

THE LIBRARIES AT MASON

SPRING 2023

PEOPLE • RESOURCES • EVENTS



INCLUSION

ALL TOGETHER DIFFERENT

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About the cover

University Libraries celebrate a community that is all together different; designed by Anne Chesnut.

The Libraries at Mason

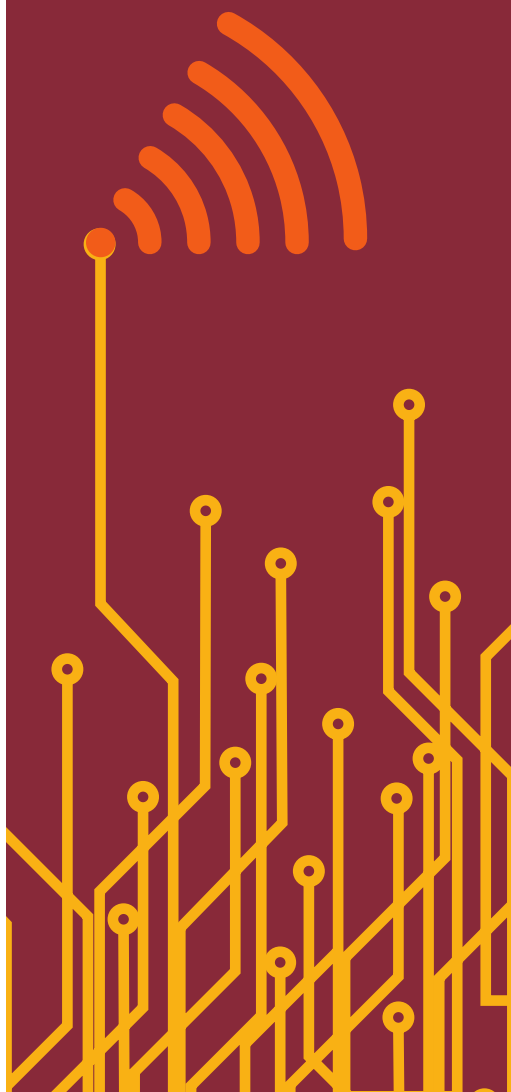
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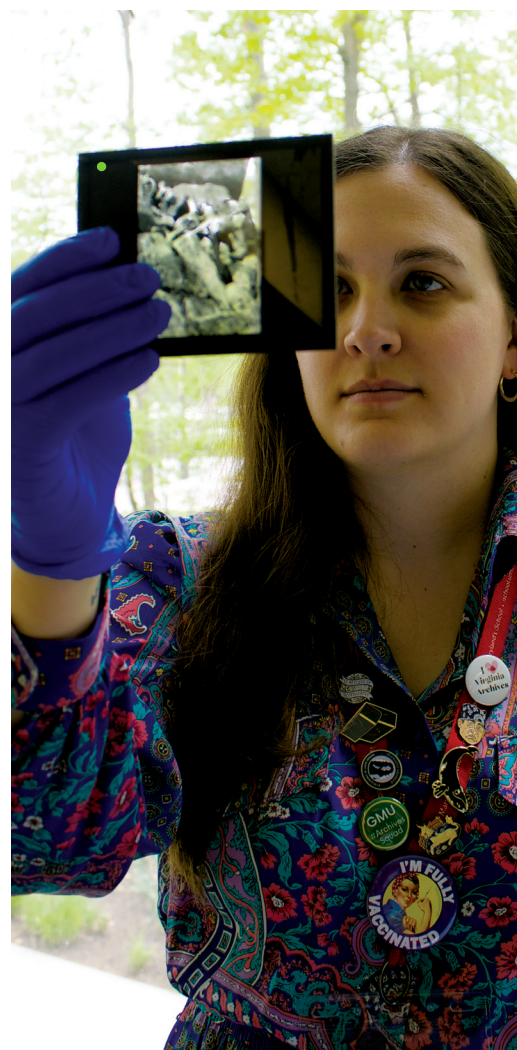
Contact us: Office of the Dean of Libraries and University Librarian, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, MS 2FL, Fairfax, VA 22030, library@gmu.edu.



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FROM THE DEAN

Celebrating Being Different



I love the theme of “All Together Different” that President Washington has chosen to express who we are as a university, and you will see this theme carry through the wonderful articles represented in this issue of *The Libraries at Mason Magazine*. The Libraries serve a key purpose on campus in enabling access to excellence. Just as the students, faculty, and staff of Mason are All Together Different, so should the services and collections be that support the growth of their knowledge. From setting a foundation for information literacy, to providing careful stewardship of collections that support researchers across the disciplines, to enabling the top-level production of creative and scholarly works through a suite of research support services, the Libraries are committed to helping every user in their pursuit of knowledge.

The work of the Libraries also extends to sharing the knowledge and research that the Mason community creates. By building sustainable options for Open Access publishing for Mason researchers, the Libraries play a central role in making this innovative and world-changing research more accessible to everyone in the world, no matter where they are, and through the production of volumes of student essays by Mason Publishing, the Libraries expand the impact and visibility of student creative and scholarly works as well.

Finally, the Libraries provide critical historical resources and research to better understand the history of our institution, region, and the world. This includes the work of the Center for Mason’s Legacies, which investigates and illuminates the complex history of our institution’s namesake, as well as the work of the Special Collections Research Center, which supports the research and teaching missions of Mason by collecting, preserving, and providing access to hundreds of archival collections, including the newly acquired Appalachian Trail Conservancy archival collection, and thousands of artists’ and rare books.

I hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful services, collections, and community that our Libraries provide, and I’d love to hear what sparks an idea for you.

Anne C. Osterman
Interim Dean of Libraries and University Librarian

A CONVERSATION

With Libraries Advisory Board Vice Chair Stephen Levenson



Stephen Levenson grew up in Miami. He earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science with a minor in History from Florida International University, and later he was awarded a Masters Certificate in IT Project Management from George Washington University. His career has focused on managing legal records by creating processes that take advantage of technology in managing and preserving content. He spent his preceding 34 years at the Administrative Office of the US Courts in the Chief Technology Office.

Levenson is active in many professional organizations. In particular, he is very involved in AIIM (The Global Community of Information Professionals), where he served on their international board of directors, led their standards board, was named a fellow, and received leadership awards. Although retired from the federal government, Levenson serves as Chair of an international standards board and is frequently sought as a consultant for several industries and state and local governments. ■

George Mason University Libraries is fortunate to have

these outstanding and generous individuals serving on our advisory board. We virtually sat down for a conversation with Vice Chair Stephen Levenson who began his term on the Libraries Advisory Board in July of 2018.

Each board member has a different history with George Mason University. And they all have a variety of connections to the Libraries' mission. "The Libraries are the core of the university," Vice Chair Stephen Levenson states. Levenson's experience in working in the courts parallels his connection to the Mason Libraries when it comes to collecting information, indexing and preservation. "There's no better way to support Mason than through the Libraries."

The importance of the Libraries is enormous to the community. "The Libraries are our memory institution. They're critical to who we are, what we are, and where we've been," says Levenson. The George Mason Libraries are the center of the university. They are the footprint of our history. "It is important for students to have good accessible resources. If there is something we [the Board] can do to help, we do it. We are trying to make a difference in what we do."

