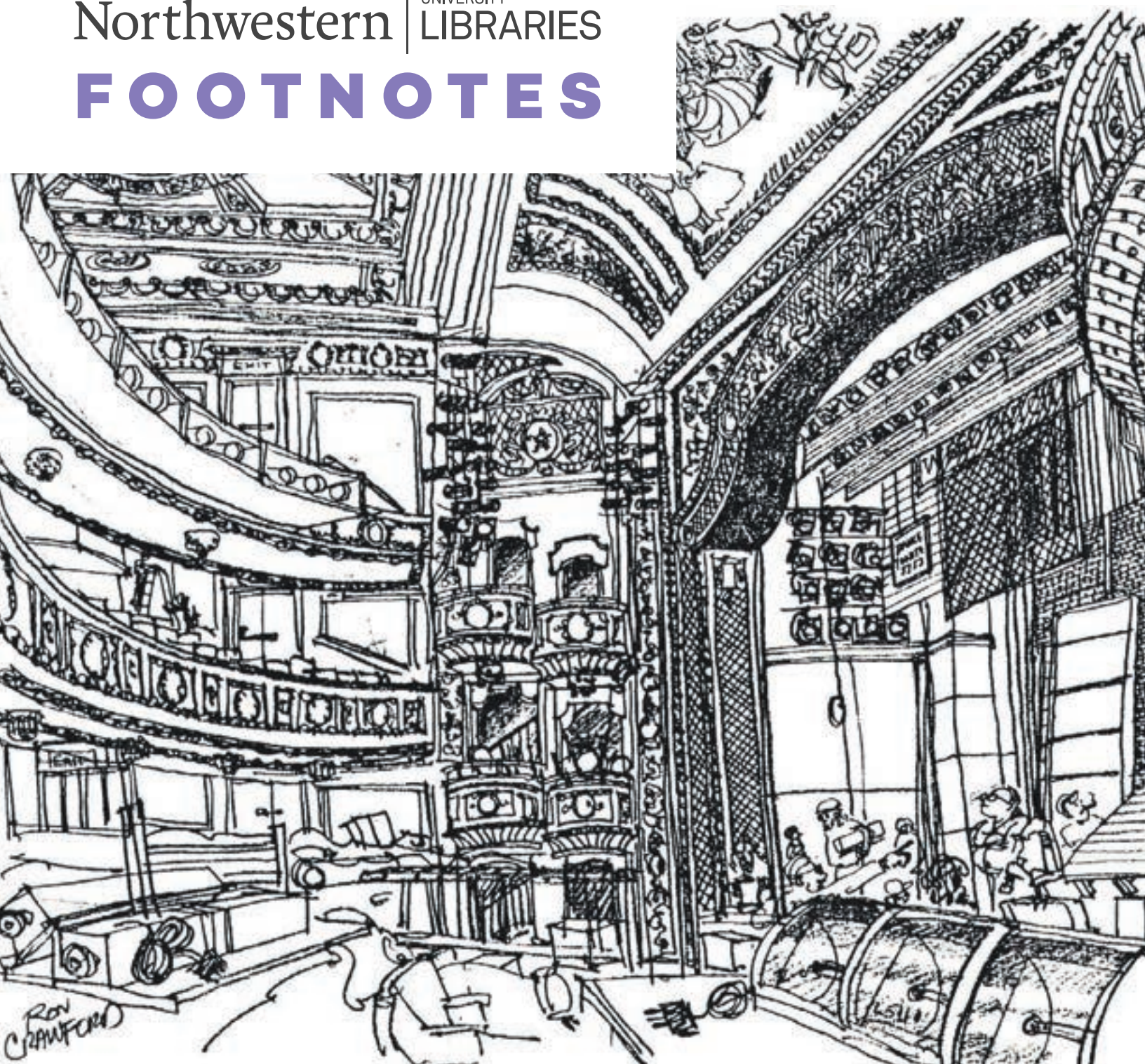


Northwestern | UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
FOOTNOTES



SPRING 2023 VOLUME 48 NUMBER 2

FOOTNOTES

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On the cover: Detail of a sketch by artist Ron Crawford of the Cort Theatre (now James Earl Jones Theatre) in New York City, 1990. From the Frank Galati Papers in University Archives. See back cover for more.

