

BOOKS and LETTERS



Newsletter of the University of Arkansas Libraries

Vol. 22 No. 2, 2008

Mysteries, Mistresses & Murder: Three Arkansas Authors

In honor of American Archives Month, the Special Collections Department of the University Libraries hosted three events during October in a series titled "Mysteries, Mistresses and Murder: Celebrating Three Arkansas Authors." The programs featured Laura Parker Castoro of Pine Bluff, Radine Trees Nehring of Gravette, and Kevin Brockmeier of Little Rock.

The first event featured Castoro, author of thirty-eight novels in the genres of historical and contemporary romance, western, and romantic suspense, who described how she began her writing career and the interesting places that career has taken her. She received the Golden Leaf Award for best historical romance, the New Jersey Writers' Award, the National Readers Choice Award for best long contemporary romance, two "Literary Lion" citations from the Southwestern Booksellers Association, and several Reviewers Choice Awards from the *Romantic Times* magazine. She was inducted into the Arkansas Writers' Hall of Fame in 2005.



Laura Parker Castoro signs a copy of her book for Carolyn Allen, Dean of Libraries.

The second event, with a theme of the Arkansas Ozarks and the Buffalo River, included a screening of a clip of the new documentary "The Buffalo Flows" by Professor Larry Foley of Journalism and a reading by Nehring from her mystery novel "A River to Die For," which is set on the Buffalo River. Nehring has published a collection of essays titled *Dear Earth: A Love Letter from Spring Hollow*, as well as other popular mystery novels in the "To Die For" series featuring characters Carrie McCrite of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and her friend Henry King.



Tom Dillard, head of Special Collections, and Radine Trees Nehring.

The final event showcased Brockmeier reading from his works, followed by a question and answer session with the audience. Brockmeier is the author of the novels *The Brief History of the Dead* and *The Truth About Celia*, the teen novels *City of Names* and *Grooves: A Kind of Mystery*, and the story collections *Things that Fall From the Sky* and *The View from the Seventh Layer*. He received the Borders Original Voices Award,

the *Chicago Tribune's* Nelson Algren Award, an Italo Calvino Short Fiction Award, a James Michener-Paul Engle Fellowship, three O. Henry Awards (one first prize), the PEN USA Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a National Endowment of the Arts grant. Recently he was named one of *Granta* magazine's Best Young American Novelists.



Carolyn Allen, dean of Libraries, Kevin Brockmeier, and Nancy Talburt, vice provost for Academic Affairs.

American Archives Month encourages persons and organizations to preserve records of enduring historical value. The Special Collections Department is an archival repository created in 1967 to foster research and writing in the history and culture of Arkansas and the surrounding region. It currently holds 12,000 linear feet of documents in the Manuscripts Collection, 28,000 cataloged titles in the Rare Books Collection and the Arkansas Collection (which houses books by Castoro, Nehring, Brockmeier and other Arkansas authors), and 150,000 photographs, broadsides and maps.

Arkansas Democrat Oral History Project

After three years of effort, an oral history project to record the story of the *Arkansas Democrat* newspaper has been completed by the Special Collections Department. The David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral & Visual History conducted more than 100 interviews with people who worked for the *Democrat*.

Established in 1878, the *Arkansas Democrat* was a competitor with the much older and highly regarded *Arkansas Gazette*. Widely touted as the “Old Grey Lady,” the *Gazette* was a vigorous newspaper with a reputation for quality coverage of the entire state.

Jerry McConnell, the veteran reporter and editor who coordinated the *Arkansas Democrat* oral history project, worked at the *Democrat* on more than one occasion. He believes that

being number two often causes reporters to try harder. McConnell observed that, “While the *Democrat* had less money, paid lower salaries and had poorer fringe benefits (if any), it was staffed with young, eager journalists trying to make their mark in the profession by competing with, and sometimes beating, the *Arkansas Gazette*. Many of them went on to distinguished careers in the newspaper business.”

The two newspapers had been competing for nearly a century in 1974 when a young Walter Hussman, Jr. purchased the *Democrat* and announced his intentions to compete with the *Gazette*. Over the next two decades Little Rock and Arkansas witnessed a take-no-prisoners newspaper war that ultimately ended in 1991 when the *Gazette* surrendered.

