

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Lifelong library connections

How many books would you have if you kept each one you ever bought or were gifted? As Ken Stephens walks into his personal library, he is surrounded by exactly that scene. While some people display sports medals or hunting treasures, Ken's library is his trophy room.

Stephens remembers the first time he walked into Watson Library, recognizing that he had never been in a library quite like it and thinking that he needed breadcrumbs to find his way back out of the extensive and impressive stacks. Stephens graduated from KU with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1975.

"I think of libraries as temples of books. They're repositories of all human knowledge and our imagination," Stephens said. "When we can't physically travel, books take us on journeys to places we can't go, to times that we can't revisit, or to a future that we can't yet imagine."

Stephens enjoyed a 40-year career as a reporter and editor, including 20 years at the Dallas Morning News, covering eight Olympics and traveling to 22 countries on assignment. He's made a point to visit some of the most revered libraries across the globe — including the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford and the British Library in London.



Upon understanding his passion for special collections, KU librarians provided Stephens with a private tour of Kenneth Spencer Research Library. After viewing and handling a few of the distinctive materials from Spencer, including a page from a Gutenberg Bible and a Book of Hours, Stephens realized the true depth of KU Libraries' collections.

"If you went to KU and you got a degree, you undoubtedly used the library — even if you never stepped foot in the physical space, especially when you can access so much digitally," Stephens said. "KU Libraries

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— Ken Stephens

Growing the KU Libraries Student Ambassador Program

Supporting student success is an essential component of KU Libraries' mission and vision. To understand the needs of our student users, we must find meaningful ways to connect with them and create an ongoing dialogue. The KU Libraries Student Ambassadors Program (KULSAP) engages and builds awareness among students with an eye toward enhancing library services and facilities.

Library ambassador Bea Reiter graduated from KU in December 2020 with bachelor's degrees in anthropology and Spanish and a minor in history.

She is one of 10 ambassadors who have been part of monthly conversations about library resources and services. The ambassadors have met with library donors, leadership, and the library's Board of Advocates.

"I hope that future library ambassadors take advantage of all the amazing KU Libraries staff and faculty they get to meet and learn from," Reiter said. "Our library staff and librarians are excellent researchers and information professionals. I hope KULSAP members recognize that they are advocating for the unsung heart of KU. The libraries are integral to KU's mission as a Research 1 institution, not only for students but for professors too."

Reiter began the Masters in Library Science program at Emporia State University this spring and is currently a content and access specialist at Dykes Library on the KU Medical Campus.

KULSAP invites student input and involvement in library services and programming. Led by Kelly Spavin, events and donor relations coordinator, KULSAP works closely with the Office of Communications & Advancement to engage with library donors and learn about library advancement.



"I have so much love for the libraries and being a member of KULSAP was one way I could give that back."

– Bea Reiter

"The student ambassadors program opens up natural lines of communication between the libraries and students, allowing us to learn what's working for them and how we can continue to best support them during their time at KU," Spavin said. "KULSAP is truly a two-way street when it comes to benefits. I love getting to help our ambassadors learn more about the libraries and how they work, and I also love hearing their feedback about the things that matter most to them."

Each year, a new class of KU Libraries Student Ambassadors will be recruited to continue this essential program.

"I have so much love for the libraries and being a member of KULSAP was one way I could give that back," Reiter said. "I know future ambassadors will have just as much appreciation."

KU Libraries are grateful to each and every student ambassador that helped us improve throughout the last year. ■



KULSAP's first meeting, October 15, 2020.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

It is impossible to reflect on the essential individuals and impactful work of KU Libraries without acknowledging the ways that work has changed as we move past the one-year mark of the coronavirus pandemic. But as we simultaneously look back and plan for the future, your continued support leaves us in awe.

During a time where digital resources were even more essential, we continued to serve as leaders in the open access realm — promoting and advocating for open educational resources (OER) that are available to our users on the Hill and beyond. Dedicated donor support for OER greatly benefited students, helping them achieve significant savings on textbook costs and allowing them to electronically access vital learning resources during a turbulent time.

When we needed your friendship the most, you were there for us. And because of you, we are here for KU students, faculty and staff, and community members who rely on our resources.

On February 18, thanks to your continued generosity, KU Libraries celebrated our biggest and best-ever *One Day. One KU*. It was an incredible opportunity for us to engage with existing donors and forge new friendships. To all who contributed on this annual day of giving, we are so grateful for you.