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www.library.northwestern.edu
Dean of Libraries and Charles Deering McCormick University Librarian:
Xuemao Wang
xuemao.wang@northwestern.edu
Director of Development:
Jennifer Mullman '99
jmullman@northwestern.edu
Director of Marketing and Communication:
Clare Roccaforte
c-roccaforte@northwestern.edu
Editor and Writer:
Drew Scott '92
drew.scott@northwestern.edu
Photography:
Matthew Gilson, Jim Ziv

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Papers of gay rights pioneer to be archived at Libraries

By Natalia Gonzalez Blanco Serrano '24

Steve Pieters '74 has stood under many spotlights in his lifetime—on stage, at the altar, on TV—and has touched a wide range of audiences. University Archives recently acquired Pieters's collected papers, ensuring that many details of his inspiring life will be accessible to future audiences.

As a theatre major at Northwestern, Pieters performed in dozens of shows and graduated with a degree from the School of Communication. In his early 20s, he said, he struggled to find his path; he was also coming to terms with his gay identity. It wasn't until he started attending Chicago's Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which was home to a vibrant, openly LGBTQ congregation, that he discovered his first queer community—people who fully embraced who he was and who he would become.

"A year after I'd started going to MCC, I was sitting in a service and was suddenly struck with the absolute certainty that I was called into the ministry," he said. "It was as blindingly clear an idea as I'd ever had."

Pieters wasted no time: he enrolled in McCormick Theological Seminary, received his master of divinity degree, and moved from Chicago to Hartford, Connecticut, to become pastor at its local MCC. He spent three years there, then moved to Los Angeles in 1982. Soon thereafter, he got sick and was told he had gay-related

immune deficiency. In 1984 he was formally diagnosed with AIDS, Kaposi sarcoma, and stage 4 lymphoma.

Despite his diagnoses, Pieters pushed on. He became director of the Los Angeles MCC's AIDS ministry and refused to let his medical condition limit his will to live. He continued to galvanize people through his ministry and began reaching out beyond religious circles. Famously, he sat for a live satellite interview with televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker in 1985 that not only highlighted Pieters's humanity as a person living with AIDS but also helped turn Bakker into a champion of gay rights.

University archivist Kevin Leonard was grateful to receive the papers of an alumnus he calls "a living model of strength and compassion."

"His records provide evidence of how our institutions and our society confronted AIDS," Leonard said. "His archive is a remarkable and searing collection of material that will speak clearly to future generations."

Pieters's archives will be fully processed this summer. Other memorabilia of his can be found in the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. ■

Above: The papers of pastor Steve Pieters include personal correspondence and photos, including an undated image of his meeting with then vice president Al Gore.

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Kathleen Bethel,

esteemed African American studies librarian, retires after 41 years.

On Kathleen Bethel's first day as a student at Elmhurst College in suburban Chicago, someone in a passing car shouted a racial epithet and threw a soda can that just missed her head.

"I remember being mad, being so mad," Bethel said. "That anger led me to pursue Black studies. Whatever class I was in, I would make the assignments about Black studies."

Bethel went on to make Black studies the heart of her career as well. She retires later this year after 41 years as Northwestern's African American studies librarian. The University's "Af Am" department was only 10 years old when Bethel became librarian in 1982, so she set about single-handedly building the collection and would become a research consultant to generations of scholars.

She also created a welcoming space in the library for Black students, first in a windowless shared office in the former reference department, then in a second-floor private office with spectacular views of Lake Michigan.

"Students knew my office as a safe Black space," Bethel said. "They would pop in, saying, 'I don't need anything. Just let me sit here for a moment,'" she recalled.

The posters displayed in her office capture four decades of lectures, plays, exhibits, and other events relevant to the Black student community—a graphic archive of campus culture. "I've done everything I can to document the Black experience here," she said, noting

"Students knew my office as a SAFE BLACK SPACE. They would pop in, saying, 'I don't need anything. Just let me sit here for a moment.'"

that students would often lose themselves reading all the material on her walls.

"Kathleen's name is mentioned by alumni across the globe when they reminisce about their time on campus," wrote Jeff Sterling and Lauren Lowery in their 2018 book, *Voices and Visions: The Evolution of the Black Experience at Northwestern University*. They recounted how a student who came into Bethel's office once told her, "This is the Blackest space I've seen on campus. I love it!"

Librarianship is the ultimate expression of Bethel's interest in Black history and well-being, but she had at first dreamed of becoming a lawyer. Swayed by several aunts who were librarians—and her own sense of unreadiness for law school—she saw training as a librarian as a potential entrée to the legal profession. But before long, she fell for librarianship outright.