Hussman was interviewed twice for the Project. Another interviewee was Ozell Sutton, the first African American reporter to work for an Arkansas daily newspaper. Among the many other people interviewed were cartoonist Jon Kennedy, veteran reporter and editorial writer Robert McCord, in addition to Rex Nelson, Mara Leveritt, Mike Masterson, Bob Lancaster, Wally Hall, Bill Husted, and Sam Dickinson.

The *Arkansas Democrat* oral history project complements the *Arkansas Gazette* oral history project completed in 2006.

Transcripts of the *Democrat* and *Gazette* interviews can be accessed on the Pryor Center Web site at <http://libinfo.uark.edu/SpecialCollections/pryorcenter/>.

In Memoriam: Herb Fowler and John Williams

Two pioneering faculty at the University of Arkansas School of Architecture, both great friends of the Libraries, passed away last spring. John G. Williams (April 30, 1915 – April 11, 2008) and Herbert Keatinge Fowler (May 31, 1921–April 10, 2008) will both be sorely missed.

Williams, a native of Van Buren, was hired by the University of Arkansas to teach architectural drawing and design in the College of Engineering in 1946. Largely due to Williams’s cheerful persistence, in 1948, a four-year architecture course was created in the College of Arts and Sciences, and Williams became chairman of the Department of Architecture for the next eighteen years. The highly successful department became the School of Architecture in 1974.

Fowler grew up in Idaho, Oregon, and Connecticut before service during World War II interrupted his studies at Yale. After completing his degree in architecture at Yale following the war, Fowler went into private practice in New

York City and in 1956 was hired by the University of Arkansas to design a new Animal Sciences Building, one of the first on campus to feature the glass walls and flat roof that are characteristic of post-war architecture. Williams was impressed with Fowler and took the opportunity to recruit the young architect for the faculty at the fledgling Department of Architecture. Fowler remained at Arkansas to become one of

the most influential teachers in the program. In the 1970s, Fowler was instrumental in creating the Department of Architecture’s Rome Program, which enabled students to explore the European architectural heritage in person. Williams wrote a delightful account of the early days of the school, *The Curious and the Beautiful: A Memoir History of the Architecture Program at the University of Arkansas* (UA Press, 1984).

In 1989 the School of Architecture established the John G. Williams Professorship to bring visiting architects to campus, and in 2007 the Herbert K. Fowler Award was established to honor students with exceptional drawing abilities. Williams began donating his papers and architectural drawings to the Special Collections Department in 1985, and Fowler donated his papers in 2006.



Herb Fowler, Gus and Fay Jones, and John Williams at the John Williams Fellowship Announcement in 1995. From the John G. Williams Papers in Special Collections, 2nd Access, Box 2, F12. Used by permission.

E. C.

Happy Anniversary, Mullins Library!

The University Libraries celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the Mullins Library building on September 16, the day when the doors first opened to students, faculty, and staff in 1968. The occasion was celebrated with balloons, an exhibit in the Walton Reading Room, and cake for all comers.



Dean Carolyn Allen serves cake on the 40th anniversary of Mullins Library.

Before the new building was constructed, the Library resided in Vol Walker Hall just east of Mullins. The library in Vol Walker had a beautiful reading room, but it also had closed stacks. The new University Library, which was named after university president David W. Mullins in 1974, was dedicated to the concept of open access to all its resources (with the exception of rare books and special collections).

The University decided that the building's design should emphasize function and utility over other considerations, but the aesthetic appeal would not be sacrificed. Another important factor in the planning was "expandability." What was referred to then as the "knowledge explosion" was a concept that had a great impact on library planning, and it was rightly

expected that library holdings—then totaling 500,000 volumes would continue to grow at an accelerated rate (and number 1.8 million today). That rate of growth necessitated a major remodeling of the 1968 building and the construction of an east wing in 1997.



The Special Collections area in 1968 consisted (as it does today) of a reading room, closed stacks, exhibit space, staff offices, and work space.

Research Wizard

The University Libraries have recently released the first version of the "Research Paper Wizard," an online resource designed to help students through the research process by providing step-by-step instructions and schedules. The Wizard, affectionately known as Hogworthy, will break down the research process into manageable steps and suggest a target date for each one to help students keep to an assignment schedule.

Incorporating guides, advice, and video tutorials from the Libraries and from the University's Writing Center, Hogworthy allows students to specify the subject area of their paper as well as the due date. The Wizard then supplies suggested sources and strategies, including recommended databases for the assignment subject. Topics covered include finding back-



ground information, locating books and articles, quoting from and citing sources, as well as writing, polishing, and revising their paper.