As we move into the digital world, students are becoming accustomed to having resources at their fingertips, literally. The Libraries are moving in a direction to meet student expectations. "The faculty and staff can support the Libraries by becoming a part of the transition into the digital world. You cannot have a university without a library," Levenson states. "The Libraries are all about the core function, intellectual function, and academic function of the university. Students have found the libraries a quiet place to be and a system in their development." With the digitization of the collections and using strategic communications, the Libraries will continue to be a place for students to find what they need to nurture their college careers and also find everything the Libraries have to offer.

The Libraries are a critical part to the community at George Mason University. With the support of the advisory board, the Libraries granted three Student Assistant Scholarships in 2022. The board is a group of dedicated members who contribute ideas to the university. Members aim to help the university in a fundamental, genuine way. They have supported many projects throughout the years that have been a tremendous benefit for students. We thank Vice Chair Stephen Levenson for chatting with us and sharing his insight on the importance of the advisory board and the Mason Libraries. ■

LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

The Mason Libraries have always been the heart of George Mason University. In the past year, our campuses have continued to create a welcoming space for our community by providing access to more information, resources, and events to help build their careers. The Mason Libraries acknowledges our donors. Many of our accomplishments were made possible because of their support. See our year in review at our multiple branches throughout Virginia.



 Fenwick Library



 Mrs. Graves is an avid gardener and dog lover.

Mason Alumna Remembers the Libraries in her Bequest

Marylyn T. Graves, BA '69 embraces her teaching career—a career that she is now making her legacy. It is a legacy she is creating with a planned gift that will establish a library endowment.

The Marylyn T. Graves Library Endowment will support digital resources such as e-books, e-journals and other digital formats in the subject area of mathematics and computer science acquired by the University Libraries. Mrs. Graves received a BA in mathematics in 1969 as a non-traditional student. Upon graduating, she taught math for twenty-three years at Key Intermediate School in Springfield.

Mrs. Graves retired from Fairfax County in 1991. Since then, she established the

Thomas William Graves Memorial Scholarship Endowment, named for her deceased spouse, and the Marylyn Thompson Graves Scholarship Endowment. Both endowments are for students majoring in either mathematics or computer science.

Mrs. Graves strongly believes that scholarships help open doors to student opportunities. Her library endowment opens those doors even wider. In doing so she has created a lasting legacy that honors her dedicated career and her unswerving commitment to academic achievement. ■

Mercer Library

SciTech Campus

Mercer Library was happy to unveil two new pop-up study spaces and three new graduate carrels in March 2023. The study spaces for patrons are in addition to the existing two enclosures that were installed in May 2020, and all four spaces now have electrical outlets and new furniture.



Fenwick Library

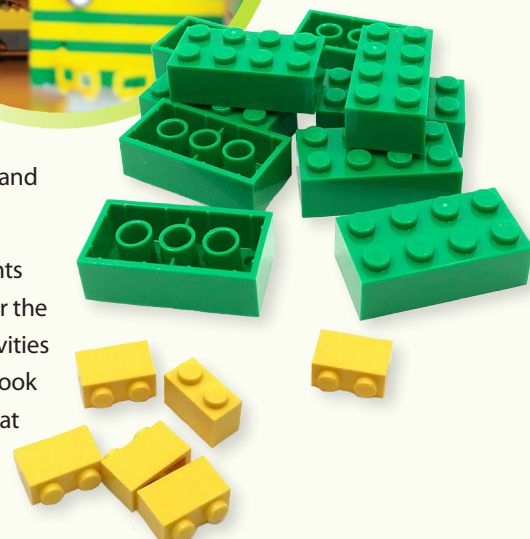
Fairfax Campus

The end of the semester is stressful for all of us. From wrapping up classes and publishing grades, to preparing for travel during winter or summer break, not to mention taking and grading final exams. To help provide a bit of relief as we get ready to wrap up the semester, the University Libraries sponsors DeStress the week before finals begin. This week is packed with events, workshops, prizes, and food for the Mason community. Each semester has a different theme and we work with various partners both from Mason and community partners to help emphasize, build, and expand

our community.

In previous semesters, we have partnered with the LGBTQ+ Resources Center, the Center for the Advancement of Wellbeing, Student Health Services, among other offices and Fairfax community groups!

We are excited to bring DeStress events at each semester's end. Each semester the week is planned with a variety of activities for the Mason Community to enjoy. Look for more information about DeStress at library.gmu.edu/workshops. ■



Mason Square Library

Mason Square Campus

As the Mason Square Campus continues to change and grow, the Mason Square Library is working to adapt and serve the new needs of the campus to allow us to all grow together.



If you are a Mason Square Campus student, staff, or faculty member, please complete the survey to help us work together to provide Mason Square the best library experience possible.

go.gmu.edu/MSLFeedback

INVESTING IN INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE PUBLISHING

Boosting the impact of Mason research

By
Helen McManus



Have you ever tried to read a scholarly article online, but found it was hidden behind a paywall?

If you're a researcher yourself, have you ever published an article in a journal, then found that you could not download your own work without paying a fee? At the University Libraries, we are working to support more equitable access to academic publications. In doing so, we are also expanding the reach of Mason faculty and student research.

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Today, access to the results of academic research depends on a person's institutional affiliation. Faculty may lose access to their own articles when they move from one university to another. After graduation, alumni may not have access to the articles they co-authored with their faculty advisors. The COVID-19 pandemic surfaced the global stakes of restricted access. Scientists around the world need to be able to build on each other's findings. In order to do that, they need access to those findings. Paywalls on research articles limit the impact of research and obstruct the scientific enterprise.

Scholarly publishing in much of the world relies on a "triple-pay" system that benefits publishers at the expense of the public good. First, governments pay to fund most academic research through grants and university budgets. Second, universities (often publicly funded) pay the salaries of the faculty who review that research on a volunteer basis. Third, government agencies and universities pay subscription fees to access the findings of the research they funded, and their faculty reviewed. Mason Libraries pay millions of dollars in subscriptions to for-profit publishers every year. Almost half of our collections budget goes to journal subscriptions alone.

Governments, universities, and libraries are challenging the triple-pay system by advocating for open access (OA) publishing. OA makes articles and books freely available, immediately, for anyone with an internet connection. It levels the academic playing field, allowing scholars and policymakers around the globe to build on the most up-to-date results of academic research. There are several different models of OA, and Mason Libraries are exploring two. Under a model known as gold OA, authors pay a fee to publish an OA article. This model shifts costs from readers to authors. By contrast, diamond or platinum OA relies on libraries to crowd-source journal publishing so that there are no fees for reading articles and no fees for publishing them. Both models have the potential to transform scholarly publishing.

Libraries have always used our collections budget to fund subscriptions and purchases of scholarly resources; we now also use that budget to make academic research—and particularly Mason research—available to all via OA publishing. Our work in this area relies on collective action among academic libraries to benefit researchers at Mason and around the world.

Above

Open access logo, originally designed by Public Library of Science.



Gold OA

State-Wide Investment in “Read & Publish” Agreements

As a member of VIVA, Virginia’s academic library consortium, we are working to negotiate state-wide agreements that cover OA publishing fees with individual publishers. Mason now participates in five gold OA, or “read and publish” (R&P), agreements through VIVA. The “read” side of these agreements provides subscription access to a publishers’ journals; the “publish” side covers the OA publishing fees for researchers at VIVA institutions. By negotiating as a collective, Virginia institutions benefit from greater bargaining power, our limited funds go further, and we boost the impact of state-funded research.