I am fortunate to have this opportunity to once more say thank you, and I hope you enjoy the following stories from KU Libraries that reflect the immediate impacts made possible from donors like you.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Smith
Dean of Libraries

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Renovated study carrels continue to impress

Watson Library's fourth-floor study carrels now boast a sleek variety of refreshed study spaces, equipped with necessary power and lighting features, after a full renovation by KU students from the Architecture 509 design-build studio, led by Paola Sanguinetti, professor of architecture.

The 16 study spaces maximize natural light, offer a range of seats and standing desks, and follow ADA requirements to ensure the libraries meet the needs of all Jayhawk scholars. The designs feature a mix of woodwork, steel, and terracotta and acrylic tiles. While the stacks remained closed to the public during the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters, KU Libraries look forward to welcoming students back into these inspiring spaces in the fall.

Karen Johnson, KU alumna, lived just down the hill from Watson Library at Douthart Scholarship Hall as an undergraduate in the mid-1960s. She also worked as a student employee in several library departments, gaining respect for libraries and the librarians who provide essential guidance to patrons.

"When I arrived at KU and walked into Watson Library, I felt like a kid who had discovered a giant candy store — it was amazing!" Johnson said. "I have never lost my awe for libraries, and Watson is at the top of that list." *(continued on following page)*

Lifelong library connections

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are an essential part of every degree program, and a gift to the libraries supports every student across disciplines."

Stephens joined KU Libraries' Board of Advocates in June 2018. As advisors to the dean, board members provide human and financial resources necessary to promote and achieve the mission and vision of the libraries. Stephens has committed matching gifts during the university-wide day of giving, *One Day. One KU*, for the past three years. His matching gifts made up significant contributions to the libraries during the 24-hour campaigns.

"When I retired, I wanted to take a defined approach to establishing my estate gift to the libraries," Stephens said. "I decided that KU Libraries would be the ideal stand-in for every library I ever visited or browsed that were all so much a part of my life." ■

One Day. One KU.

4th 
annual day
of giving



\$27,410
to KU Libraries

100
gifts



4/4 matching donor
challenges met

21% ↑ increase
over 2019



“ I am pleased to think that in giving back to KU Libraries and naming a carrel, I am helping students reach their goals. Watson Library was instrumental in helping me reach mine. ”

– Karen Johnson

The renovated study carrels offer library supporters a unique giving opportunity, as each limited space is available to be named.

“The study carrels accomplish multiple goals at KU: giving KU architectural students hands-on experience and providing beautiful spaces that allow students to concentrate on their studies without distraction,” Johnson said. “I am pleased to think that in giving back to KU Libraries and naming a carrel, I am helping students reach their goals. Watson Library was instrumental in helping me reach mine.”

*If you would like to learn more about this unique giving opportunity, please contact **Christy McWard**, executive director of the Office of Communications & Advancement for KU Libraries, at cmcward@ku.edu or 785-864-0092. ■*

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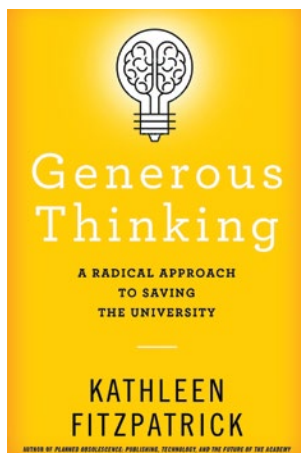
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Generous Thinking inspires the KU community



In January, KU Libraries partnered with The Commons to host a keynote presentation by Kathleen Fitzpatrick, author of “Generous Thinking: A Radical Approach to Saving the University.”

In her book, Fitzpatrick urges academics to think critically, constructively, and generously — a mode of engagement that she describes as listening over speaking, community over individualism, and collaboration over competition.

“Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s research into thinking and leading generously garners attention throughout the university community, and I think it speaks directly to the staff of KU Libraries — and to all academic library practitioners,” said Sarah Goodwin Thiel, faculty and community engagement librarian. “Engaging with colleagues and building relationships are key strengths for KU Libraries. Bringing generous thinkers like Kathleen Fitzpatrick to KU reminds our campus partners that the libraries are here to support them and to further their engagement efforts.”

Fitzpatrick is director of digital humanities and professor of English at Michigan State University. She is also the author of “Generous Thinking: The University and the Public Good” and “Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy.” During her virtual visit, Fitzpatrick spent time in small-group discussions with leaders and departments from across the KU campus, engaging audiences with thought-provoking questions and ideas.

“Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s talk oriented us toward community — across campus and beyond — as we began the spring semester,” said Emily Ryan, director of The Commons. “She shared a message of collaboration and cooperation, which can be a challenge to harness when resources are scarce. Her charge to consider the type of community we are creating for ourselves, our students, and our colleagues was broadly felt, and the ideas presented in ‘Generous Thinking’ have sparked further discussions and programs across the university.”

