm struck anew by the depth and breadth of our collective impact. This year's issue of *Annual Review* offers a vivid snapshot of how our libraries advance learning, research, community, and engagement.

It's a joy to see our students — like Allison Bell and this year's Sanders Scholars — not only using our resources, but actively *shaping* them, from curated collections to meaningful employment experiences. Their stories reflect how libraries provide them with opportunities for personal growth and societal contribution.

Our global reach continues to expand through strategic partnerships, the launch of the Institute for Globally Engaged Librarianship (IGEL), and our stewardship of rich international collections. We are proud to advance KU's internationalization goals by connecting research and learning at KU with worldwide perspectives.

We also celebrate extraordinary milestones, including the award-winning Watson Centennial, the achievements of longtime KU Libraries colleagues, and the support of visionary donors and advocates. Their many contributions both honor the past and actively shape our future.



From textbook affordability to digital preservation, from intensive faculty collaborations to new staff roles, from new initiatives to enriching programming, this year has been one of continuous renewal, impact, and forward motion. Our strategic plan is not simply a document — it is a shared call to action, and it is coming to life in initiatives taking place across KU Libraries.

Thank you for being part of this journey! Together with your support, we're building libraries that reflect the best of who we are as a KU community and what we aspire to become.

Carol E. Smith  
*Dean of Libraries*



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# LEARNING, LEADING, AND GIVING BACK

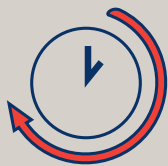
Student employee embraces multiple opportunities for engagement at the libraries

Allison Bell's time at KU has included many different chapters, but it feels appropriate that the bookends of her undergraduate career are all about the libraries. A Lawrence native, Bell began working at Watson Library a couple of weeks

before her freshman year kicked off at KU, and her position at the circulation desk has stretched beyond her graduation in May 2025. As Bell prepares to move on, it's difficult for her to imagine working anywhere else.



**140+**  
STUDENT EMPLOYEES  
ACROSS KU LIBRARIES



AN AVERAGE  
**1,200**  
HOURS OF STUDENT WORK  
PER WEEK

**"I love this job, and I'm very happy to have had it for the entire duration of my undergrad degree. It's one of the things I'm most grateful for throughout my whole KU career."**

—Allison Bell

"It has been gratifying to watch Allison mature from a new student who needed to learn everything about the job to a supervisor who was able to help the other students, and was increasingly able to help with the complicated aspects of running the library," said Christen Caton, library coordinator at Watson and one of Bell's supervisors.

Bell's time at KU has included double majoring in linguistics and German studies and studying abroad in Germany. Her love of language blends with a desire to address real world problems, something she has glimpsed in action at the libraries.

In the future, Bell hopes to combine her passions to address societal challenges.

"In my ideal world, I would first get my master's degree in applied linguistics and then afterwards get a degree in library and information science and find a way to fuse the two," she said. "That's the dream."

Bell's involvement with the libraries has given her unique insight into librarianship. Beyond her work at Watson, she participated in KU Libraries Student Ambassadors Program (KULSAP), where she connected with other undergraduate students to provide input on library services and programming to libraries leadership, faculty, and staff.

Bell was also one of four students to take part in the libraries' pilot program to create the student-curated collection, "Page Turning Tropes: Your Favorite Narratives, Themes, Clichés, Archetypes," which debuted during the spring semester.

She and her fellow student curators worked with librarians Amalia Monroe-Gulick and Sara Outhier to brainstorm ideas and learn about collection development, budget management, and the various libraries departments that work together to provide access to resources.



Student Curators Allison Bell, Ali Madden, Margaret Baechle, and Sarah Patti

Bell and the student curators selected more than 90 items organized into seven subtopics for the collection, including electronic books and streaming films available via the libraries through platforms Libby and Swank.

"I wanted to participate in the curation project because I wanted to learn more about other parts of the libraries and contribute to a project that might help increase student engagement, highlighting books and other media that students may be interested in," Bell said.

In addition to her work with the student curation project, Bell was also a member of the KU Reads common book program selection committee over the past academic year.

"I really loved being able to help pick the book and just talk with other people on the committee about what works in a book for this program and what doesn't," Bell said. "And I really enjoy being exposed to different books that I probably wouldn't have picked up on my own."

In celebration of her contributions to the libraries, Bell was recognized with a KU Libraries Student Ambassador Service Excellence Award for outstanding service and engagement work. Being honored among other libraries ambassadors, student employees, faculty and staff during the awards event this spring was extra special to Bell.

"I love being able to share this experience with people who are in a similar position and understand how important libraries are." ■



# FINDING THEIR NICHE

Sanders Scholars aid collections accessibility, find unique interest



Eli Kumin and Kaya Taylor didn't sign up for a three-credit hour course but nonetheless received a graduate-level introduction in sigillography, the scholarly discipline dedicated to the study of seals historically used to authenticate documents. Kumin, a junior from Lenexa, and Taylor, a now-graduated senior from Wichita, spent the 2024-25 academic year as Sanders Scholars working with Digital Humanities Librarian John McEwan to improve search tools for Spencer Research Library's medieval sigillographic collections.

The Sanders Scholars program, created through a gift from William J. Crowe and his wife Nancy P. Sanders, in memory of her parents, provides funding for a paid internship for KU graduate or undergraduate students working with a librarian mentor. The program aims to provide an opportunity for students to learn about the evolving practice of librarianship and prospects for a career in the field.

Kumin and Taylor helped refine and build a catalog for KU Libraries' collection of medieval seals, learning digital tools and archival cataloging standards, while centering the user experience — from researchers to patrons with no previous experience interacting with seals. That's where they both were prior to starting the project with McEwan, who has published a book titled, "Seals in Medieval London, 1050-1300." Prior to joining KU Libraries as Digital Humanities Librarian in 2024, McEwan was a researcher in the Department of History and Welsh History at the University of Aberystwyth, where he worked on the Seals in Medieval Wales project.

**"If you Google sigillography, John McEwan is like the second search result."**

—Eli Kumin

In addition to being a top subject matter scholar, the students explained McEwan "has a gift of being a good teacher." McEwan helped the students learn technical, conceptual and ethical matters related to digital humanities, and gain a working knowledge of a suite of software packages used in preparing digital exhibitions and documentation.

A key highlight of the experience was interacting with primary sources and learning about the seals themselves, which often survive as features of historic documents. KU is one of the few academic institutions in North America to have collections of medieval seals. Among Spencer Research Library's hundreds of seals, the Sanders Scholars project focused on seals from the Abbey Dore Collection, associated with documents concerning land in Herefordshire, England in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Kumin and Taylor were familiar with the libraries and each other prior to the experience, as both were employed as student workers at Spencer Research Library. They had spent time interacting with



library users at the front desk or retrieving items from the closed stacks, but the Sanders Scholars experience gave them an opportunity to go deeper, gaining first-hand experience cataloging items and using digital humanities tools. They also developed a keen appreciation for the libraries' conservation services, noting the care Special Collections Conservator Angela Andres took while rehousing a number of the seals in recent years, as well as admiration for the breadth of Spencer librarians' knowledge and the interdisciplinary nature of library work.

"The experience solidified my intention to become a librarian," Taylor said.

Taylor has already made plans to gain work experience in secondary education before exploring an opportunity at library school abroad. Kumin, who took a special interest in the Latin scripts on the documents and recreating visual representations of the seals, still has time at KU to consider his next steps.