After Elmhurst, Bethel worked at Chicago's Newberry Library and Maywood Public Library and earned

her master's in library science at Dominican University. Next, she landed a librarian role with Johnson Publishing Company—home of the highly influential *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. Then in 1982 came the opportunity at Northwestern, where all her interests came together.

"It was just the beginning of seeing white colleges and universities having Black studies and building library collections specifically for it," she said. The field was taking shape before her eyes, and she was able to take part in charting its course at Northwestern. "During my time, libraries were switching the terminology from *Negro* to *African American*," Bethel said. "I was changing the card catalog a lot in the 1980s."

Bethel earned another master's degree—in history—at Northwestern and pursued various on- and off-campus professional development opportunities over the years. A Fulbright Library Fellowship took her to South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal in 1996, and she studied African American museums as an Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities library fellow. She served for 14 years on the board of trustees for Chicago's DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center and has worked closely with HistoryMakers founder Julieanna L. Richardson. When Richardson

suggested interviewing Bethel for the project—a digital archive of interviews, biographies, and archival photography of more than 3,300 influential Black Americans—Bethel said, "I was kind of leery and surprised. I'm not sure I was a history maker; I was just a history worker."

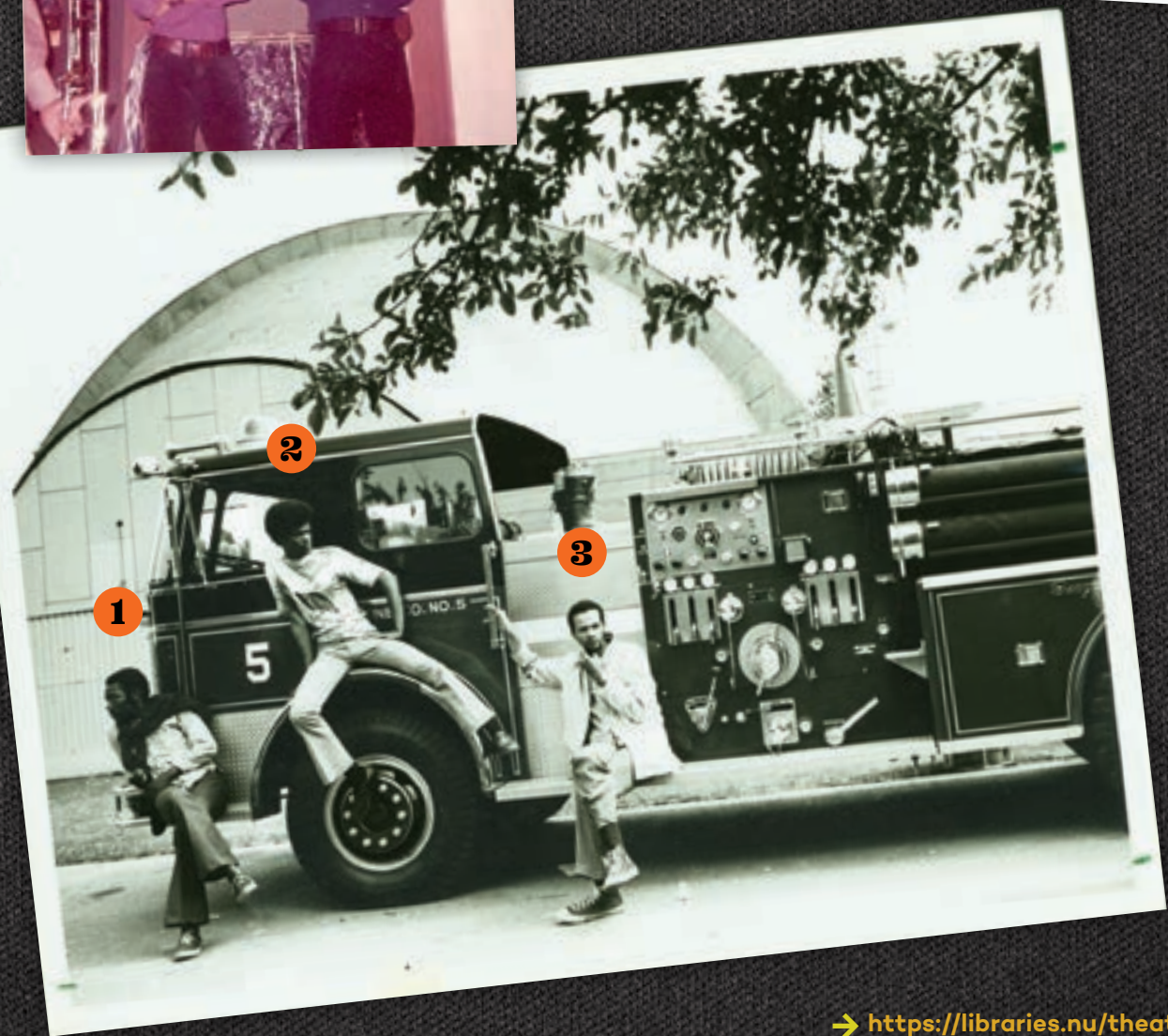
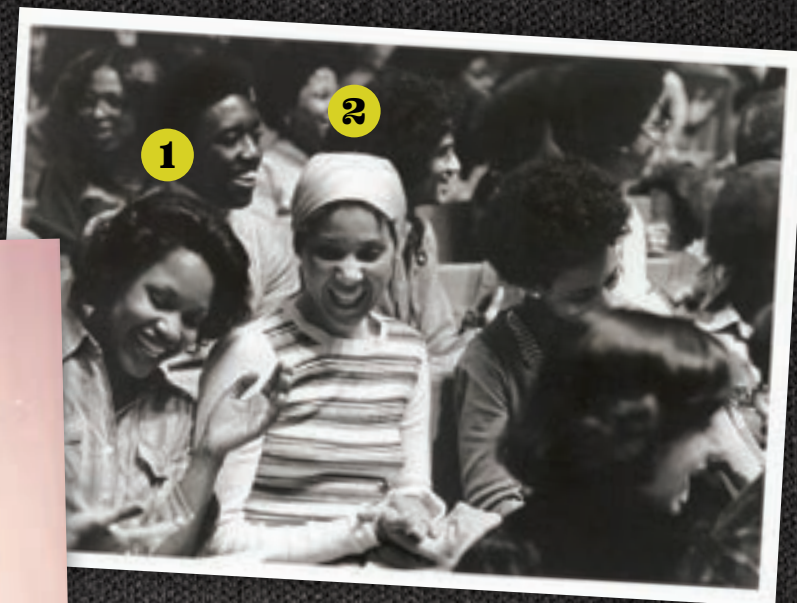
When asked whether her 41 years at Northwestern helped create more welcoming conditions for Black students and Black scholarship at the University, Bethel paused before replying.

