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Footnotes is published three times a year by Northwestern University Libraries.
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1976–2016

Celebrating 40 years of Footnotes

This issue marks 40 years of publication for Footnotes, the Libraries’ triannual newsletter. The debut issue in 1976 was produced for the Library Council, a group of friends, alumni, faculty, and students who donated funds and personal collections to the Libraries.

For many of its early years, Footnotes was a densely packed two-color publication focused on fundraising activities, council membership, facility improvements, and desiderata—specific books the Libraries wanted but could not afford. Footnotes grew in size, scope, and color over the years, arriving at its current design in 2004 with a broader focus on library services and staff and the diversity of the Libraries’ collections.

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Kaplan fellow pursues “insider ethnography”

Africana cataloger Marcia Tiede, the 2015–16 library fellow for the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities at Northwestern, presented a preliminary version of her Kaplan work at the African Studies Association annual meeting in November. Her presentation about the colonial education of French West Africa’s future leaders focused on two essays held as photocopies by the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies.

The essays—one of which was written by Modibo Keïta, Mali’s founding president—were a compulsory part of education at the École de African Studies. William Ponty, a prestigious secondary school run by the colonial government in Senegal. On the surface the essays are about village customs, such as herbal remedies and children’s games. But Tiede addresses these papers as a form of “insider ethnography” that helped French governors understand their subjects.

Tiede is working on a critical source edition of Keïta’s manuscript.

New leaders in Libraries’ administration

Last fall, two associate University librarians assumed their roles in a reorganized Northwestern Libraries system devoted to expanding services and collections.

D. J. Hoek, who had been head of the Music Library since 2004, is now associate University librarian for collections strategies, a newly created role designed to ensure the Libraries build collections that continue to support Northwestern’s strategic priorities.

“My job is to make sure that our resources are right for the research happening on this campus—and that our researchers have a complete sense of what’s available to them,” Hoek said.

Hoek was a music librarian at Kent State and Wichita State Universities before coming to Northwestern. He has a master of library science degree in music theory and music composition from Bowling Green State University.

Evviva Weinraub has joined the Libraries as associate University librarian for digital strategies, providing leadership and oversight for three work groups: Repository and Digital Content Management, Bibliographic Services and Platform Management, and IT Infrastructure. Because technology is at the core of modern library services, Weinraub said, her team’s work can affect every service, including checkout of physical books, retrieval of an image in a digital repository, and preservation of electronic materials.

“My challenge is to ensure we are delivering those services as seamlessly as possible while balancing constant improvements,” she said. “We are always striving through our collaboration to make services faster, easier to use, and more efficient.”

Weinraub was formerly the services manager of the Digital Preservation Network in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as part of a team developing a nationwide digital preservation infrastructure. Prior to that she was director of emerging technologies and services at Oregon State University Libraries and Press and assistant director of IT administration at Tufts University. Weinraub earned her master of library science at the University of Maryland.

Grant funds digitization of University Press titles

Northwestern University Press has received a three-year, $73,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to digitize 64 of its out-of-print titles in African studies, literary criticism, and philosophy. The grant, one of the first awards made by the Humanities Open Book program cosponsored by Mellon and the National Endowment for the Humanities, reinforces open-access technologies and services at Oregon State University.

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UNIFORM DONATED TO ARCHIVES

The family of Paul Tangora ’37 donated a rare football uniform to University Archives last fall. Tangora, a standout player for the Wildcats from 1933 to 1935, played guard in two collegiate All-Star games in 1936 wearing the uniform.

From 1934 to 1976, the Chicago Tribune sponsored the College All-Star Football Game series, which pitted fan-chosen players against professional teams. In the first of his two games, Tangora and the 1935 All-Stars battled the Detroit Lions, the previous year’s National Football League champions. With gate receipts supporting local charities, the game attracted 76,000 fans to Chicago’s Soldier Field to see the college players fight the Lions to an impressive 7–7 tie. A week later Tangora wore the uniform again in a second All-Star exhibition game, this time a 12–2 loss to the New York Giants. Tangora blocked a punt that resulted in a safety, the only points the All-Stars would score.

Comprising a heavy-duty cotton jersey, lustrous yellow pants, and a leather helmet, Tangora’s uniform will be held in a custom housing and stored in a temperature-controlled environment to stabilize its color and condition.
Myth: Everything is on the Internet.