Mason researchers are already benefiting from VIVA’s negotiations. In 2022, VIVA’s two R&P agreements funded OA publication for over 100 Mason-authored articles, at an estimated value of over \$120,000 in OA publishing fees.¹ State-wide, VIVA’s agreement with Wiley—one of the five largest publishers—funded almost 600 OA articles, covering \$1.9 million in APCs. With three additional R&P agreements in place in 2023, Virginia’s researchers enjoy more fee-free OA publishing opportunities.

Mason authors who take advantage of the option to publish their work OA through VIVA’s agreements may benefit from higher citation counts; they can also rest assured that their work will be available to researchers, students, and policymakers worldwide.

Diamond OA

Contributing to Community-Funded Initiatives

Beyond our work with VIVA, Mason Libraries contribute to diamond or platinum OA initiatives, which eliminate fees for both readers and authors. Here we are investing in OA publishing for authors regardless of institutional affiliation and funding.

We specifically seek out scholar-led options with a commitment to inclusive excellence, and with some immediate, tangible benefit to the Mason community.

Our support for MIT Press’s Direct To Open (D2O) initiative is a particularly promising example of diamond OA. In 2022, D2O successfully funded making the entire 2022 title list, over eighty books, OA. As contributors, we gain guaranteed access to the year’s e-books, even if funding targets aren’t met. We also receive subscription access to all past years’ e-books. The equivalent approach in the journal environment, the “subscribe to open” model, is also gaining traction. It looks like a standard subscription: libraries pay an annual fee for university-wide access to a journal. Once a certain funding target is met, the publisher makes the entire subscription year of that journal OA.

Mason faculty and students benefit directly from diamond OA when they read the freely available e-books and articles funded through this model. They also stand to benefit from greater reach—and, for book authors, potentially higher print book sale—if they opt to publish with a diamond OA outlet. Now that major university presses such as MIT, University of Toronto, and University of Michigan are exploring diamond OA, this model is gaining credibility.

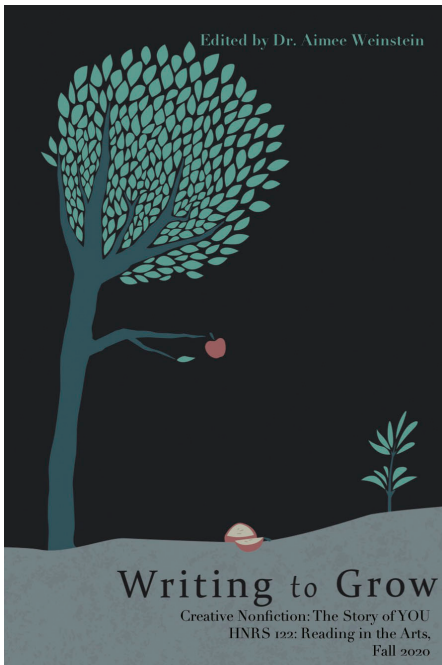
Towards an OA Future

We do not know which model(s) of OA publishing will prove most equitable and most sustainable in the medium to long term. We are, however, committed to supporting the OA initiatives we find most promising with the funds we have available. As we do this, Mason researchers enjoy greater visibility, our alumni have more scholarly resources available to them after graduation, and the entire global community gains access to the insights and innovations produced here. ■

1 ACM-47 articles, estimated value \$70k. Wiley—49articles, over \$150,000.

SUPPORTING STUDENT RESEARCH

Through publication and dissemination



Writing to Grow was published in October of 2021.

The Mason Publishing Group provides services to support the creation, curation, dissemination, and preservation of scholarly, creative, and educational works by and for the Mason community. Through our Mason Publishing imprint, we can more directly support the Mason community by providing publishing services for a variety of projects—from Open Access textbooks and workbooks, to documenting the history of specific departments, to creative and scholarly works created by students and professors. Between the summer of 2021 and spring of 2023, Mason Publishing produced three such volumes of student essays, each in collaboration with a different Mason professor. Each professor collaborated with Mason Publishing for typesetting, design, and coordination and obtained micro-grants to cover print costs. The projects began through coursework, continued through research assistance from subject librarians and library staff, underwent editorial reviews by classmates, professors, and Mason Publishing staff, and ended with a fully formed publication for students to take home and share.

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Writing to Grow, Creative Nonfiction

The Story of You

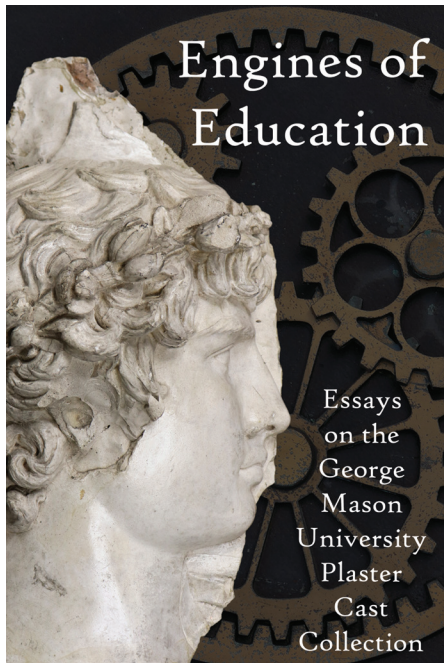
This creative nonfiction volume was done in collaboration with Dr. Aimee Weinstein, assistant professor of Humanities in the Honors College. The essays collected in the book were written in the fall of 2020 by two separate classes of the Honors 122 course, Reading in the Arts.

Writing to Grow was published in October of 2021. Students from the Honors college gathered on November 12, 2021 for a launch party where the books were distributed to current and past students of the Reading in the Arts course and contributors had the opportunity to read their stories aloud to their peers. ■

Engines of Education

Essays on the George Mason University Plaster Cast Collection

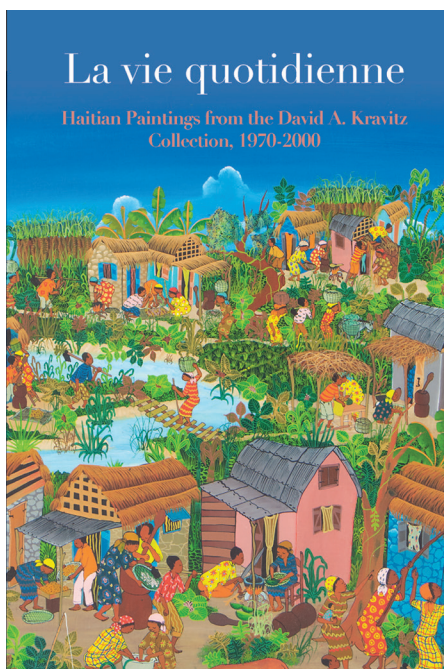
This essay collection is the result of a curatorial seminar directed by Dr. Christopher Gregg, associate professor of History and Art History, in the 2021 spring semester. The essays center around a collection of seventy plaster casts which were loaned, donated, or purchased for George Mason University from the Metropolitan Museum in New York under the direction of Carol Mattusch, Department of History and Art History *emerita* between 2003 and 2010. Spurred by the need to relocate many of the plaster casts amidst the demolition of Robinson Hall, the students in the seminar worked



Engines of Education: Essays on the George Mason University Plaster Cast Collection was published in November 2021.

to create a new catalogue for the Robinson collection, create new labels, and recommend new display locations. The seminar and resulting essay collection gave students the opportunity to research and explore the history and evolving role of structural plaster casts in the art world. In the Foreword to the book, Dr. Mattusch describes the incredible collaboration involved in this project, spanning almost twenty years with the help of individuals within and beyond the Mason community, explaining that “Between 2003 and 2011, more than twenty students from half a dozen disciplines cleaned, restored, researched, catalogued, and installed most of the casts... Judy Ozone and Abigail Mack, conservators from the National Gallery of Art, spent a day at George Mason giving a workshop on how to clean plaster casts properly.”