"This opportunity combined a lot of interests that I have," Kumin said. "My mom always encouraged me to triangulate my dream job — this project combined my interests in classics, English, and drawing."

"The variety of things we were able to do within the project made it really valuable," he said, "being able to explore a niche subject and tangibly experience these documents and objects." ■

## EXCELLENT STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS RECOGNIZED

Student workers averaged about 1,200 hours of work per week across all major offices and divisions of KU Libraries this year, while providing essential services to the Jayhawk community. A pair of student employees who do vital work maintaining physical and digital collections and two KU Libraries Student Ambassadors were honored this year for their exceptional contributions, and student workers inspired to pursue graduate study in library science were supported in their future studies.



Levi Cromwell, left and Oliver Grotegut, right accepting their Dean's Awards for Student Employee Excellence.

### DASEE AWARDS

Levi Cromwell, a senior in history and classics from McPherson, and Oliver Grotegut, a senior in linguistics and sociology from Shawnee, received a Dean's Award for Student Employee Excellence (DASEE). Cromwell was honored for efforts in processing the libraries' extensive collection of journals and other serials. Grotegut was recognized for his work with record groups within the University Archives, where his contributions aided in the preservation and accessibility of information.

### KULSAP SERVICE HONORS

The KU Libraries Student Ambassadors Program (KULSAP) connects students with libraries leadership to promote student input and involvement in library services and programming. Allison Bell, a linguistics and German studies major from Lawrence, and Margaret Baechle, an English major from St. Louis, were honored with KULSAP Service Awards for their contributions to multiple special projects this year.

### RUBINSTEIN/MASON SCHOLARSHIPS

In honor of the late Joseph Rubinstein and the late Alexandra Mason, who each contributed many years of principled service as KU librarians, the libraries awarded the 2025 Rubinstein/Mason Award to three students who made significant contributions as student employees and leaders. Margaret Baechle, Amanda Mills, and Sarah Thompson each received a \$1,000 scholarship to pursue graduate study in librarianship and archival studies.

Student employees and KULSAP participants grow transferable workforce skills and gain leadership and career experience while making significant contributions to KU Libraries' work and mission.





# COLLECTION REFLECTIONS

Student passions connect to KU Libraries holdings through new aspect of Snyder Book Collecting Contest



On an April afternoon in the Johnson Room of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, pamphlets from the French Revolution and a military document signed by Napoleon sat next to a roller rink newsletter touting a “confetti battle.” At tables nearby, onlookers encountered early editions of Marie Curie’s thesis and Sojourner Truth’s memoirs, studied 484-year-old directions for calculating lunar distance, or hovered over correspondence between a high-school-aged Bob Dole and legendary basketball coach Phog Allen.

This remarkable mix of items from the Spencer Research Library’s collections came together as part of KU Libraries “Inspired by Snyder: Celebrating Student Interests and Library Connections” project, a new addition to the libraries annual Snyder Book Collecting Contest. The activity invited finalists in the contest to gather and view the specially curated display related to their book collections. Though Spencer’s shelves are full of rare books and primary sources, student items entered in the contest are not usually unique or expensive, simply indicative of their own passions and curiosity.

“I never really thought about how I have a collection until I saw the contest,” said Jasmine Hunt, an undergraduate from Spring Hill, Kan., whose collection surrounding scientific curiosity was selected as a finalist in the contest.

Once Hunt started viewing her books as a possible collection, her perspective changed.

“I could categorize it, and you can see how it intertwines with you and what it means to you,” she said.

The collections of this year’s student finalists spanned a wide range of topics, including revolutionary wars, the history of roller derby, how good and evil are portrayed in literature, U.S. presidents and first ladies, and more.

Connections and conversations buzzed as contest finalists and library faculty and staff experienced the “Inspired by Snyder” exhibit, which included historic documents, photographs, signed first editions, and letters preserved via the libraries’ collections.

“It’s really so much fun to get to see what students care about, what things are compelling and exciting to them and how that connects to our library,” said Eve Wolynes, Special Collections Curator and creator of the “Inspired by Snyder” display.

Christine Singleton of Richmond, Va., a contest finalist in the graduate division for her collection themed around Black feminism, found the “Inspired by Snyder” activity moving.

**“An archive is love documented and saved for later. All of this is just love. Somebody cared enough to keep this and preserve it for future generations because they thought it was worthy and that’s just so beautiful.”**

—Christine Singleton



Snyder finalists viewed the curated exhibit and talked to librarians about the items.

“I love everything in the Spencer,” said Abby Breyer, a finalist in the graduate division from St. Louis. “There’s something about the tangibility of it,” she said, “when you come and you can touch something that’s 200 years old or you can touch something that an author you have studied has signed.”

This year marked KU Libraries’ 67<sup>th</sup> Snyder Book Collecting Contest, which was established in 1957 by libraries donor Elizabeth Snyder. Each contest winner received a cash prize made possible by an endowment fund created by Snyder, as well as a gift card from contest co-sponsor Jayhawk Ink. First place winners in both the undergraduate and graduate division are eligible to compete in the National Collegiate Book Collecting Contest, which awards a top prize of \$2,500. ■

## SPENCER RESEARCH LIBRARY



**1,159**

RESEARCHER VISITS TO STOKSTAD READING ROOM

**149**

INSTRUCTION SESSIONS FOR KU CLASSES



**65**

TOURS/EVENTS WITH LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES





# LIBRARY LEGENDS

KU Libraries colleagues mark decades of dedication, achieving remarkable milestones



Colleagues Mary Roach, left, and Kent Miller, right, are celebrating significant milestones in 2025.

Mary Roach doesn’t precisely remember her first day working for KU Libraries, but she knows she was on time. That was the day, in 1975, when she learned that her supervisor stood at the door with a pocket watch taking note of any late arrivals. The inclination toward efficiency and order made a strong first impression, though it was soon balanced with a keen sense of community, full of engaged and interesting colleagues.

One of those colleagues was Kent Miller, who had already been working at the libraries for 10 years when Roach arrived for her first day. The two have been coworkers ever since, and in 2025, Roach and Miller reached the extraordinary milestones of 50 and 60 years of service to the libraries, respectively.

Both began their careers in the cataloging department, which was on the east end of the fourth floor of Watson Library at the time. “It was a sea of gray Steelcase desks with no partitions, everyone sitting back-to-back,” Roach said.

Miller remembers the noise, the distinctive click-clack percussion of many typewriters as each library item’s information was manually typed on individual cards. The machines were fitted with a special platen that enabled the small cards to stay in place as they were typed. If a mistake was made, an “electric eraser,” which required a change of typewriter cartridge, allowed the card to be altered without being completely retyped.

“That was technology then,” Roach said, beginning adaptations in a long line of innovations that she and Miller would play integral roles in, over the decades to come.

Miller said some of his most rewarding moments at the libraries took place in “a golden age of creativity” through the late 1960s to the 1980s, when technology was developed and adapted by librarians and staff to meet the ever-changing, ever-growing needs of the university community.



Cataloging staff using “beehive” computers in Watson Library, 1983.

“The focus at that time was on building collections, but the future could be glimpsed in the technology that was the basis of experimentation,” he said.

In 1967, Miller helped implement a punched card system for the circulation of general collections, the first large-scale automation project in KU Libraries. Working with the university to modify user IDs, the libraries began to produce cards with uniquely punched patterns for each of the 1.7 million volumes in the collection at that time. Special card readers allowed for automatically generated notices and replaced the three-part forms that had previously been filled out by hand to maintain circulation information.