Dean of libraries Sarah Pritchard has heard this one so often that she has made it a frequent talking point in her speeches and lectures. The line she hears is, “I don’t need to go to a library. I can go online and find everything I need.”

It’s true that libraries and commercial enterprises have made many strides in digitizing important works and making them available online. Pritchard noted, for example, the Google Books project and the HathiTrust, two large-scale digitization projects to which Northwestern has contributed and which greatly expand the availability of scholarly works online, free to all.

Librarians everywhere have heard ’em all: misconceptions and legends that develop a life of their own. Let Footnotes set the record straight once and for all.

Myth: Frank Lloyd Wright insulted Deering Library.

As legend has it, the celebrated Prairie School architect Frank Lloyd Wright so disliked James Gamble Rogers’s design for Deering Library that he compared the building’s appearance to a sow on her back.

This tale has not just endured but evolved, according to assistant University archivist Janet Olson. In the original telling, Wright uttered his critique at the Deering dedication in 1933. (According to archival records, Wright was not even in attendance.) Later, the story grew to include the notion that the University closed Deering’s main doors because Wright’s criticism had so wounded the pride of head librarian T. W. Koch. Of course, those doors didn’t close until 1970, when University Library opened. Koch died in 1941, so his supposed hurt feelings would have been long forgotten by then.

If Wright ever breathed an ill word about Deering Library, he did so privately. According to Olson, Northwestern art history professor David Van Zanten, a specialist in architecture, once confirmed that he had never come across a reference to Wright criticizing the design of Deering Library.

“A Google search gives you a false sense of completeness,” said D. J. Hoek, associate University librarian for collections strategies. “If you type ‘biochemistry’ in Google, you get a seemingly infinite number of results. But there’s a lot about biochemistry that is not going to show up, including research published in electronic journals and databases that a library can provide access to.”

Librarians teach students to fight the sense of complacency many feel after a seconds-long search. “We try to coach students against thinking that what they find on the first page of a Google search is enough,” Hoek said.
It may be the most common myth at university libraries around the world—so common, in fact, that the urban-legend-debunking website Snopes.com has an entry about it.

The story, often passed from juniors and seniors to first-year students, goes like this: “The architect forgot to consider the weight of the books when designing the library. Once the shelves were filled, the building started to sink.”

A version of this myth persists at many academic libraries, but the story has acquired added plausibility at Northwestern because “students know this library sits on a manmade sandbar,” said Assistant University Archivist Janet Olson. According to one local embellishment, University Library architect Walter Netsch visited the construction site and noticed a worker sitting on a horizontal beam. Supposedly the workman and his beam weren’t parallel to the ground, signaling that the building was starting to sink even before it was completed.

Perhaps there is something about Netsch’s brutalist-style buildings that attracts wild speculation. Netsch also designed Northwestern’s administration building, the Rebecca Crown Center, which opened in the turbulent 1960s. In 1986, he went on record before it was completed. “Students who come here to study tell us, ‘When I want to get serious, I come to the library,’” he said. “There is just something productive about the environment.”

Still, the buildings provide facilities and services available only inside library walls, such as computers with licensed software for graphic design, media editing, mapping, or statistical analysis.

And then there’s the service for which libraries are perhaps best known: librarians. Whether conducting a face-to-face consultation about dissertation research or teaching a student how to use proprietary products like Geographic Information System mapping software, librarians are on duty until late each night, answering calls and responding to messages.

Finally, there’s that rather obvious benefit of the physical space: the books.

“ ‘Yes, many things are available digitally, but believe it or not, some people just prefer print,’” Swindells noted with a laugh.

Myth: A university library is just a glorified study hall.

Myth: There is a secret tunnel to Deering.

This is a close cousin of the “it’s all online” argument, and dear of libraries Sarah Pritchard hears it just as often. “It’s true that a student or faculty member can do deep, meaningful research while sitting in front of any University network-connected computer,” Pritchard said. “But it is important to distinguish between the open, free Internet and the carefully regulated Internet that lives behind paywalls and license agreements. That second entity is a specialty of the academic library. It’s where the most heavily vetted publications reside, containing sourced, authoritative writings by experts in their fields.”

“Myth: All information is free these days.”