The project is still ongoing as they are working on quality reviews and plan to continue when Dr. Gregg returns from research leave. *Engines of Education: Essays on the George Mason University Plaster Cast Collection* was published in November 2021 and distributed by Dr. Gregg to contributors and stakeholders in the project. ■



La vie quotidienne: Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970–2000 was published in January of 2023.

La vie quotidienne

Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970–2000

This project was done in collaboration with Dr. Michele Greet, Director of the Art History Program Professor, History and Art History. The project began in Dr. Greet’s ARTH 495/599 Curating an Exhibition seminar which culminated in an exhibition at George Mason University’s Gillespie Gallery, Art & Design Building, on display from April 8–30, 2022. The paintings were donated to George Mason University by David A. Kravitz, retired GMU business professor. Throughout the course, students researched Haitian history and wrote the essays to complement and contextualize the artwork and the Haitian artists represented who are “internationally renowned, nationally respected, and virtually unknown.”

La vie quotidienne: Haitian Paintings from the David A. Kravitz Collection, 1970–2000 was published in January of 2023. ■

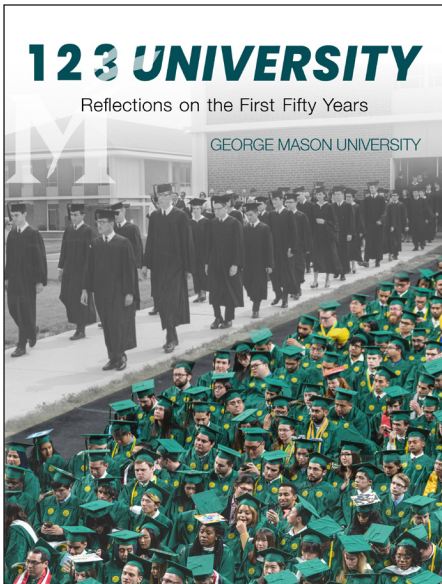
Mason Publishing Projects

If you’d like to learn more about Mason Publishing projects or have an idea for a collaboration or publication, send us an email at:

publish@gmu.edu

MASON PUBLISHING RELEASES COMMEMORATIVE VOLUME

To celebrate Mason's 50-year anniversary



123 University will be available soon on the Mason Publishing site and will be distributed by the University of Virginia Press.

On April 7, 1972, George Mason College officially became an independent institution when Governor A. Linwood Holton, Jr. signed H-210, the bill that separated Mason from its parent institution, the University of Virginia. As George Mason University concludes its 50th Anniversary year, the University Libraries and Mason Publishing are pleased to announce the publication of *1 2 3 University: Reflections on the First Fifty Years—George Mason University*.

In large measure, the book presents content from a long-running archival online project, “*George Mason University: A History*” in print form. The University Libraries’ Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) has been developing collections of unique and rare materials, including a focus on materials significant to the history of the university itself, since 1978. Led by University Archivist Bob Vay, a project was launched in 1996 to create essays on Mason’s history based on these collections, that continued through 2010. Eventually the project moved online, using the Omeka exhibit platform developed by Mason’s Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media.

The book was produced by a two-person team: Andrew Rouner, Mason Publishing Group Director, reorganized and edited the material, and Hannah W. McLaughlin, Design and Production Lead in the unit, typeset the text and designed the layout. A great deal of effort went into the book, but it represents only the top-most layer, as years of prior effort went into the development of the collection itself, as well as into the research in the archives represented in the online exhibit. The print book presents much—but not all—of the material from the SCRC project, reorganized thematically, with some updates from Mason’s recent past and reflections from key contributors, especially members of the Board of Visitors. It is presented in three main sections, reflecting perhaps the most important themes in Mason’s history: Foundation, Innovation, and Achievement. The book is neither purely commemorative and celebratory, nor a formal history. While it does indeed celebrate some of the high points of Mason’s history, it also engages some of its problematic past, from the legacy of its namesake, to struggles with racial equality as it developed and now as it moves forward into the future.

While there have been significant challenges, the undeniable story of Mason has been one of achievement and advancement against the odds. The run to the NCAA Final Four in men’s basketball certainly comes to mind as one example, but Mason’s advance much earlier from a regional college to a PhD and law degree-granting university was arguably an even unlikelier outcome, given the resistance it faced from established interests in the Commonwealth. It was just as unlikely that Mason would become the first public university in the Commonwealth to boast a Nobel laureate, which it



Top to bottom

George Mason College Dedication, November 12, 1964, from the perspective of the audience.

Oliver F. Atkins Photograph Collection Box 3, Folder 10, Special Collections Research Center.

Members of the George Mason University Board of Visitors take part in the swearing-in ceremony at the Inaugural Meeting of the George Mason University Board of Visitors, May 31, 1972.

"George Mason University: A History", accessed December 13, 2022, <https://masonlibraries.org/masonhistory/items/show/179>.

Nobel Laureate, James M. Buchanan at a press conference in George's Hall, now Carow Hall, on the Fairfax Campus on October 17, 1986.

George Mason University photograph collection box 16, Folder 6 Special Collections Research Center.

Right

Horizon Hall before sunrise on the Fairfax Campus

Evan Cantwell/Creative Services/George Mason University.

followed with another. Its most improbable run undoubtedly was becoming both the largest public university in Virginia and the youngest R1 research institution in the country, as well as one of the most diverse, in just fifty years.

Mason both benefitted from and contributed to the rapid growth of the northern Virginia region, as evidenced in work done by the informal group, the "123 Club," organized by President George Johnson, which brought together businesses and other organizations and leaders to advance the university and the region. Named for the Virginia State Route that borders the Mason campus, the group exemplifies the strategic partnerships that have been a key to Mason's growth and achievement. Before and after Johnson, Mason benefitted tremendously from individuals who recognized the potential of the fledgling university and worked persistently to assure its future. There is no doubt there are many more such individuals than those referenced in the book, but the book provides an initial overview of some of Mason's most dedicated advocates, who started and help continue Mason on its improbable streak of success.

However, neither the benefit from the growth of the region nor from dedicated individuals could have alone resulted in the success Mason has seen. It was how Mason used those advantages to innovate in myriad ways that led to Mason's successes in so many respects. That is why "Innovation" is the core of the book: from its foundations, Mason innovated its way to achievement. While this is certainly not the final word on Mason's story, we hope, like Mason's first fifty years, it is a good start ■



Special Event Highlight

April 7, 2022, marked the 50th anniversary of George Mason University as an independent institution. On Saturday, October 15, 2022, lovers of the university and its Libraries came together to celebrate the anniversary with a luncheon and a tour of a student history exhibition hosted by the George Mason University Libraries.

During the luncheon, Bob Vay, the University Archivist, gave a special presentation on the growth of the university from its very beginnings in 1957.