"I'd like to think so," she said. "But there's this phrase from my youth: the struggle is never ending. We can't say that racism, sexism, ageism, all of these things don't apply here anymore."

Bethel's colleagues, however, are emphatic about her positive impact, especially as an agent for change. Former dean of libraries Sarah Pritchard, who retired in 2022 after 16 years at Northwestern, first met Bethel when they both served in American Library Association governance roles early in their careers. She remembers Bethel as an influential voice in the transformational social and campus movements of their times.

"Kathleen has had an enormous impact," Pritchard said. "She energetically expanded the role of a librarian through her commitment to the academic field of African American studies. She excelled in direct engagement with collections, student services, faculty research, and campus policies. She really went beyond that through her work in many national organizations for librarianship and for historical studies. She has been a brilliant campus citizen of the highest order." ■

If you recognize any of the faces in these photos from the 1960s through the 1990s, email charla.wilson@northwestern.edu.



- <https://libraries.nu/theater>
- <https://libraries.nu/trumpet>
- <https://libraries.nu/firetruck>

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE: UNIDENTIFIED ALUMNI

“I Know Them” project crowdsources IDs in Black experience archives

By Natalia Gonzalez Blanco Serrano '24

University Archives has undertaken a new crowdsourcing project that aims to put names to the faces of Black Northwestern students in photos dating as far back as the 1960s. Charla Wilson, archivist for the Black experience, is spearheading the “I Know Them” project, which calls for alumni help to create a more complete picture of Black student life in the past.

The Libraries recently digitized two large collections of archival photos: a 2018 donation of thousands of images from the Northwestern University Black Alumni Association (NUBAA) and a collection of Northwestern Community Ensemble (NCE) gospel choir photos donated by Ronald Pitts '76. Shown in the photos are Black students from the 1960s through the 2000s attending school functions, singing in the choir, and spending time together on and off campus—sometimes with family members.

The goal of “I Know Them” is to fill a large gap in the University’s archives. “Ideally, it’s an opportunity to seek help from alumni to provide an accurate description for each image,” Wilson said. While Northwestern’s holdings of photos depicting student life already include many thousands of images, information is often missing from photos where Black students are the focus.