KU Libraries and The Commons continue to facilitate conversations, offer related grant opportunities, and craft programming to carry forward ideals of generous thinking. ■



A NOTE FROM LAURA MEYER, KU ENDOWMENT

CARES Act Legislation extended through 2021, benefiting all libraries supporters

The pandemic has certainly affected everyone in a wide variety of ways. I am fortunate that I was still able to find opportunities to connect with many of you, our fantastic library supporters. Some of you are likely familiar with the CARES Act Legislation passed in 2020 to provide direct relief to lower income Americans — many of whom lost jobs or were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

In addition to this direct support, there were also two specific provisions benefiting those who made both small and large charitable gifts. This legislation has been extended through 2021 and includes the following provisions:

Non-itemized Charitable Deduction

The CARES Act contains a provision allowing taxpayers who take the standard deduction, rather than itemize, to claim a deduction of up to \$300 for charitable gifts made in 2020. The act extends this benefit through 2021 and expands the available deduction from \$300 per return to \$300 per single filer or \$600 for those married and filing jointly.

100% AGI Deduction for Cash Gifts

Another CARES Act provision allows a taxpayer to deduct cash gifts made to public charities up to 100% of adjusted gross income in 2021. This benefit is limited to cash gifts made directly to public charities and includes funding a charitable gift annuity with cash. The enhanced deduction for cash gifts expires after 2021.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me or your personal financial advisor.

Sincerely,

Laura Meyer
Director of Development, KU Endowment

Laura Meyer cultivates and stewards major gifts for the libraries and the School of Social Welfare. Feel free to contact her at lmeyer@kuendowment.org or 785-832-7372.

Jayhawk Book Club brings variety to alumni, friends



Maisy Card, author of the spring 2021 Jayhawk Book Club selection, "These Ghosts Are Family."
Author photo credit: Marian Calle

For the past three years, Jayhawks everywhere have become part of a global community united in their passion for reading. The Jayhawk Book Club offers lifelong learners and book lovers the opportunity to connect as they read the same book and participate in moderated virtual discussions through the club's Facebook group.

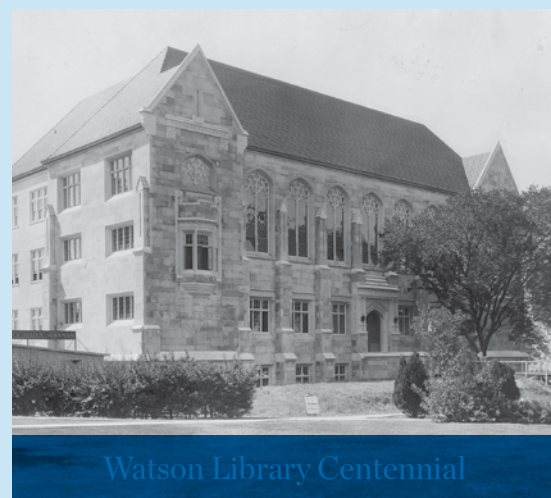
Since the Jayhawk Book Club was established in September 2018 the group has finished eight books together.

"In the Jayhawk Book Club, we read a vast array of books and genres, and I have the opportunity to read books that I likely wouldn't have read otherwise," said Abby Coble, book club member and KU graduate. "I really enjoy discussing books with other people because everyone interprets books in such different ways, and I like hearing different points of view. I also like that Jayhawk Book Club is made up of all different types of people, which adds even more to their perspective."

At the end of each book, members of the Jayhawk Book Club are invited to an in-person discussion led by KU Libraries staff. Pivoting in response to COVID regulations, Jayhawk Book Club leaders secured bestselling and award-winning authors Kristina McMorris, John Marrs, and Bob Kolker, to join the group virtually for author talks. The spring 2021 selection is "These Ghosts Are Family" by Maisy Card, who will join Jayhawk Book Club members on May 6 at 6 p.m. [Learn more or access event details at rockcha.lk/JoinJBC.](#)

"I'm very appreciative of all the work put in to making Jayhawk Book Club be the best it can be!" Coble said. ■

LIBRARIES THROWBACK



KU Libraries Throwback: On September 11, 1924, Watson Library opened its doors to the KU community. In 2024, we will celebrate the Watson Centennial — honoring the library's first 100 years as an iconic building and an essential resource for generations of Jayhawks. We look forward to including you in the centennial celebrations as the anniversary nears!
Photo credit: KU University Archives, 1929.

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