The presentation included details about the start of George Mason as branch of the University of Virginia, its opening as an independent university in 1972, and how it has transformed over time into a Tier 1 research institution with the largest enrollment in Virginia of any public university.

Following the presentation, Vay took the event attendees on a tour of the Special Collections Exhibit, titled *We Are Mason: A Student History*. The exhibit showcased images and artifacts of the university that dated from 1957 to 2022. It was created by Libraries' Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) which is responsible for acquiring, documenting, preserving, and providing access to primary research collections.

A highlight of the luncheon was the recognition by the University Libraries of the 50 years of service one of its strongest advocates, Randolph Lytton, Emeritus, Department of History and Art History. Lytton was a professor at Mason from 1972–2014 and is a founding member of the Libraries' Advisory Board, where he served as chair from 2018–2022. John Zenelis, Dean of the Libraries and University Librarian, said of Professor Lytton, "...he has exemplified the highest ideals of service and was always an extraordinary advocate and ambassador of the Mason Libraries." ■

— Shelley Locke

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

WE ARE

MASON

A STUDENT HISTORY

Special Collections Research Center
Fenwick Library 2nd Floor

THROUGH AUGUST 2022



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1972-2022

MASON LIBRARIES RECIPIENT

LYRASIS Catalyst Fund Grant



The Catalyst Fund Award

The Catalyst Fund is an award program that provides support for new ideas and innovative projects from the LYRASIS membership. It is administered by the LYRASIS Leaders Circle to expand opportunities to explore, test, refine, and collaborate on innovations with potential for community-wide impact.

In July, the George Mason University Libraries' Center for Mason Legacies (CML) is pleased to announce that they were one of five 2022 recipients of the LYRASIS Catalyst Fund.

The Center for Mason Legacies and its George Mason University faculty researchers George Oberle, LaNitra Berger, Benedict Carton, and Wendi Manuel-Scott have been awarded \$39,500 by the LYRASIS Catalyst Fund. This generous grant will advance an interdisciplinary project based in the University Libraries and College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The winning proposal, "Geographies of Inequity: Exploring the Hidden Lives Next Door," draws on CML's "Black Lives Next Door," launched in 2021 with OSCAR support. Two other CML projects have been instrumental in shaping "Geographies of Inequity: the Enslaved Children of George Mason," an undergraduate research initiative which started in 2016, and the Enslaved People of George Mason Memorial, a work of public history recently unveiled on the Fairfax campus. Wendi Manuel-Scott is excited to have "CML use the LYRASIS grant to create an interdisciplinary social justice methodology that incorporates digital humanities and historical research in local communities, and fully engages our students in valuable transformative work."

CML's proposed "Geographies of Inequity" has also received the Catalyst Fund's Sandy Nyberg Award, which recognizes "the highest levels of innovation" in publishing, writing, preservation, and other categories. Dean of the University Libraries, John Zenelis, noted "the collaborative and creative energy that materializes when faculty and librarians work together results in substantive educational experiences for students." The 2021–2022 Catalyst Fund grant competition was international in scope. The finalists included Cambridge University, University of Virginia, Université du Québec à Montréal, and University of North Carolina System. ■

The University Libraries

As a core academic function of George Mason University, the University Libraries serves as both a repository of and digital portal to the wider universe of knowledge. The Libraries fosters innovation, originality, and imagination by qualitatively managing access to scholarship and information, providing expert consultation in the research process, actively teaching the effective and critical use of information, and disseminating research and scholarship through publishing endeavors.

The Center for Mason Legacies

An interdisciplinary and collaborative research center, the Center for Mason Legacies was established by the University Libraries and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The mission of the Center is to preserve and examine the legacy of George Mason IV (1725–1792), his ancestors and heirs, and the people he enslaved. To accomplish this, student researchers are engaged in studying the past and present influences of our university's namesake through a combination of scholarly research, public history, teaching innovation, and community outreach.

UNDERSTANDING OUR PASTS NEXT DOOR

Research initiatives and teaching a new generation of scholars how to find the silences in the past

By
George Oberle

The Center for Mason's Legacies (CML) deploys the work of librarians and historians who engage in fieldwork, classroom teaching, and original scholarship.

Focusing on questions posed by a range of student researchers, the center is currently advancing two projects, namely the Mason Family Papers (The Digital Edition) and Black Lives Next Door.

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Mason Family Papers

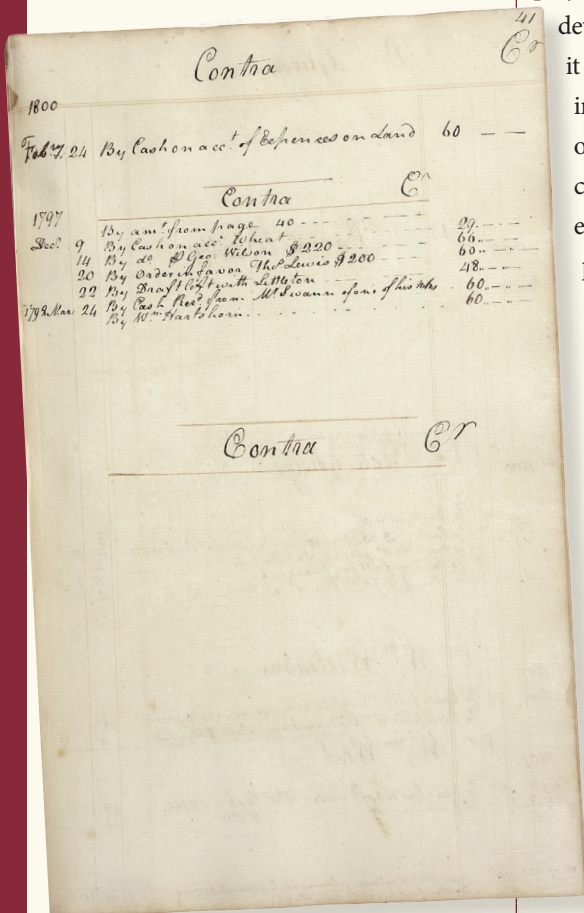
The *Papers of George Mason* (1970), compiled and edited by Robert Rutland into a three-volume set, contains documents generated by and about George Mason and his plantation at Gunston Hall. It is a classic example of a traditional documentary editing project. Despite the significant efforts made by this work, Rutland's volumes do not detail the experiences of enslaved people owned by our university namesake nor does it engage with the lasting impact of the Mason family's role in dispossessing land from indigenous people and their role in regional and national politics. Significant overlooked sources, currently being sourced and imaged by CML researchers in area courthouses and other repositories, will become part of a newly expanded digital edition of the Mason Family Papers, which comprehensively catalogues George Mason IV's property holdings, including enslaved people, and the property holdings of his multi-generational family. We intend to document this long history of the Mason family from the Seventeenth Century through the Twentieth century to better understand the legacy of slavery in the United States in the Mason Family Papers (Digital Edition).

Using government documents in local country courthouses and other disparate source he updated Mason Family Papers (Digital Edition) will feature the importance of deploying methods of family history to reconstruct personal and institutional pasts of our university namesake. Anthony (Tony) Guidone, an advanced doctoral candidate in History and project leader, produced an excellent Omeka exhibit titled, "Enslaver, Investor, and Failed Progenitor: Richard Chichester Mason and the Legacies of Slavery in Fairfax, Virginia" to illustrate how Mason Family Papers (Digital Edition) is disseminating hitherto unknown findings.