Wilson is undeterred. “In digitizing these collections, we hope they will better serve the needs of researchers in the future,” she said. “Now is the best time to reach out to alums who are still engaged with the University and ask them to look through the website and tell us what they know.” In addition to identifying who’s in each photo, alumni are asked to describe what’s taking place, the significance of the setting or occasion, and, if possible, the approximate date.

Some of the NCE photos, Wilson has learned, were taken on the ensemble’s annual spring tours. “They would go across the country, mostly to their hometown churches, to sing there during spring break. Their families would often attend the concerts, but it can be hard to get details, like whose family is in the photo.”

Certain snippets from the past have already come in handy, Wilson said. Kathryn Ogletree '71, PhD '76, who was president of the Black student group For Members Only during the 1968 student takeover of the bursar’s office, was identified in multiple photos, which were used for publicity purposes in 2018 when Ogletree was invited to the 50th anniversary observance of that event. Wilson said it was wonderful “to see that alums could spot Kathryn among the images.”

The history of Black students on campus is a source of pride for Black alumni, Wilson added, because it tells how earlier generations achieved progress and moved Northwestern forward. “These were people who fought for Black student spaces and resources, and they continue to advocate for those causes—even years after leaving Northwestern—for the sake of current students.”

Currently, the growing collection of photos to be digitized and processed for University Archives is best suited “for decorative purposes only”; it can’t be expected to serve the needs of researchers until more information is gathered. Thus, Wilson sees the project as an ongoing, open-ended effort—as well as an outreach opportunity to engage alumni with University Archives.

During Homecoming 2022, Wilson set up a display of photos at the Black House and distributed forms for alumni to fill in with the names of people they recognized, and she intends to do the same at future alumni events. “So far, we’ve have had about 100 responses through the forms,” she says, “but we’re still looking for more information.”

Although some alumni are hesitant to reconnect with an institution that they perceive as having failed to support them as students, Wilson has high hopes for “I Know Them” and other efforts to draw them in.

“NUBAA is doing a lot of work to repair those relationships,” she said. “Certainly, alums were excited to return to campus during Homecoming 2022, especially to see the newly renovated Black House.” She adds that “I Know Them” has enabled her to connect with alumni and students from the past who otherwise would have been lost to anonymity.

Slowly but surely, “I Know Them” is disturbing the settled dust of history, and Wilson is determined to wipe that dust away before it’s too late. ■

To view all “I Know Them” images, visit <https://sites.northwestern.edu/studentlifepotos>



→ <https://libraries.nu/BlackHouse>
 → <https://libraries.nu/80sBlackHouse>



→ <https://libraries.nu/90sFormal>
 → <https://libraries.nu/formal>
 → <https://libraries.nu/intramural>



Small changes, big improvements

The UX librarian works in the background, with results that are easy to grasp



User experience librarian Frank Sweis

Imagine if someone moved the University Library entrance closer to your parking spot. You'd notice the difference, right?

But every day, specialists at the Libraries make any number of service improvements that are practical and impactful despite often being nigh imperceptible.

Welcome to the world of the user experience (UX) librarian.

Frank Sweis joined the Libraries in March 2020 after working as a UX analyst for Northwestern University Information Technology and, before that, at DePaul University. As Northwestern's UX librarian, he's leading conversations about how students, faculty, and other researchers find the resources they need and how that user experience can be made faster, easier, and more accessible.

"We try to center our patrons in our decisions," Sweis said. "We want our library search systems to be welcoming to folks, whether you're

a PhD student with heavy research needs or an undergraduate who's rarely used a library."

UX comes into play wherever library users and library technologies and services meet, focusing on matters ranging from browser plugins to accessibility accommodations. No human-computer interaction is too small to be subjected to UX analysis.

For example, if you're using NUsearch (the library catalog) to locate Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, you might click on the topmost result—only to be momentarily annoyed to realize, like many other NUsearch users before you, that the link takes you to a book review of *Jane Eyre*, not to the book itself.

"It just felt so frustrating to get fooled by an article," Sweis said. Why should a book review, like a sly doppelgänger of Brontë's classic, take precedence over the real thing? "That just sticks in your craw, right?"

NUsearch's "book reviews first" behavior was a quirk of the software's way of prioritizing search results. After hearing about it, Sweis took action. When usage data revealed that only 10 percent of catalog users adjusted the filter settings to exclude reviews—suggesting that probably few users were even aware of the option—Sweis consulted with the library staff committee that implements the

catalog software; then, just like that, a technician turned off book reviews as a search result. (Users can still choose to include them if they prefer.)