Soon after Roach arrived in the mid-1970s, work began with “beehive” data terminals from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) as part of the libraries first foray into a new computerized Union Catalog system, a centralized database that allowed the sharing of bibliographic records and holding information with other member libraries.

“The beehives were big, clunky old things and they were all daisy-chained together with these long, thick cables that would have to stretch across the room, so you had to have cable up and over and down and across, then connected to a modem,” Roach said.

“If you look at the right places in the ceiling in Watson, you will see a lot of cable,” Miller said. “Dead cable from these various connections that had to be physically made.”

From these beginning projects and throughout the decades, the need for the libraries to change and evolve to meet rapidly developing and expanding campus needs has never ceased. As key players in the evolution of the libraries’ technology as well as longtime stewards of the Watson Library building, Miller and Roach bring special context and irreplaceable institutional knowledge to their current-day responsibilities. Over the past year, as executive associate deans, they took part in the selection of a new integrated library system (ILS) to manage the 5.8 million items currently in KU Libraries’ collection.

“The evolutionary path from 2,500 drawers of 3 by 5 inch catalog cards, thousands of Kardex records and three-part circulation forms with access to only KU holdings, to the type of personalized, at-your-fingertips access to KU collections and services, as well as many other sources, represents an awesome leap in one lifetime,” Miller said. “Libraries of the 1950s and 1960s were very similar to their predecessors of the previous century, but the last 50 to 60 years have brought dramatic change.”

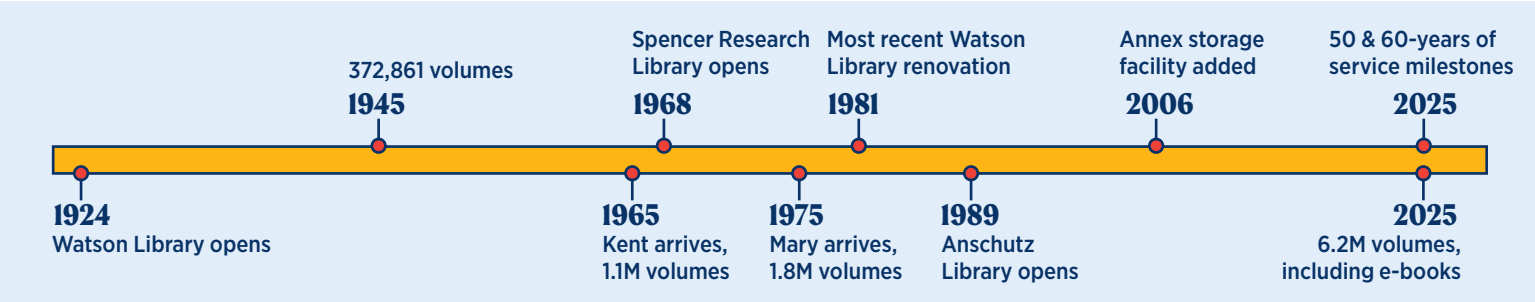
**“I never would’ve expected to be here for 50 years, or to have the opportunities that I’ve had, to engage in so many different things and have different roles in the library. I never would’ve anticipated when I started that I would have such a fully rewarding career here.”**

—Mary Roach

Looking back to those first days on the job, Roach said she thinks her younger self would be surprised at the way things have turned out.

And if someone had told Miller during his first semester at KU, that he would still be working at KU Libraries in 60 years?

“I guess I wouldn’t have been that surprised,” he said. “It’s always seemed like Kansas is not a bad place to be, and the things that were happening at the university and the libraries — a lot of pretty progressive, cutting-edge stuff has happened here.” ■





# NEW TALENT

Spotlighting some of the new faculty and staff joining the KU Libraries team



### GENE SAUNDERS

IT Support Technician

“I appreciate helping library faculty and staff pursue solutions and technology that create a better environment for research and processes, so they don’t have to see technology as a gatekeeper but more as an enabler of paths and their goal achievements.”



### ELLA DURHAM

Research Data Librarian

“Coming to this work with an interdisciplinary background, one aspect of data stewardship and services I appreciate is the opportunity to be exposed to and support research across disciplines and areas of practice.”



### JASON DEAN

Rare Materials Cataloging Librarian

“The people, the collections, and the reputation of the institution [drew me to KU Libraries].”



### JAMIE YOUNG

Events Coordinator

“Being surrounded by lifelong learners is inspiring.”



### ALEX McMILLEN

Library Assistant — New Request Fulfillment

“I love working with both KU patrons and libraries around the world. Working in resource sharing, I can work with many different people, near and far, to help get information to those who need it.”



### AMANDA SCHLUMPBERGER

Faculty & Community Engagement Librarian

“Becoming part of KU Libraries was like coming home for me. When I was in grad school at KU, the libraries were not only where I found academic support and resources, but also where I found a space and community.”



### SAMANTHA GREESON

Common Book Librarian

“My favorite aspect of my role is being able to share the common book with the university community and join the campus-wide conversations the common book inspires.”



### GRACE BRAZELL

Spencer Research Library  
Administrative Associate

“The people I work with are easily the best part of the job. My primary role is working with our wonderful student assistants, and I’m constantly amazed by how creative and intelligent they all are.”



### RICH LLOYD

Executive Director of Fiscal Services

“I’m a data geek, and I’ve found that the people at KU Libraries implicitly understand data. It excites me to think about and find opportunities to interface with people and share financial data that is applicable to them and useful in their roles.”



### JOHN McEWAN

Digital Humanities Librarian

“It’s exciting to work directly with faculty and students who are developing ideas for research projects and to help them convert those ideas into practical research programs.”



### WARREN LAMBERT

Digitization Specialist

“My favorite aspect of my role at Spencer Research Library is getting to handle unique collections that have amazing stories connected to them.”



### DAWN LIND

Watson Library Night & Weekend Supervisor

“I love it when a patron asks a question beginning with something in the vein of, ‘I know it’s a long shot, but could you help me find...’ When you solve this problem it’s like being a detective.”

### ADDITIONAL TALENTED TEAMMATES

**MC Mack**, Circulation Business Specialist

**Mazzy Martinez**, Library Assistant — ILL Lending Lead

**Charissa Pincock**, Archives & Manuscripts  
Processing Coordinator

**Kate Stewart**, Curator for the Wilcox Collection of  
Contemporary Political Movements

### DIGITAL PUBLISHING HIGHLIGHTS

Raj Bhala, Brenneisen Distinguished Professor of Law, worked with KU Libraries to openly publish the newest edition of his widely-used textbook on international trade law via KU ScholarWorks. In the first two months following publication, the free and openly available e-textbook was downloaded more than 2,000 times. Bhala was recognized for his work with the 2024 David Shulenburg Award for Innovation & Advocacy in Scholarly Communication.

Cottonwood magazine made 60 years’ worth of issues available in digital format through partnership with KU Libraries’ Open Journal Systems. The literary magazine’s original poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction, and early pieces and interviews with notable literary figures are now accessible online. Digitization support has also helped streamline submissions, making review and editorial processes more manageable for the faculty and graduate students who collaborate to create the magazine.

KU Libraries Publishing Specialist Eric Bader, a contributor to the Cottonwood project, also assisted KU Distinguished Professor Town Peterson with the layout of his repeat photography book, "One Hundred and Fifty Years of Change on the Great Plains." Published open access in KU ScholarWorks, the digital version of this work, which compares 1870s photos to the same landscape today, has been viewed nearly 6,000 times.

### KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

Bringing expertise, unique perspectives, and diverse collections, KU librarians are working to expand discovery, advance librarianship, and create a more robust system of shared knowledge. Through continuous behind-the-scenes efforts and a passion for transformative partnerships, the libraries empower rich experiences for the KU community that ripple across campus, the state of Kansas, and beyond.

Through membership with Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST), a print journal repository program, the libraries collaborate with regional partners to develop a highly trusted network-level shared print archive. The partnership ensures access and preservation of the print record of scholarly journals, while allowing member institutions to optimize limited physical library space.

By joining with Reveal Digital, KU Libraries works to make archival primary sources openly available across the globe. The partnership enables projects such as Independent Voices, an open access digital collection of alternative press newspapers, magazines, and journals, as well as thematic collections, such as those centering on Student Activism or the Civil Rights Movement. Collections are sourced from a diverse set of institutions and private collections, creating a rich and highly valuable open resource for scholars and researchers.



# PICTURING HISTORY IN WILSON

Rebuilding a community archive through digitization and photo reprints



Ernest Haulyicek children (Ernest, Evelyn, and Richard), Jellison Collection.

In the early hours of Nov. 6, 2009, a fire gutted the Czech Opera House in Wilson, Kansas, destroying more than a century of historical documents and photos — a devastating blow to a cultural landmark.

Now, thanks to a partnership between KU Libraries and the Wilson Tourism Hub, part of that history is back — and growing.

Melinda Merrill, the hub's president, was simply being a gracious alumna when she hosted KU faculty and staff during the 2023 Wheat State Tour. The itinerary included stops in Lucas and Nicodemus, a visit to Wilson's Czech Egg, and a night at Merrill's restored Midland Hotel.

During the trip, conversation turned to the Opera House fire and Merrill's efforts to preserve local history. That sparked an idea from Phil Cunningham, curator of the Kansas Collection at KU's Spencer Research Library: digitize the Arthur Jellison Photograph Collection and return it to Ellsworth County.



Daughters of Joe and Rose Brokes, Jellison Collection.

The result is a public exhibit in Wilson's town center that debuted in February — bringing the area's past back into view.

"Within about a week of the visit," Merrill said, "Phil called me and said they had this collection of Arthur Jellison's work, and he really felt like that work should be in the town where it was created."

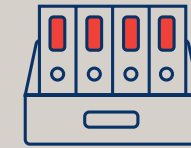
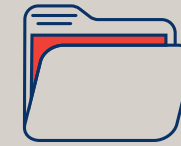
Cunningham, a Kansas native who joined KU Libraries in early 2023, had been combing through Spencer Research Library's holdings as part of his on-boarding. The Jellison Collection had been flagged as a priority due to its condition and large number of potentially dangerous nitrate negatives — film consisting of a base of cellulose nitrate, a highly flammable and unstable material used by early photographers.

Jellison owned and operated a photography studio in Ellsworth County during the first half of the 20th century, capturing studio portraits, weddings, community events, and school photos. The Jellison family consulted with former Kansas Collection curator Sherry Williams in the 1980s, but a family move prompted the donation to Spencer Research Library for safe keeping in 1998.

Cunningham sent Merrill a sample of photos to choose from, along with an offer to provide prints for display as digitization of the full collection began. Merrill and her team selected more than two dozen images, with the Wilson Heritage Museum contributing a similar

# 150,000

ITEMS AVAILABLE IN KU LIBRARIES' DIGITAL COLLECTIONS



# 40

DISTINCT COLLECTIONS

number. The photos now hang in a shared workspace at the Wilson Tourism Hub. Before the official February opening, a preview event welcomed Jellison family and friends to help identify the images.

**"We are excited to bring these images home to Wilson and hear the memories shared behind each photograph."**

**—Melinda Merrill**

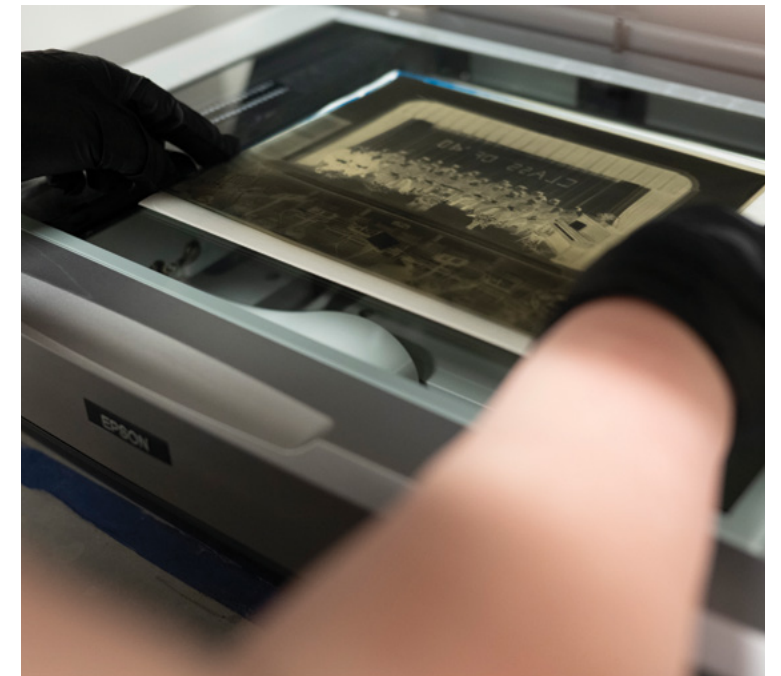
KU Libraries staff have digitized more than 1,500 images from the collection through June, including 104 document images, 326 print images, 344 acetate negatives, and 769 nitrate negatives. Digitization specialists Melissa Mayhew and Warren Lambert handled the nitrate film inside a controlled lab at Spencer Research Library's Conservation Services, following strict safety protocols.

"With a digital camera it takes seconds to capture images, but on a flatbed scanner it's five to 20 minutes depending on the size of the negative," Mayhew said. "It took a really long time to do these compared to digitizing less hazardous types of film downstairs where we could just snap, snap, snap, snap."

Since the exhibit debut, many others have come forward with other Jellison images and various community artifacts. Originally slated to be temporary, Merrill plans to keep the Jellison photos on display. More prints provided by KU Libraries are on the way in the near future.

"The whole purpose of that group coming out here was to expose them to more of Kansas and its landmarks," Merrill said. "Phil was able to synthesize the information that he was getting here and turn it into an incredible product. People love the exhibition. We're not taking it down, we're just adding to it."

As the images are added to Spencer Library's Digital Collections, they're being tagged with metadata and descriptions, making them accessible worldwide at [digital.lib.ku.edu](https://digital.lib.ku.edu), which hosts more than



Digitization of Jellison Collection materials in Spencer Research Library.

150,000 items. Spencer Research Library holds more than 1 million photos, including similar community collections from Joseph Pennell (Junction City), Duke D'Ambra (Lawrence), George Cornish Studio (Arkansas City), and Hannah Scott Studio (Independence, Kan.).

"A lot of communities don't have the resources that exist at the Kansas State Historical Society or here at KU — they're working with what they have, and the worst-case scenario is you have a fire or some kind of catastrophe," Cunningham said. "This project was a good opportunity for us to recognize that we're a resource for the whole state." ■



**VIEW THE JELLISON COLLECTION**

Explore the collection at [rockcha.lk/jellison](https://rockcha.lk/jellison).