Another Web exhibit, created by the CML GRA Janine Hubai under the direction of Gabrielle Tayac and George Oberle, reconstructs the seventeenth-century interactions between the Mason family and Native Americans in the Potomac River region. Titled "The Doeg and the Early Mason Family: Native Land, Lies, and Dispossession," it carefully documents the actions of George Mason I and

Account books are rich resources that provide insights into local communities.

Mason Family Account Book Digital Edition, Book Folio 41;
<http://masonfamilyaccount.gmu.edu/>





A view of the Potomac River on Mason Neck, taken by CML researchers exploring the relationship between Colonial Virginians and Virginia Indigenous People.-

his neighboring settlers who defied colonial law, urging conciliation toward indigenous inhabitants, and instead enflamed animus between the Doeg peoples and English newcomers who murdered Native Americans. These homicides ignited Bacon's Rebellion. A Doeg chief's family members were killed during one settler raid, except for his young son. He was kidnapped by the marauding whites and taken to George Mason I's residence where this boy captive lay in a catatonic state for over a week because he suffered the destruction of his natal community and loved ones. Mason's family and compatriots baptized the traumatized boy. They believed he was bewitched and in need of Christian intervention. We intend to explore further the complex relationships between Native Americans and New World colonists by using the lens of the Mason family to illuminate life in Northern Virginia centuries ago. This research will enhance the contextual essays punctuating the Mason Family Papers (Digital Edition).

A "forensic" component of the Mason Family Papers (Digital Edition) is the "Mason Family Account Book." In 2012, the University Libraries acquired an original Mason family ledger tabulating the business, family, and personal accounts of Stevens Thomson Mason (1760–1803) and his son Armistead Thomson Mason (1787–1819). Included in these records are entries for the operations of enslaved workers on the family plantation, Raspberry Plain Farm, near Leesburg (Loudoun County). Stevens Thomson Mason was the nephew of George Mason IV. Following the acquisition of this account book, the University Libraries created a digitized copy. This rich resource remained relatively

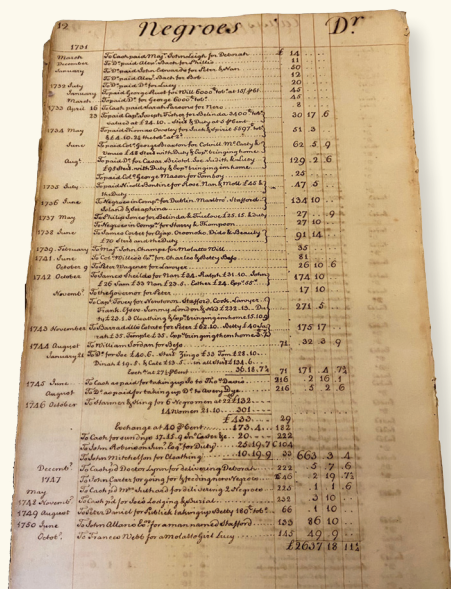
untapped until George Oberle and Professor Cynthia Kierner, with the assistance of the graduate research assistant, Anne Dobberteen, co-taught a documentary editing course in Spring 2020, using the Mason family account book as the central primary source. The students in this class began transcribing entries from this ledger and conducting archival research to contextualize some of these entries. This transcription project continues to this day and will lead to a valuable public online historical tool. Updated versions of the course were taught in Spring 2021 and Spring 2022 and will be offered again in the next academic year.

Black Lives Next Door

In Summer 2021, the Center for Mason Legacies launched Black Lives Next Door (BLND), an interdisciplinary project involving faculty and students. BLND is continuing to re-examine the early years of George Mason College and its successor institution, George Mason University. LaNitra Berger (Director of the African and African American Studies Program, Benedict Carton (Associate director of CML), and George Oberle led the intensive summer phase with a team of six undergraduate students and two graduate research assistants. Black Lives Next Door has fostered important community partnerships, among them an oral history project with local churchgoers focusing on Black communities in Northern Virginia during the 1950s and 1960s. LaNitra Berger has drawn on her work in Black Lives Next Door to create an oral history initiative that involves interviewing former directors of Mason's formative African American Studies program. During a recent year-long Harvard faculty fellowship, Benedict Carton extended BLND research to South Africa, using a comparative analysis of racial (residential and educational) segregation in Johannesburg and Fairfax. He is currently co-editing a special 2024 issue of the journal *American Nineteenth Century History*. Under the title "Slavery and the University, A Global Perspective," the special issue will feature the scholarship of academic forums of Mason CML and Harvard faculty and article length studies authored by professors from a range of institutions—Middlebury College, UGA, William & Mary, Georgetown University, University of Glasgow, University College London, Manchester University, Dalhousie University, and elsewhere.

In April 2022 principal members of the BLND research team held a research symposium called *Black Lives Next Door: George Mason College and the Fairfax Community, Past and Present*. It was well attended by faculty, students, and community members. Sponsored by CHSS Intellectual Life of the College Committee, the symposium presented the research of faculty, doctoral students, and undergraduate contributors to the overall project.

BLND is now branching into Loudoun, Arlington, and Prince William counties, where the goal of CML is to connect community history initiatives with ongoing university research. Fairfax County took notice of this outreach effort and in 2023 agreed to sponsor CML graduate students to conduct research on the complex racial histories of Northern Virginia; this endeavor includes our own institution. CML is currently examining how our campus buildings were first named. Anti-Racist and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) is funding parts of this work. It is hoped that College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and the University Libraries might also support this project in 2024. CML has



A page from John Mercer's handwritten account book housed in the Pennsylvania Bucks County Historical Society.

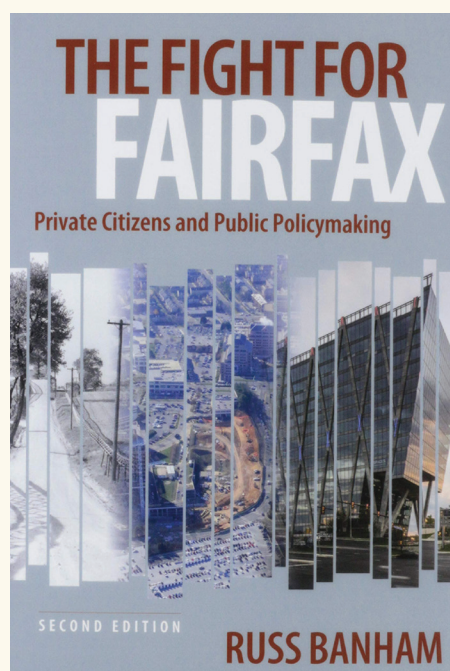
already disseminated early findings here: “By Profit and Loss for 46 Negroes [D]ied’: John Mercer: Virginia Slaver, Bibliophile, and Mentor to George Mason IV (and namesake of Mercer Library, Science and Technology Campus).” In addition, CML is devising a digital history “walking tour” that will complement the university’s planned campus history trail.

Professor Wendi Manuel Scott and George Oberle are co-teaching a new Black Lives Next Door which is focused on understanding the hidden geographies of Black life in the region. The result of this work will be added to the Black Lives Next Door work and is titled Geographies of Inequity which is funded by a grant through LYRASIS. Students learned how to critically read archival sources to better understand the silences created in the archive. The work of some of the students will be highlighted in a research Symposium held on 12 May 2023 in the Main Reading Room of the Fenwick Library.