But wait—there's more for the UX librarian to do. Your *Jane Eyre* search will still bring up films, television adaptations, plays, critical analyses, and even a score for a 2013 opera; does the interface help you distinguish among those results quickly? To ensure that it does, Sweis collaborated with the NUsearch team—specifically, web developer Alice Tippit, who is also an artist—to design icons that make multimedia, scores, and articles easy to identify at first glance.

The UX librarian relies on both qualitative and quantitative research tools to analyze how people engage with an interface or take in information, Sweis said. The more user input available, the better the analysis; the better the analysis, the better the behind-the-scenes UX decisions it informs.

"Being surrounded by students is a benefit we use to our advantage," Sweis said. By promising modest compensation, Sweis can recruit student participants for in-depth usability studies that entail 30- to 90-minute interviews about using, for example, a software interface. Students may be asked to share their perceptions of how the

"It just felt so frustrating to get fooled by an article," Sweis said. Why should a book review, like a sly doppelgänger of Brontë's classic, take precedence over the real thing?

interface works, what they already know about it, and how they perform specific tasks.

"Do their responses tell us what we expected," said Sweis, "or are they throwing a curveball at us, showing that our assumptions were wrong?"

Sweis deploys simpler data-gathering methods as well. To assess new software that dictates how card catalog information is displayed on screen, he and library colleagues set up a table near the library entrance and offered free snacks to students who performed a 15-minute on-the-spot "card sort" activity. Results revealed that there was no need to purchase the new software, because what students preferred—a cleaner view of a book's table of contents—could be provided using the existing system.

"I don't think any of this stuff is too impressive when you look at it individually," Sweis said, "but all those microinteractions add up. Our concern is getting folks to want to interact with our services and making sure every interaction is approachable and accessible for all users and experience levels. The more we can ease those microinteractions, the better the experience as a whole." ■



A collection of real impact

Transportation Library holdings link humans, history, and the environment

On its maiden voyage across Lake Michigan, the SS *Badger* ferried passengers, autos, roll-on/roll-off freight cars, and, as a festive flying banner declared, a “solid shipload of beer from Milwaukee, Beer Capitol [sic] of the World.” The year was 1953, and Great Lakes steamship transportation was in its heyday.

Less than a quarter century later, such ferries would become a dying breed. The three railway companies that still operated the service across Lake Michigan were preparing to abandon the *Badger* and other ships like it. That’s when the Interstate Commerce Commission, a federal regulatory agency, mandated an environmental impact statement, or EIS.

EISs hold a near-legendary status among engineers, historians, and environmentalists—as well as their respective supporters and challengers. Since the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, thousands of federally mandated EISs have been produced to determine how, from every angle, proposed infrastructure changes—such as building new highways or dams or

“Because EISs are so holistic, they reveal more than just the facts about a single infrastructure project; they can contain information that you might not find elsewhere.”

eliminating coal-burning ferries on the Great Lakes—could affect people and the environment.

In this way, each EIS becomes a unique, voluminous record of how people and the environment interact, said Rachel Cole, interim head of Northwestern’s Transportation Library, which holds the largest collection of EISs in the nation. “Because EISs are so holistic, they reveal more than just the facts about a single



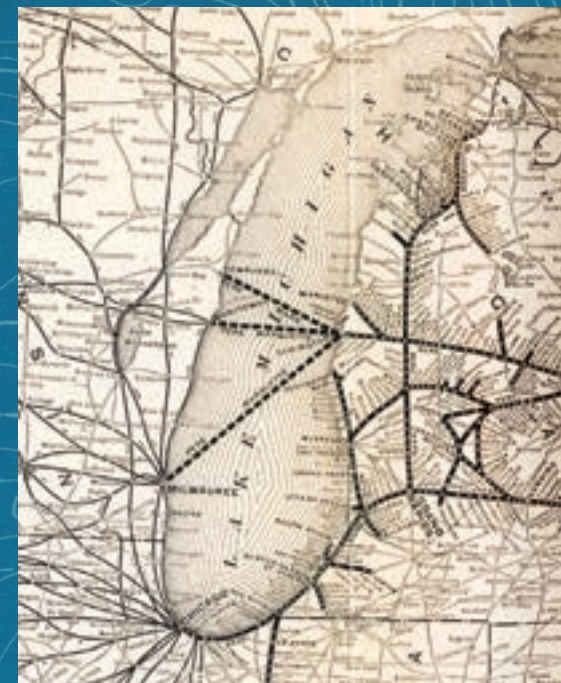
Rachel Cole, interim head of the Transportation Library

infrastructure project; they can contain information that you might not find elsewhere,” she said.