Amy Hardin: Library Intern

Amy Hardin, a graduate student in library science at the University of Alabama—and a native of Conway, Arkansas—performed a 300-hour internship at the University Libraries over the summer months. Her particular subject interests included music, film, and cataloging, but she was also interested in exposure to as many library departments as possible. Her internship extended from May 19 to August 8 (a total of twelve weeks).

The Libraries were fortunate to be able to offer Amy a number of assignments working in music cataloging, as well as performing arts and media. She also had rotating assignments

in various other library departments, including reference, web services, diversity, development, special collections, interlibrary loan, circulation, and the Chemistry Library.

In all areas in which she worked, Amy proved to be a real team player, an effective independent worker, and a quick learner of new skills. This kind of internship is a win-win situation for both the Libraries and the intern, and the hope is to offer several more like it in the future.



Amy Hardin, library intern.

In Memoriam: Kinne Colpitts

The University Libraries regret to announce that D. C. "Kinne" Colpitts, a beloved librarian who served as reference librarian from 1974 to 2001, died September 28, 2008, at the age of 72 in Springdale, Arkansas.

Kinne served as reference librarian, library science instructor, and head of the Map Department at Oklahoma State University from 1962 to 1973. As head of the Reference Department at the University of Arkansas Libraries from 1974 to 1989, she led the department in the transition from print-based to electronic resources, mentored a new generation of librarians, supervised library faculty and student staff members, initiated the Libraries' instruction program, and accelerated the trend toward subject specialization among librarians. She herself served as engineering librarian, developing the instruction pro-

gram for that discipline.

Kinne's contributions to the wider library profession included attending national library conferences, serving as a delegate to the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Services in Little Rock in 1991 (part of the statewide planning for the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services), publishing conference descriptions in the Arkansas Library Association's journal, *Arkansas Libraries*, and making presentations at Arkansas Library Association annual and division meetings.

After she retired from her full-time position, Kinne graciously agreed to continue on a part-time basis for an extra year. In retirement, she became involved in a number of charitable causes. She always interacted with students and colleagues with grace,

style, and intelligence. She led by her good example, and her good humor and distinctive laugh were treasured by all.

N. P. G.



Kinne Colpitts, former head of the Reference Department.

Art Exhibits: Photographs and 3 Dimensions

The Libraries continued their arts program with two exhibits of photographs and an exhibit of multi-media, three-dimensional artwork in celebration of American Indian Heritage Month in November.

In July and August, Fayetteville photographer Craig E. Nelson exhibited portraits from an ongoing project. Titled "Strangers and Not So Strange," Nelson's portraits were taken at Brewski's on Dickson Street, using only available light with no secondary light sources. Focused on the subjects' faces, the images are deceptively straightforward and unusually fascinating. Nelson said, "What results is a glimpse beneath



"97 in the Series" by Craig E. Nelson.

the skin, a peek at the animal under the surface. In essence, I am working to remove the masks that we often feel compelled to wear."

In September



"Filling Station, NW corner of College and Center, Fayetteville, Arkansas" by J. H. Field. MC 539, Series 4, Folder 2.

and October, a series of soft-focus images created by Julius Herman Field (1869-1936), an early 20th century Fayetteville photographer, were displayed. The exhibit, titled "A Gentle Eye: The Photography of J. H. Field," was a glimpse into a bygone era. It is evident from the negatives in the J. H. Field Photographs collection (MC 539) housed in Special Collections, that most of Fields' soft focus effects were obtained by manipulation during the printing process: use of a light-dif-

fusing coating on the negative, scratching the emulsion to add features or to obscure unwanted parts of the image, drawing on it with pencil or ink, or using ground glass or celluloid screens in printing.

In November and December, an exhibit titled "We Are Sac and Fox" was displayed by Oklahoma artist Tony Tiger.

Tiger's art is an evocative mix of media including carpentry, acrylic and oils, photography, and collage. The resulting three-dimensional pieces invite the viewer to contemplate the historical photographs and images of the Sac and Fox tribe families and their heritage.



"Sac and Fox Legacy" by Tony Tiger.

A Note of Thanks!

Students, teachers, and libraries are not alone in advancing learning and knowledge at the University of Arkansas. The role of our donors is crucial. Their contributions have made a significant impact in improving our collections and services. The University Libraries gratefully list below the names of generous donors who have donated gifts **during fiscal year July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008**. The list does not contain matching gifts by corporations or organizations.

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