# SPRINTING ALONG THE TRAIL

Faculty-Librarian collaboration yields rapid progress on complex projects

There's a park sign in Colorado at more than 11,000 feet elevation that spends more than half of the year covered in snow, but it's one of Jeremy Shellhorn's favorite projects. Thanks to a new collaboration, completed in just one week during KU Libraries' annual Sprints Week, you won't need a pair of hiking boots or a walking stick to view it.

Shellhorn collaborated with KU librarians to build and launch The Park Signs Archive ([parksignsarchive.org](https://parksignsarchive.org)) as a design guide or inspiration board for parks staff, who often lack formal design training but are responsible for creating clear and concise signage on important topics.

KU Libraries regularly partner with faculty and staff on research, teaching and scholarly communication topics, but for one intensive week at the end of the spring semester, teams of librarians work to complete complex tasks in a short amount of time during Sprints Week. This year three professors — Shellhorn, Dorothy Hines (African & African-American studies) and Georgina White (classics) — spent 35-40 hours working on their selected projects with more than a dozen library faculty and staff contributors. Each faculty member was also awarded a \$1,000 stipend.

Shellhorn attended a Sprints presentation in 2022, in support of another design colleague Sam Yates-Meier who had just completed

a course redesign with her library team. Also presenting that day was Areli Marina, an art history researcher with thousands of photos included in pages of field notes, which she worked to untangle and make accessible to a broader audience through an online portal. That talk served as the trailhead for a similar idea in Shellhorn's mind — in the absence of hearing from a park ranger directly, signage provides the next-best alternative for sharing information and stories, and he dreamed of a way to document and share best practices.

**"Nobody goes to a park to look at a sign, it's a necessary evil. Signage is often in the most beautiful places we have in the world, and we should make the signage be the best we possibly can."**

—Jeremy Shellhorn

An avid outdoors enthusiast whose design portfolio and research regularly includes collaboration with and contributions to national parks and public lands, Shellhorn worked with Andi Back (art and architecture librarian), Gwen Geiger-Wolfe (science and engineering librarian), John McEwan (digital humanities librarian), Brian Rosenblum (digital humanities librarian) and Erin Wolfe (metadata librarian) to develop a community archive using Omeka, an open source web publishing platform.

The result — in fewer than five days — was the The Park Signs Archive, a crowd-sourced digital archive documenting conservation communication in parks, public lands, and protected areas. Users can browse a growing collection of signs, interpretive panels and informational kiosks, or upload park signs of their own. The intuitive form has descriptive fields and tags for each image to enhance discoverability. Each image is also geotagged so users can navigate to the sign digitally or in the real world.

"We've come across and documented a lot of different signage, and we've seen precedent and heard stories from rangers at multiple different parks," Shellhorn said. "Yosemite has similar types of questions that Yellowstone is having if they're trying to keep people off trails, if they're trying to get people to slow down for wildlife, et cetera. Is there a way to share this visually, what this park might have done or what these different researchers are doing? And so this was sort of my dream, right?"

"The sprint has made this dream come alive and made it possible." ■

## VISIT THE PARK SIGNS ARCHIVE



The Archive includes everything from trailhead signs and interpretive panels to informational kiosks. The site is for everyone. Submit signs you see on your next outdoor adventure!

## SPRINTS SOUNDBITES



### DOROTHY HINES

Hines' project focused on developing a course about the education of African Americans during slavery and post slavery, including a body cartography project, a way of mapping reactions and processing personal responses to texts to help students think more deeply about the subject and their interactions with it.

"It was very helpful to have cross collaboration with so many different people on my team and learn about different library and campus resources. The entire experience was definitely advantageous to my class, to myself, to the students. I'm very appreciative of the community that was created in a new way with people that I wouldn't necessarily have connected with outside of Sprints Week."



### GEORGINA WHITE

White endeavored to design a new first-year seminar to prepare students for upper-level classics courses using open educational resources, freely available and adaptable educational materials.

"The opportunity to have people who are engaged and interested and care about the student experience bringing their thoughts and expertise is fantastic. Sprints Week was so incredibly valuable. I've come out of this with a syllabus, all my assignments and all my teaching resources, which for a week is remarkable. Thank you, thank you, thank you."



# REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Chemistry professor named 2025 Textbook Hero



When Lisa Sharpe Elles stands in front of her introductory Chemistry class, the auditorium almost seems to shrink, with her welcoming style, interactive quiz questions, and frequent opportunities for student feedback invoking a small class feel.

Sharpe Elles' goal is to make the course as accessible as possible, a value that has also driven her to transition from costly textbook and homework systems to free open educational resources (OER), earning her recognition as KU Libraries 2025 Textbook Hero.

Sharpe Elles, an Associate Teaching Professor in the chemistry department, began her journey to OER over several semesters, when she noticed that some students had difficulties or delays accessing required textbooks and ancillary materials, hampering their progress in courses.

"Whenever students would enroll in the class and we were using a paid textbook, there would always be a couple students who would come to me in the third week of class and say, 'I just got my book' or 'I just got my money now, so now I can start doing the work,'" Sharpe Elles said.

Beginning in the spring 2019 semester, Sharpe Elles incorporated OER through LibreTexts for her CHEM 110 classes, eliminating the cost of a textbook for the course. In 2021, she switched from a publisher-paid online homework system to LibreTexts ADAPT, free to her students because of her work as an editor on the platform, where she has helped expand and enhance OER content over the past five years.

This year, KU's Chemistry Department paid for a site license to make the iClicker platform — a student engagement tool used to encourage active learning during lectures — free to students, ensuring CHEM 110 is completely free of textbook and ancillary costs.

Sharpe Elles said the response from students has been positive, with grateful students sharing that the costs of course books and homework systems are a burden, and it's a welcome relief to reduce their overall class-related costs.

Dedicated to expanding the benefits of open resources to more students, Sharpe Elles also extended her OER use to the CHEM 130/135 sequence this past fall, employing an OpenStax chemistry textbook and ADAPT homework system, making both semesters of general chemistry free for the students in her classes. She estimates this translates to cost savings of \$25,000 to KU students for the 2023-24 school year alone. Using the Open Education Network's widely used \$100 per student impacted method, the estimated savings exceed \$50,000.

"Dr. Sharpe Elles has been passionate about using OER in her chemistry classrooms for over five years," said Heather Mac Bean, KU Libraries Open Education Librarian. "She found a solution to address her students' need for a no-cost textbook and ancillary materials in a course with typically high textbook costs."

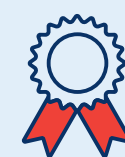
**"I'd like for more people to be using open. I think that it definitely helps the students who can't buy the book on day one."**

—Lisa Sharpe Elles

KU Libraries advocate for and support the use of open textbooks and other OER through a variety of initiatives, including grants, consultations, presentations, events, and other outreach. Since its inception, the OER Grant Initiative has provided 44 awards to KU instructors with an estimated annual savings of more than \$1.2 million for KU students. The libraries support OER publishing via the Pressbooks platform, collaborating with co-authors to publish their work openly, with 24 titles in the KU Pressbooks catalog and more than 20 in development.