In 1976 an EIS looked at how cessation of coal-burning ferry service on the Great Lakes could affect air and water quality, traffic density in Chicago rail hubs, regional employment figures, and even tourism in affected harbor towns. As with every EIS, the public commentary was recorded in the final report, capturing a sampling of local attitudes.

An EIS doesn’t make a recommendation, Cole said. Rather, it lays out its findings, including alternative options, for policymakers to base their decisions on. In the case of the *Badger*, greatly reduced service continued until the 1980s, while most of the other railway ferries were allowed to cease operation. (The *Badger* eventually resumed operation under private ownership as a car ferry between Ludington, Michigan, and Manitowoc, Wisconsin.)

The Transportation Library’s EIS collection began with a 1992 donation of 20,000 printed EISs from political science professor H. Paul Friesema, whose work



From top: An undated photo of the car ferry SS *Badger*; detail of a map from the 1904 Pere Marquette Railway annual report showing contemporary ferry routes; a 1977 volume of the environmental impact statement analyzing the cessation of ferry service on Lake Michigan.

contributed to the founding of the University’s Environmental Policy and Culture Program. Today the library holds 33,000 EISs in print, microfilm, and digital formats; many of the physical reports were digitized by Google and placed in HathiTrust, a publicly accessible digital preservation repository.

EISs reveal fascinating slices of human activity that intersect with every federal agency, from NASA to the national parks, Cole said. For example, she cited a southern Illinois community that experienced a rise in flooding in the aftermath of a highway project; an environmentalist group consulted the relevant EIS to see whether this consequence had been anticipated. A student recently sought an EIS to see if public transportation options had been considered as alternatives to a Seattle highway project.

Keith Woodhouse, associate professor of history in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, studies American environmental history and uses EISs in his research. Students in his research seminar on American energy policy consult EISs as part of their class projects. Woodhouse calls EISs from 1980 to the present an “absolutely vital” source of information for his current research on California desert regions administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Woodhouse conceded that EISs are sometimes “the butt of jokes about frustrating and pointless red tape,” though that assessment can cut both ways. Activists can use EISs to torpedo, say, a construction project that would displace a community; on the other hand, EISs can slow down projects that environmentalists would like to accelerate, like windmill farms or walkable urban neighborhoods.

Still, EISs have proven so successful at capturing the nuances of complex decision making that many countries around the world have created their own versions of the process.

Ultimately, EISs have a democratizing effect, allowing people from all walks of life, no matter their means, to participate in decisions that affect their lives, Woodhouse said. For instance, without EISs, a group of citizens worried about the effect of a construction project on their local community would have to go out and pay for studies that proved the validity of their concerns, Woodhouse said. “And that would effectively render their argument impossible.” ■

HERE TO HELP TEXTBOOK COST SAVINGS

The Libraries' physical and virtual service desks are obvious sites of support for student learning at Northwestern. Another location for library support may be hidden but is no less crucial: the student wallet.

Multiple initiatives at the University are helping reduce the cost of college attendance. Affordable Instructional Resources (AIR), for example, is a network of faculty and staff—including several librarians—who lead efforts to offer less-expensive alternatives to costly course materials. Because there is always more need, the Libraries support AIR and related programs to ease the financial strain on students.

"As a library, we want to provide free and low-cost classroom resources," said open education librarian Lauren McKeen McDonald. "The need is clear, and we have the resources to create options other than buying a \$200 textbook."

Programs like AIR aren't simply a remedy for sticker shock, McKeen McDonald said. High costs can adversely affect student learning and even student well-being. According to a 2021 Public Interest Research Group study, 65 percent of students forgo the purchase of some assigned textbooks "despite concerns it will impact their grade."

Northwestern students are no exception. A 2022 survey found that the cost of classroom materials causes 53 percent of students to avoid, drop, or withdraw from certain classes or skip purchasing the materials. When the Libraries solicit comments about buying books, many students bring up the "dread" of covering costs and making hard cost-benefit decisions.

"When you hear about students choosing between living expenses and textbooks, you have to come up with solutions," said outreach and community engagement librarian Chris Davidson.

The Libraries can't purchase every textbook, and some are not even available as e-books for digital distribution. But several librarian-led or library-supported initiatives are providing some critical solutions.