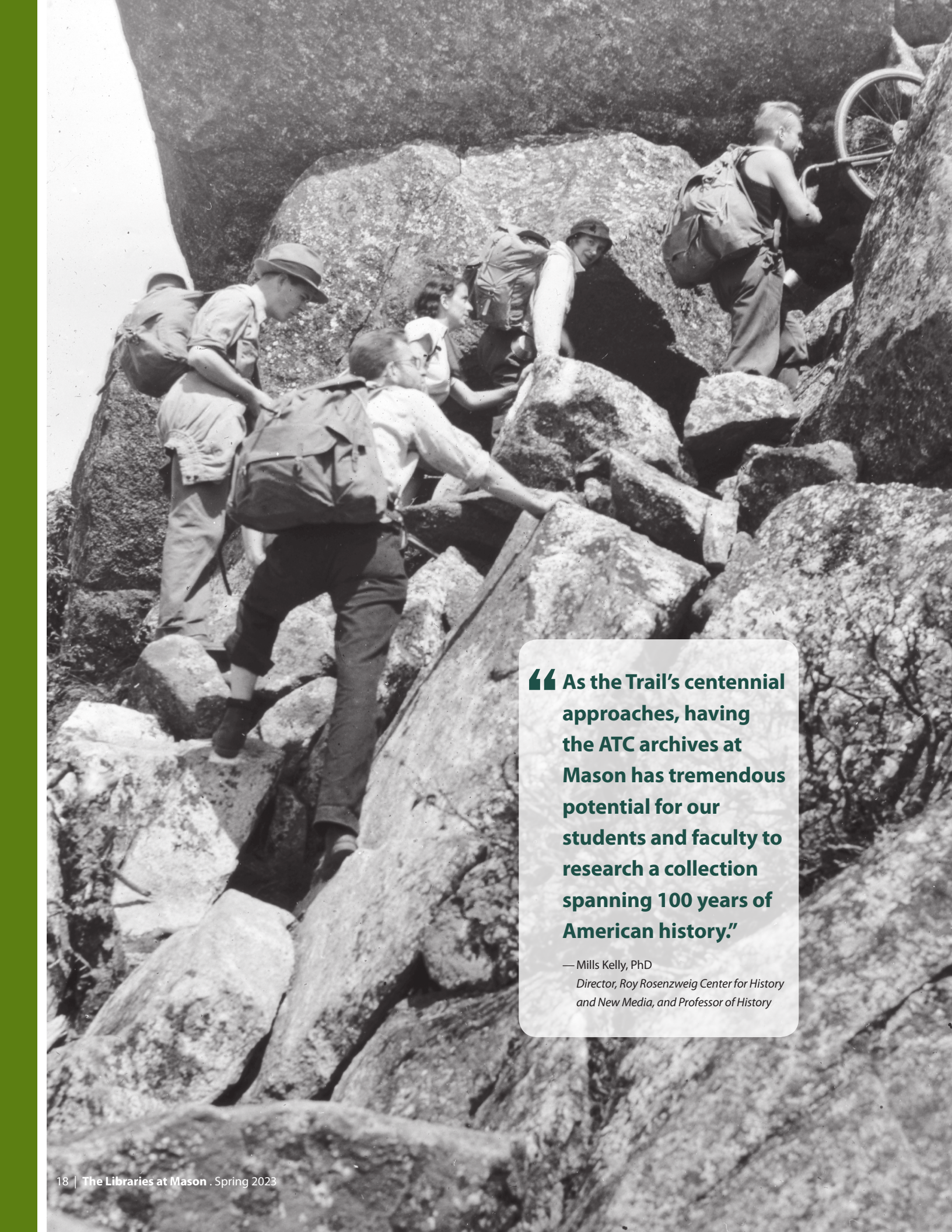
The Center for Mason Legacies recently signed an agreement with Fairfax County to conduct research which focuses on the development of Fairfax County neighborhoods during the post-World War 2 era. This research is a continuation of the Black Lives Next Door work in which the faculty and students at the Center for Mason Legacies closely examine the myth of Northern Virginia being a place which largely escaped the lasting influence of Jim Crow racism. In works such as *The Fight for Fairfax* a progressive vision promoted by local governments initiated a process of “slum clearance,” which altered the face of Fairfax County. The bulldozer became a symbol of this process. By the 1950s, new middle-class suburbs were emerging on razed ground where the memories of prior residents were removed with the earth; many long-time Black homeowners were displaced by these clearing bulldozers. Over the next two decades, prosperous white properties extended as far as the eye could see.

The three-year agreement between Fairfax County and the Center for Mason Legacies develop an online archive, containing little-known oral histories, untapped administrative and legal records, datasets, and artistic materials such as photographs, music, and other dynamic expressions of culture. This online archive currently displays digital projects using open-source software to feature local biographies and performances, community, and institutional narratives, and StoryMaps of changing geographies. The aim of our prospective work with Fairfax County is to optimize government-university relationships that enhance models of collaborative learning and make visible original perspectives of transformative histories.

We are conducting research and making accessible local history to all learners. In the past several years we have conducted special sessions on local history and diversity. This work deepened our commitment to develop model learning opportunities that links findings of CML’s Black Lives Next Door to Fairfax’s declaration that “all residents deserve and equitable opportunity to succeed.” CML will create accessible content on a website, hosted at GMU, supported by Omeka, a publishing software invented by GMU historians to provide a central location online for the organization of diverse evidence and a means for people to share their experiences and analyses. ■



▲
Cover for *The Fight for Fairfax* by Russ Banham



“As the Trail’s centennial approaches, having the ATC archives at Mason has tremendous potential for our students and faculty to research a collection spanning 100 years of American history.”

— Mills Kelly, PhD
Director, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, and Professor of History

JOURNEY TO PRESERVATION

Special Collections Research Center becomes the repository

By
Lynn E. Eaton

The University Libraries Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) is now the repository for the records of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). Originally titled the Appalachian Trail Conference, the ATC is the organization responsible for “overseeing the management and conservation of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.”¹ The ATC operates within a public-private partnership with the National Park Service across fourteen states and over 2,100 miles. What that means on the ground is that the ATC brings together several organizations and Appalachian Trail (AT) clubs that work in support of the trail. It also means that there are some AT-related organizations that work outside of the ATC’s oversight, with ramifications in how the AT is documented at those state and regional levels.

Donation of the Collection to Mason

In January 2022, the George Mason University Libraries SCRC gratefully received the donation from the ATC of its archives documenting the history of the ATC since its inception in 1925. As is often the case, this donation went through a variety of starts and stops over many years. Dr. Mills Kelly, the current Director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM), GMU history professor, and Appalachian Trail scholar, podcast host,² and author of the newly published *Virginia’s Lost Appalachian Trail* (February 2023) worked in the ATC archives for years at their original Ranson, WV location. During that time, he and the ATC historian, Brian King (now retired) built a collegial relationship and Mr. King kept Dr. Kelly up to date on discussions for the future of the archives. Dr. Kelly kept in touch with University Libraries’ administration during that time, advocating for the collection to come here based on his knowledge of its rich archival and research value.



P.A.T.C. Hunt Trail

C0336_glassplates1939_003, Special Collections
Research Center.

Left to right: Thru-hiker walking through greenery, circa 1960s and Thru-hikers resting atop a peak, circa 1960s.