Sharpe Elles was presented with the award during KU Libraries' celebration of Open Education Week in March, which included a keynote address from Virginia Clinton-Lisell, associate professor in educational foundations and research at the University of North Dakota and lead researcher of the Open Education Group. ■

## OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



44

OER GRANTS AWARDED  
TO KU INSTRUCTORS



AN ESTIMATED

\$1.2

MILLION PER YEAR IN  
SAVINGS FOR KU STUDENTS

24

OER TEXTBOOKS IN KU PRESSBOOKS



# MULTI-LINGUAL, MULTI-FACETED

Library specialist supports East Asian Collection through critical tasks



Cecilia Zhang, Chinese studies librarian leads a group of students from Zhejiang Normal University (ZJNU) on a tour of Watson Library.

As a library specialist supporting the East Asian Collection, John Jones, works in three languages — Chinese, Japanese, and Korean — but the toughest part of his job might be deciding how to decorate his two workspaces in acquisitions and cataloging on the second floor of Watson Library.

“I have to split my decorations,” Jones said with a laugh.

Despite the divided role, Jones has earned praise from colleagues for his quick responses and dedication to a collection that supports exhibits, language learning and scholarly research. He’s one of many staff members who help keep essential library operations running smoothly.

“John’s position is invaluable to my work,” said Cecilia Zhang, Chinese studies librarian. “Tracing acquisition orders and cataloging are crucial for ensuring our collection is both accessible and visible. Honestly, I can’t imagine processing Chinese materials without John’s help.”

On a typical day Jones begins his morning on the west side of Watson at his workstation in acquisitions, managing the 12-hour time difference between Lawrence and his vendors in East Asia by responding to overnight correspondence. Next, he sorts through any new book or book locating requests from library patrons or faculty, taking care to reference multi-lingual inventory lists to



avoid duplicates and to select the correct edition. After that, Jones processes invoices — receiving any items that came in that morning or the previous day.

“I tend to take care of those immediately because people want to get paid,” Jones said. “I generally process invoices quickly and any rush requests, then in the afternoon I switch over to cataloging and annex inventory.”

For cataloging new items at his eastside workstation, Jones accesses a worldwide database of titles and verifies the information is transferred correctly into KU’s library management system before it’s passed on to be physically processed and put on the shelf.

Additionally, Jones does work as part of the Annex Inventory Management team. Low circulation and older books go into long-term storage, where they’re still accessible to patrons but clear space for other items. He and a pair of student workers use a generated report to pull the books and make sure the records are correct so they’re findable among the millions of items when they’re trucked over to the KU Libraries Annex on West Campus.

Jones joined the KU Libraries in summer 2022. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Colorado and a master’s degree from Pittsburg State, during which he worked at the Arma (Kan.) Public Library. Jones became interested in East Asian languages during high school and learned Chinese first during an intensive program as part of his military service.

**“I love language, so the idea of having a job in Kansas where I got to do Chinese and Japanese and Korean — that was definitely for me. I’ve always loved libraries too, so being able to work in one is great.”**  
—John Jones

Jones says he’s happy to support language learning and play a role in discovery at KU.

“The library provides a place you can go and expand your horizons, whether asking the librarians directly or browsing the shelves,” Jones said. “An important role a library plays is to provide a place where you can think and explore the unknowns.” ■



## EAST ASIAN RESEARCH SYMPOSIA

In collaboration with the Center for East Asian Studies, KU Libraries’ East Asian Collection librarians partnered on a handful of research symposia in 2024-25, including a pair of multi-presenter events and the Dardess Research Forum at Watson Library. Each opportunity allowed faculty, undergraduate and graduate students the chance to share their research interests, upcoming publications, dissertations and theses to a wider public audience.

## EAST ASIAN EXHIBITS

KU Libraries’ International Collections create annual displays honoring Lunar New Year and Hinamatsuri, important dates in East Asian culture. In addition to those displays, they also exhibited a collection of books titled, “Women’s Voices in East Asian Literature: Tradition and Transformation.”

This exhibition highlighted the literary contributions of female authors in East Asia, spanning from ancient times to the present. Through a diverse selection of works, the exhibition explores themes of identity, culture, and social change across different regions.

From Japan, the exhibit included “The Tale of Genji,” one of the world’s earliest and longest novels by Murasaki Shikibu. From Korea, the exhibition presented contemporary literature tackling pressing social and political issues. From the Chinese collections, the exhibition showcased works exploring the complexities of Chineseness, questioning identity, culture, and language in an increasingly interconnected world.

Beyond celebrating the literary achievements of East Asian women, this exhibition also highlighted the richness of KU’s East Asian collections, offering a glimpse into the dynamic voices shaping the region’s literary landscape.



# GET SET FOR PROGRESS

Leaning into collaborative leadership, the libraries launch new Strategic Engagement Team model



KU Libraries faculty and staff engaging in SET discussions.

During the 2023-24 academic year, a multi-layered, highly participatory process yielded rich input from across the libraries, resulting in an expansive, collectively constructed strategic plan in alignment with the institutional priorities of the university’s Jayhawk’s Rising framework — Student Success, Healthy and Vibrant Communities, and Research and Discovery.

In 2024-25, the libraries’ strategic planning process shifted from setting goals and refining a vision toward implementation, reaching toward the libraries’ everyday goals and highest aspirations through a new, collaboratively created model: the Strategic Engagement Team or SET.

“A fantastic team of library colleagues spent several months thoughtfully shaping a new structure for innovative change,” said Courtney Foat, Advisor for Strategic Initiatives & Organizational Engagement.

“Their SET model is grounded not only in helping to advance what we want to accomplish strategically, but equally in considering how we get there — striving to model and spark fresh approaches to work that deepen interconnection, empower leadership growth, and elevate creativity.”

—Courtney Foat

The SET model was shaped to reflect the libraries’ new approach to strategic plan implementation and collaboration, steered by a group of more than 40 faculty and staff members organized into six Objective Teams. Each Objective Team is thematically focused on a cluster of prioritized strategic objectives, allowing team members to bring unique perspectives and an interconnected lens to objectives which enrich our user community, physical library spaces, wellness and belonging, research and technology, and more.

With empowered collaboration at the center of both the strategic goals and their implementation, the SET model centers around a monthly forum, where representatives from each Objective Team gather with core conveners and facilitators to regularly share and collaborate while creatively problem-solving. The SET team also oversees disbursement of an Innovation Fund. This past year, they evaluated proposals and approved distribution of more than \$20,000 to support teams in propelling strategically aligned initiatives. ■

## WHAT IS SET?

44  
FACULTY & STAFF ON OBJECTIVE TEAMS

6  
OBJECTIVE TEAMS

1  
SET CORE TEAM + INTEGRATED SET FORUM OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH TEAM

# GOING GLOBAL

Libraries take next steps toward further internationalization with new center



KU Libraries was represented in Ghana by Carol Smith, first row, second from left, Kodjo Atiso, first row, right, and Brian Rosenblum, back row, second from left.

A newly launched Institute for Globally Engaged Librarianship (IGEL) is leveraging the libraries’ strong history in international collections and relationships to enhance world-wide connection.

“Where the world goes, the University of Kansas goes. Where the University of Kansas goes, KU Libraries must also go,” KU Libraries Dean Carol Smith emphasized in her 2024 State of the Libraries address. “KU Libraries will be actively cultivating sister academic library relationships with similarly focused research institutions across the globe, and engaging in international library collaborations with them, in support of the world’s grand challenges.”