“It costs money to produce high-quality digital information, and that information is not always publicly available,” Pritchard said. “The only way to gain access is if we pay for it.”

The misconception exists because academic libraries have simplified and expanded access in recent years, acquiring site-wide licenses for content. Such licenses, with prices based on an institution’s number of users, give researchers access to specialized content with one log-in from their office computer.

Compare that with the days of yore. Pritchard said, when a publisher’s agreement for a journal might provide 10 passwords, which the library would have to distribute and manage carefully. No one wants to revisit those hassles.

“ ‘Today, ease of access belies the effort required to make information available. “We try to make connectivity very seamless, which lulls people into thinking it’s free,” Pritchard said. “But people don’t always perceive the gates they’re passing through as they conduct their work.”

There is a tunnel, but it’s not really secret—just forgotten. When Leverone Hall opened in 1972 as the Evanston home of the Graduate School of Management, Deering Library was still home to the Commerce Library, as it had been since 1933.

Dean John Barr pushed to give business students easier access to the collection, especially because the front doors to Deering, just steps from Leverone, had been permanently closed in 1970 (they stayed closed until 2012).

The tunnel passes under Deering Meadow, between a nondescript door on the lower level of the Donald P. Jacobs Center (formerly Leverone) and the first floor of Deering. The word “tunnel” oversells the romance, though; it’s more of a well-lit hallway, inclining up slightly from Jacobs and lined with insulated utility pipes.

Today, Archives and the renamed Kellogg School of Management share the space as a locked storage closet.

Myth: There is a secret tunnel to Deering.

Myth: The library is sinking.

SPRING 2016

footnotes

SPRING 2016

footnotes
Transportation Library curator Roberto Sarmiento tried not to get his hopes up. He had just fielded a call from a man interested in donating thousands of books about transportation history to Northwestern. It sounded like a curator’s dream.

But knowing that such dreams can be derailed, Sarmiento was wary. The potential donor might have a change of heart, or the materials could be redundant with existing holdings.

“I told him, ‘Okay, send us a list.’ But you know librarians have to be very selective,” Sarmiento said. “It’s usually a long, slow dance after that first call.”

The donor, Damian Kulash, is a retired Transportation Research Board executive and a lifelong collector of books on transportation. He sent a list comprising some 1,300 items, including rare 19th-century volumes and other materials Sarmiento could never have found on his own. About 80 percent of Kulash’s donation was unique, a veritable treasure trove for transportation historians.

“Talk about a collection that offers immediate service for researchers!” Sarmiento said. “Those books started circulating right away.”

Sarmiento routinely increases the Transportation Library’s holdings through conventional acquisition, but he has become adept over the years at working with interested donors—and there are many—to add new and surprising items to the library’s one-of-a-kind collections.

The success of his efforts is evident in an exhibit on display at Deering Library through April 15. Making Connections: Unique Gifts to the Transportation Library allows Sarmiento to highlight donated materials and to acknowledge the industry experts and enthusiasts like Kulash who previously owned them.

“These people are very passionate about what they are collecting,” he said. “When they donate to us, they’re giving a part of themselves.”

For Sarmiento, the title Making Connections suggests how a single collection from one donor can yield unexpected connections to another. For example, while contemplating a book of watercolors depicting Pan American aircraft flying over iconic cities, he realized the same painted images show up elsewhere in the library’s holdings—on a commemorative plate, on a collectible airline menu, and even in a children’s coloring book. He also discovered that photos, maps, and tickets donated by bus industry executive and trade magazine publisher William A. Luke illuminate historical details that other collections hint at.


The exhibit showcases items from more than 20 donated collections, such as personalized passenger cruise documents from late railroad officer Gary Gelzer and children’s rail line menus donated by industry executive Ira Silverman. It used to take a lot of legwork to find potential donors, but today the Transportation Library’s reputation has “reached the point where people call us,” Sarmiento added. “We’re responsible for making it available to the whole world through Northwestern,” he said. “I tell potential donors that their collections will be entered into a catalog that lives forever, and that gives them a kind of immortality.”
There was no mistaking the violin’s violent end. Even so, its shattered remains were being handled as delicately as an intact Stradivarius.

The three Northwestern Libraries conservators tasked with handling the broken instrument moved delicately with sewing needles and the thinnest of thread to fasten the splintered wood to a mounting board. To some, the violin’s remains might have appeared to be no more than kindling, but they were in fact cherished historical artifacts—the result of an avant-garde work that had concluded with artist Charlotte Moorman smashing the violin against a table.