Open educational resource grants

In conjunction with AIR, the Libraries help administer a \$5,000 grant program for faculty who offer open educational resources (OER) for their undergraduate classes. OERs are learning and research materials that have been released under an open license that permits no-cost use and sharing with few restrictions. They comprise textbooks, presentations, workbooks, videos, and other teaching tools.

OER grants debuted in 2019, funding eight science, social science, and language faculty members who developed customized classroom materials that cost their students nothing. Each \$5,000 OER grant may be taken as a stipend or used to pay for student assistants, travel, recording equipment, or other OER development costs. Now in its fifth year, the grant program has funded 27 projects, saving an estimated \$669,000 in course material costs for around 4,600 students.

The Libraries also offer OER support beyond grants. Any faculty member creating open resources can receive support from McKeen McDonald in finding materials to adapt and navigating copyright, accessibility, publishing, and other technical issues.



Print and electronic reserves

The Libraries make selected textbooks available for short-term checkout—often just long enough to read a chapter—and compile “alternative” course packs. Librarians work with faculty to set aside selected resources at the circulation desk or identify a package of digital articles and scans of book chapters that can replace printed course packs sold by outside vendors.

Course materials may be available even when instructors don't arrange for it. At the start of every quarter, Davidson and other librarians set up a station in the library where students can receive help to check their syllabi for course reading materials available for free at the Libraries.

E-books

Northwestern librarians now routinely seek out library-licensed e-books that can be made available for classroom use and often field faculty and student requests for e-book access. While many commercial textbook publishers do not make multi-user e-books available for libraries to purchase, some do. This year the Libraries purchased access to a digital collection of 1,100 textbooks from Cambridge University Press, a prolific academic publisher. The license allows for an unlimited number of simultaneous users, and new editions are updated as published.

The Cambridge collection is vast and varied, and it includes books already in use in some classes. Additionally, faculty can choose to switch to Cambridge textbooks whenever feasible.

Faculty outreach

Making low-cost course materials available requires faculty buy-in, which often challenges faculty to rethink materials they've comfortably used for years. To aid the transition, every field has a subject librarian who can work with faculty to find comparable open-access materials or facilitate faculty-directed library purchases that can be made available to students for free.

Associated Student Government textbook exchange

This spring a new student-government-run project (the Libraries' role is that of host) is encouraging students to bring their used textbooks to Deering Library at the end of the quarter instead of selling their materials back to the bookstore. By leaving their textbooks for other students to use, today's students can “pay it forward,” Davidson said, “sort of like ‘take a book, leave a book.’” ■

FOOTNOTES

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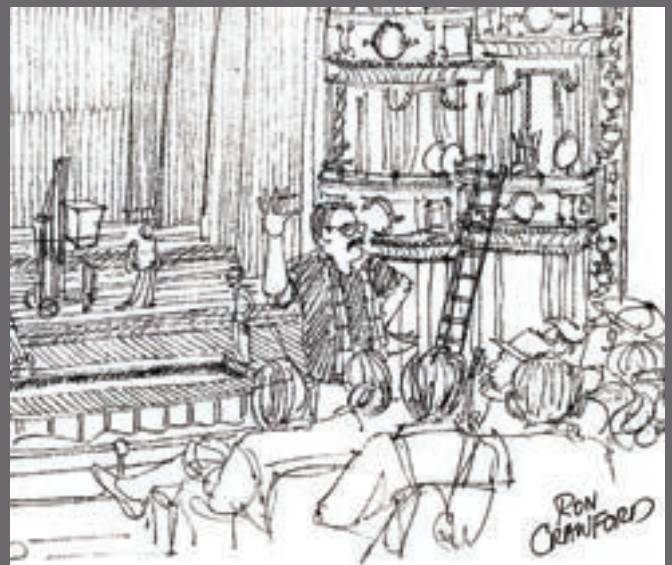
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Beloved Northwestern director memorialized in University Archives

Influential performance studies professor and theater director Frank Galati '65, '67 MA, '71 PhD died January 2 at age 79. Known for irrepressible good humor and an unstinting commitment to his craft, Galati leaves a legacy that touches every corner of the Chicago theater world and well beyond.

Filling 22 archival boxes, Galati's professional papers in University Archives reveal the diversity of his career, including materials from the Northwestern courses he taught, scripts he wrote, and records and set designs for many of the plays he directed or acted in for Chicago's Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.



A highlight of the Galati collection is a sketchbook documenting *The Grapes of Wrath*, a 1988 production that Galati took from Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre to Broadway in 1990, earning him two Tonys, for best play and best director. The sketches are the creation of Ron Crawford, a prolific theater artist and *Grapes* ensemble member.