In the 2024-25 academic year, that charge has been taken from idea to implementation with the guidance of Smith, Digital Humanities Librarian Brian Rosenblum and Head of International Collections Jon Guillian. IGEL aims to establish KU Libraries as a leader in international academic library collaboration while advancing librarianship as a globally connected profession. The center’s goals promote knowledge exchange, professional development, innovation, and collaborative research to address global challenges.

The new center’s first official event was held in June, when “Dialogue Across Borders” connected more than 50 academic librarians from across Ghana with librarians back in Kansas via video conference. Smith, Rosenblum, and Librarian for Africana and International Studies Kodjo Atiso, were part of a KU delegation in Ghana who engaged with a larger annual digital humanities conference organized by Rosenblum and KU Associate Professor of African and African



KU Librarians connected via video conference with University of Ghana librarians.

American Studies James Yékú, in collaboration with colleagues at the University of Ghana. The visit also included a series of library tours and a book buying trip.

The event exemplified how IGEL aims to enhance current KU internationalization efforts by connecting them to KU Libraries’ strengths. For decades, KU librarians and staff have partnered with KU language departments and area studies programs to assemble diverse and unique materials — more than 1.5 million volumes — from all over the world in support of research and learning at KU. Additionally, the libraries are a founding partner of KU’s Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities (IDRH), which has served as an intellectual hub for exploration at the intersection of digital technology and humanities research on campus and beyond, including an annual symposium in Africa. ■

“We, as libraries, are strategic partners across the entire institution — it’s a unique vantage point. IGEL is an opportunity to fully leverage the incredible strengths that we have and contribute to university goals, but also to be an exemplar for the best of what libraries can be and do”

—Dean Carol Smith



# THE POWER OF PLUGGING IN

From conference calls to in-person impact, advocate finds joy and connection in supporting KU Libraries

In a busy year for KU Libraries, few had a front row seat like Bev Kennedy Bradshaw, a 10-year member of the libraries' Board of Advocates. Bradshaw participated in the libraries' Watson Centennial Council planning committee and played a key role in the annual Snyder Book Collecting Contest, combining for a powerful year of library engagement and support in addition to her longtime advocacy and planned giving.

For Bradshaw, a KU alumna (c'78) from Kansas City, Kan., and a first-generation college student, giving back to the libraries has been a natural progression.

"I've always felt lucky to have gone to KU," she said. "It changed my life. After I graduated, I knew that I wanted to give back, and I realized the library was the perfect place."

As a student, Bradshaw had relied on the libraries' study spaces as places of productivity and focus, as well as libraries' resources to support her academic success while obtaining her degree in human resources.

"I would study in the stacks and pull cards to go get books — this was back before all the technology was there — but it was very convenient and important, and I thought about how great the library made things for me as a student," she said. "And I wanted to give where I felt like my dollars could have the most impact."

One of Bradshaw's gifts refurbished a Watson Library study carrel in the third floor stacks, improving the lighting and comfort of the study spaces which continue to be popular with students today.

"I was the oldest in my family, and my two sisters followed me to KU," Bradshaw said. "It was really meaningful to me to have my sisters, parents, and niece and nephew sign the plaque on the carrel. Even though we didn't have a lot of extras growing up, all our needs were met and my parents really instilled in us the importance of giving back and philanthropy, whether by volunteering time or making monetary donations. I try to stop by the carrel every time I'm up at the library."

Bradshaw's work in human resources took her to Dallas in the late 1970s. As she advanced in her career over the years, working for Fortune 500 companies, she had a strong desire to stay connected to KU despite the distance, and her appreciation for the libraries also grew.

"I ended up in a career that I really liked, and I worked in it my whole life. I just felt really fortunate that KU enabled that opportunity for me," Bradshaw said. "During my HR career at one point I oversaw payroll, which is one of those functions that people rely on and of course need and just assume your paycheck is always going to be there, on time. And it's a big, complicated, hard job to make that happen."

**"And so, I thought about the libraries, and I thought, you know, it's the same in some ways — a big job, a hard job, and complicated serving so many different constituents in so many locations. Sometimes it might be easy to take it for granted, but it's a foundational need which impacts the entire KU community."**

—Bev Bradshaw



Bev and Mary Lynch Matthews participated in Art on the Lawn during the Watson Centennial. Mary was one of Bev's roommates while she attended KU.

Bradshaw joined the libraries Board of Advocates in 2015. In the beginning she participated through conference calls, which sometimes left her wanting to do more. The expansion to video calls during the pandemic was a positive development, enabling more engagement. She attended meetings and events in-person when she could, but this year, a move back to the Kansas City area made a new level of participation possible.

She played a crucial role in the Snyder Book Collecting Contest by serving as a judge of the student collections, and was amazed by the thoughtfulness that went into the students' submissions. Her participation in Watson Centennial celebrations was also a highlight of the year.

"When we walked into Watson for the gala dinner, to see the library space transformed into this elegant, evening celebration was just awe inspiring," Bradshaw said. "It was amazing. I knew we had a talented team, but the library team's talent seems like it's endless."

Through all of her involvement she's learned even more about the libraries, and gained knowledge of how her gifts help ensure that future generations of students can have the same transformative experiences at KU that she did.

"I've really come to appreciate the leadership of the libraries in the Open Education initiative," she said. "Even when I went to KU way back, textbooks were expensive then, and it was a struggle for me. And then you add all the amazing collections at Spencer Research Library that students and faculty have access to, and the libraries work with research and teaching. I've just been amazed at everything the library does and how important it is to the university." ■



Bev and her sister, Peggy Kennedy (b'79), left, with Dean Carol Smith attending "Rhapsody in Jayhawk Blue."





# CELEBRATING A CENTURY

Watson Library marked 100 years of service with a semester's worth of events and activities.

## LIBRARY ON THE LAWN

Students gathered with the library community for live music on Watson's iconic front steps, plus food trucks, games, Makerspace activities and more.



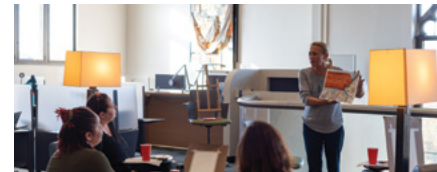
## FORMER COLLEAGUES, FOND MEMORIES

Current and former library staff reunited to celebrate the people who have made KU Libraries great for 100 years.



## CUT A RUG

Students, community members, and library staff learned to dance the Charleston, Foxtrot and more in honor of Watson Library's roaring 20s origins.



## LIBRARY ART

Campus and community members gathered to capture the Collegiate Gothic beauty of the library through guided art lessons.



## RHAPSODY IN JAYHAWK BLUE

Friends and supporters honored the rich history and modern magic of Watson Library in a glittering night of festivities.



## WATCH IT IN WATSON

Students filled Watson Library's 3<sup>rd</sup> floor event space for screenings of 1920s inspired films, paired with plenty of popcorn, flapper headbands, and fun.



## ENCAPSULATING HISTORY

The libraries assembled a 2024 time capsule to be held in Spencer Research Library's University Archives, offering future Jayhawks a glimpse into our lives, culture, and achievements 100 years from now.



## ACCOLADES & RECOGNITION

Watson Library's grand centennial season was recognized with several distinctive honors awarded to the Office of Communications & Advancement (OCA). The OCA team orchestrated three months of celebrations, engaging more than 1,000 participants, inspiring major philanthropic gifts, and coming in 30% under budget on expenses. Through strategic leadership, imaginative events, rich storytelling, and seamless collaboration with library colleagues, the team elevated KU Libraries' visibility, strengthened community ties, and set a new standard for donor engagement and institutional pride.