The wooden shards were destined for display at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art in an exhibition celebrating Moorman’s massive creative output. A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant-Garde, 1960s–1980s, on display at the Block through July 17, draws heavily on Moorman’s archive, which is held by the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections. The main exhibit displays relics of Moorman’s career as a rebellious cellist, from customized cellos and festival posters to hand-marked scores and other performance ephemera.

A smaller exhibit in the Block’s Katz Gallery tells the story of Moorman’s life (she died in 1991) through photos, diaries, correspondence, and even a small-scale re-creation of her famously overstuffed apartment. Don’t Throw Anything Out: Charlotte Moorman’s Archive was curated by Special Collections curator Scott Krafft.

The violin-shattering piece (One for Violin Solo by Nam June Paik) became a staple of Moorman’s repertoire. She saved the shattered pieces from many, if not all, of these performances, and thus her archive holds at least 10 mangled violins, six of which had to be prepared for display. In all, library conservators preserved and prepared nearly 250 objects for the exhibits—each a challenge rarely seen in a preservation expert’s average day.

During the time the library’s lab was inundated with Moorman-related objects, a group of visitors had an opportunity to view the unusual scene. Conservator Susan Russick pointed to the mounted violin parts and said, “We’re playing a game today. Can you see the threads?”

Sure enough, the answer was no. The monofilament threads were so strategically placed, and so closely matched to each object’s color, that it was almost impossible to tell what held the violin shards to the mounting board. The instrument seemed to be held in place by magic. In a way, the disappearing loops of thread had become part of an ongoing performance of One for Violin Solo.
What is it?  Heads and Faces, and How to Study Them by Nelson Sizer and H. S. Drayton. The pseudosciences of phrenology and physiognomy concerned the measurement of skulls and faces to determine qualities like intellect and character. This book was acquired to supplement the Justin Wright Collection, which contains close to 1,400 items about the occult, astrology, myths, tree and serpent worship, and other esoterica. First published in 1887, Heads and Faces appeared in the waning days of phrenology’s influence and would have appealed to fringe believers.

Where is it?  Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections

What is it?  A set of 1931 dental x-rays of Fritz Reiner, renowned conductor of many US orchestras including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In addition to a collection of Reiner’s marked scores, the Music Library holds his correspondence and several personal items, such as these x-rays, which were sent to Reiner in New York City by his former dentist in Philadelphia in 1933.

Where is it?  The Fritz Reiner Correspondence Collection in the Music Library

What is it?  A lock of hair from John Wigmore, dean of Northwestern’s law school (now Northwestern Pritzker School of Law) from 1901 to 1929. Wigmore was an influential figure in his field, and his vast collection of papers includes considerable information about the history of law, criminology, and the work of legal institutions such as bar associations. Among the collection’s large number of personal artifacts is this golden ringlet, clipped from Wigmore when he was six years old in 1869, and a collection of childhood portraits.

Where is it?  The John Wigmore Papers in University Archives

What is it?  A rock hand-painted in the style of the San people of southern Africa. This work of art is an undated, contemporary imitation of ancient art found in caves and under rocky overhangs across the region. San rock art often depicts “trance dances,” in which shamans appealed to the spirit world to heal the sick, summon rain, or bring luck to hunters.

Where is it?  The Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies
Charlotte’s Scene

Through July 17 • Deering Library lobby

The Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art (blockmuseum.northwestern.edu) is celebrating cellist and performance artist Charlotte Moorman’s career with the exhibition A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant-Garde, 1960s–1980s, which draws heavily on the artist’s archive, held by the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections. A concurrent exhibition at the Block, Don’t Throw Anything Out: Charlotte Moorman’s Archive, was curated by Special Collections curator Scott Krafft.

At Deering Library, a companion exhibit explores other avant-garde archives held by the Libraries. Charlotte’s Scene: Archives of the Avant-Garde at Northwestern University Libraries highlights composer Dick Higgins, graphic artist and composer Jim McWilliams, the experimental music of the Once Festival, and several graphic musical scores created by students of John Cage.

A 1962 poster advertising the Michigan-based Once Festival’s New Music for Pianos, a series of avant-garde recitals.