KU Libraries thanks and congratulates the OCA team of Christy McWard, Kevin McCarty, Nikki Pirch, Wendy Conover, and Christin Monts for bringing home the following honors in 2025:

- The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) recognized KU Libraries with a Gold Award among its 2025 Circle of Excellence Awards.
- A video highlighting KU Libraries' centennial celebration, "A Rhapsody in Jayhawk Blue," won an ARLIE Award for Best Development/Fundraising film at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Film Festival.
- The Office of Communications & Advancement was among seven teams nominated for recognition as Team of the Year during the University of Kansas Employee Recognition Ceremony.



Visit [lib.ku.edu/watson100](https://lib.ku.edu/watson100) to learn more about the milestone and to watch the award-winning video.



THE 2024 LIBART  
AWARD RECIPIENTS:

**Best in Show:**  
“Le Renard,” by Liam Kille

**Jewelry and Metalsmithing:**  
“Laurel Leaves,” by Aubrey Sanchez  
“Keeper of the Pearls,” by Grace Billman

**Photography:**  
“Color-blinded,” by Anh Hoang  
“Midnight Perch,” by Nathan Gibson

**Fabric/Textile:**  
“Quetalcoatl,” by Meg Overbaugh

**Ceramics:**  
“Vaca en el Tásate,” by Liliana Ramos  
“A Jeweler’s Tapestry,” by Aubrey Sanchez

**Mixed Media:**  
“Textile Exile,” by Katie Grear  
“Coffee,” by Barbara Tharas

**Drawing:**  
“How My Dad Is,” by Maral Bat  
“The Lonely Grave of Paula Schultz,”  
by Zoe English

**Painting:**  
“Reflections of Absence,”  
by Meredith Kucera  
“Eternal Blue,” by Amy Baber

**Graphic Design/Digital:**  
“No Rest for Skeletons,” by Alexa Boyd  
“Resurgence,” by Cindy Tran

**Video/Animation:**  
“Fractured Figures,” by Norea Menold  
“Choreographed Confinement,”  
by Molly Stover-Brown

**Printmaking:**  
“New Yorker,” by Lujang Li  
“External Bifurcation,” by Katie Grear



Visit [lib.ku.edu/libart](https://lib.ku.edu/libart) to view the digital show and for a full list of winners.

ABUNDANT ART

Annual art exhibition sees largest engagement in program history



KU Libraries’ LibArt program, a year-round, juried exhibition of student art in library spaces at the University of Kansas, celebrated its 14<sup>th</sup> year with a reception recognizing student artists and awarding cash prizes. This year’s show, which ran from August to May, featured 146 pieces throughout five KU Libraries locations, the largest display in program history.

The libraries honored 18 works in nine categories at the reception Oct. 30. Best in Show was awarded to Liam Kille, a junior from Overland Park studying illustration, animation and French, for his mixed media piece, “Le Renard,” a study of 18<sup>th</sup> century portraitist Joseph Ducreux’s “Le Discret” rendered as an anthropomorphous fox.

“It’s super exciting to win because I plan on going to France this summer for study abroad, and (the prize money) will definitely go towards my funds for studying abroad,” Kille said.

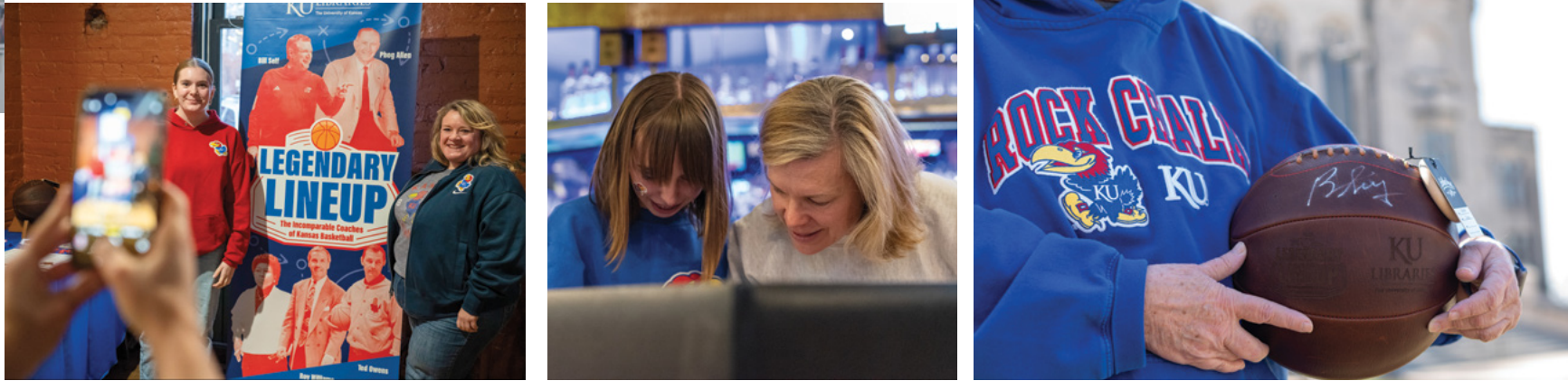
Students from a wide range of majors submit work to the LibArt program, some taking part in their first exhibit experience. Local artists selected as judges evaluate the artwork and provide feedback to students for the competition portion of the program.

“LibArt is unique in the way it provides an opportunity for non-art majors to showcase their talent,” said Rebecca Schroeder, operations manager at Murphy Art & Architecture Library and chair of the LibArt committee. “It’s rewarding to see the students bring their friends and family to the different library branches on campus to view their pieces on display.”

The 2024-25 LibArt exhibition included diverse work from KU art and design students as well as from students majoring in mathematics, computer science, physical education, mechanical engineering, social work, accounting and other subjects.

“Know that your work brightens our spaces,” Dean of Libraries Carol Smith said to the artists. “It makes us think and feel and dream, and it’s perfectly and entirely at home with libraries where we are constantly creating, leaning into curiosity and discovery, and coming together to be inspired.”

LibArt award honorees receive cash prizes, this year totaling more than \$2,000, made possible through support from KU Endowment and donors Michael and Kathryn Hughes. ■



LEGENDARY LINEUP

In honor of KU Basketball coaching excellence, KU Libraries’ 2024-25 traveling exhibit, “Legendary Lineup: The Incomparable Coaches of Kansas Basketball,” showcased the top-five winningest head coaches in KU history: Bill Self, Phog Allen, Marian Washington, Ted Owens and Roy Williams. With direct ties to the origin of the game itself, the leaders of Kansas Basketball have shaped the game and advanced it beyond barriers while performing at championship levels. Among an elite roster of roundball royalty, this starting five represents unmatched longevity and pioneering spirit.

The exhibit was showcased at KU Alumni network events across the country, with more than 600 names entered in the raffle for a Naismith-style, leather basketball signed by Self. Tour stops included more than a dozen cities and a Presidents Club tailgate in the Jayhawk Welcome Center. Archival images like the ones featured in “Legendary Lineup” can be viewed online in the University Archives digital collection at [digital.lib.ku.edu](https://digital.lib.ku.edu) where users can find thousands of photos, documents and other KU materials spanning 100 years and beyond.



# KU LIBRARIES

The University of Kansas

1425 Jayhawk Boulevard  
Lawrence, KS 66045