- 1 “Introduction,” Homepage, The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, last modified 2023. <https://appalachiantrail.org/>.
- 2 “The Green Tunnel Podcast,” R2Studios, George Mason University, last modified February 21, 2023, <https://www.r2studios.org/show/the-green-tunnel/>.



Like many collections, the possibility of the ATC records being donated somewhere was simmering in the background for many years. The organization's archivist planned to retire "in the near future" and their leadership was clear that they would need to find an institution that would be able to organize, preserve, and make the records accessible to current and future researchers.

In early 2020, Dr. Kelly notified the SCRC Director that the ATC had made the decision to donate their archives to a repository. The race was on to assess the size and state of the collection and decide if we would be able to handle the intake and management of the collection. Despite the initial pandemic restrictions, SCRC staff were able to make it to West Virginia in September 2020 to physically see the collection and better understand what records would be included in this donation.

Preserving the Collection and Enabling Access

SCRC staff regularly review collections against our development policy and active interest of the Mason community. Our repository collects Virginia history, of course, but also collects in support of academic areas of interest and growth at the university. The ATC collection touches on many subjects, such as Appalachian studies, land management, parks and outdoor recreation, environmental science and policy, as well as public policy. These were strong arguments for the collection coming here, and the library administration, SCRC staff, and the Development Officer began—and continue—to discuss how to support and manage this collection ethically and responsibly. The paperwork was signed in September 2021, and the collection arrived on our doorstep in January 2022. As noted in the accompanying timeline, the first thing needed from SCRC was to open every box and create a list so that we would know just what we had and if anything needed immediate preservation attention. With any collection, but especially with one that has almost reached its centennial (that will be 2025!), there are always items that need to be treated to make them safe for use. Using this accession list, SCRC staff have already assisted a handful of researchers in using the collection.

What's Next

Our work doesn't stop at this initial review of over 700 boxes, and over 100 linear feet of publications and maps currently on our shelves; rather, we are at the starting point of our own ATC journey. Our thru-hike working on the collection, though, will take years rather than months, and millions of dollars to make these materials—letters, trail logs, photographs, glass plate negatives, films and videos, maps, publications, and signs and posters—available to researchers far and wide. We look forward to sharing the collection, and continuing to document the ATC for the next 100 years! ■

TIMELINE

Appalachian Trail Conservancy at Mason



▲
Top to bottom
A glass magic lantern slide, one of hundreds in the collection; SCRC archivists Amanda Menjivar and Bob Vay unroll a trail map; and in addition to over 750 boxes of documents and photographs, the collection also includes maps, trail signs, and paintings.

◀
Opposite
Appalachian Trail Signage

What's next

2023–2025

- Acquire financial support to process collection.
- Hire project archivist(s) to survey entire collection.
- Create processing plan and begin initial work organizing the collection.
- Continue outreach and promotion of the collection to GMU community, ATC aligned groups, and researchers.

2025–2029

- Hire graduates and undergraduates to assist with processing project.
- Completely process the collection, create comprehensive finding aid.
- Plan and implement migration of select media to digital format.
- Acquire funding for digitization of selections from the collection.

What's happened

November 2022

Collection materials returned to Fenwick Library.

May 2022

Collection opens for limited access to researchers.

January 2022

Collection delivered to Fenwick Library.

July 2022

Preservation intervention occurs; compromised boxes sent to preservation vendor.

May 2022

Archival accessioning process ends.

February 2022

Archival accessioning process begins.

September 2021

ATC donates collection.

CREATING A GUIDE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Supporting the ATC and other collections through giving

By
Kathleen Kehoe

A *path to \$1.6M to achieve two-year vision* for broad research access. The Appalachian Trail is a national treasure—the Special Collections Research Center of the George Mason University Libraries is taking action to professionally catalogue, preserve, and make the Appalachian Train Conservancy (ATC) collection widely available to the public.

Since 1925, the ATC has led the public-private effort to build, protect, and maintain the Appalachian Trail. The ATC collection provides extraordinary historical documentation of the entire history of the Appalachian Trail, from the route-selecting correspondence of its pioneers in the post-World War I era

to the documentation of its efforts to secure protection through the acquisition of a backcountry corridor in the last two decades of the 20th century. The collection's extensive holdings include letters, trail shelter logs, legal documents, publications, approximately 2,000 photographs, films, and oral history recordings, and more than 1,000 maps.

The historical value of this collection is exceptional – and so is the archival challenge it presents. It is a large collection consisting of more than 850 linear feet of unprocessed materials.

The University Libraries will need additional archivists and storage resources—both physical and digital—to employ state-of-the-art curatorial and archival practices to the processing, description, cataloging, selective digitization, and overall preservation of the collection.

The current work plan envisions organizing the manuscript materials following the original order that ATC gave to these items. The paper documents and photographs will be housed in archival folders and boxes. The audio-visual material and media files will be migrated to stable and appropriate digital formats following best practices for long-term digital preservation. The entire collection will be catalogued and described in an on-line,

searchable collection guide. In addition, we plan on digitizing many of the holdings to provide online remote access.

Donor financial support for George Mason University Libraries is critically needed to meet this archival challenge, as is supporting other projects. Our initial cost estimate for the additional resources required for organizing, preserving, digitizing, and making the Appalachian Trail collection readily available to researchers, students, trail enthusiasts and the general public is \$1.6 million.

The University Libraries request you consider supporting this major archival project to preserve and share the history of one of our nation's greatest national treasures. With adequate funding secured, the goal is to have the Appalachian Trail collection fully curated, selectively digitized and made broadly available within a period of two years. Our two year goal is ambitious, but for good reason—we strongly believe that this collection is an outstanding component of our nation's cultural history. It not only tells the history of the vision and efforts that made the Appalachian Trail a reality but will also serve as a catalyst and guide for future generations. ■



▲
A mountain vista, circa 1960s.

Supporting the ATC Project and University Libraries

Gifts to support the University Libraries and projects, like the ATC, are the financial lifeblood of our work. We rely on the generosity of donors to help fund scholarships and fellowships for students with financial need, to build and diversify our teaching collections, to hire faculty, and to offer public-facing programs, lectures, and exhibitions. Please consider supporting the Libraries with a gift of any amount.



Donate by Mail

Please make checks payable to George Mason University Foundation, and mail to:

Director of Development,
University Libraries
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MS 2FL
Fairfax, VA 22030



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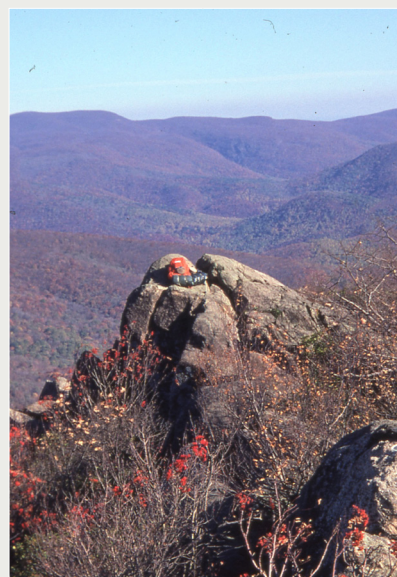
To make a one-time or ongoing gift using our secure online form, visit library.gmu.edu/support.



Planned Giving

It's never too early to begin planning for the future. Contact us to explore giving opportunities that secure a vibrant future for our Libraries. If you have already named George Mason University Libraries in your bequest or will, thank you. Please let us know of your intentions so that we can acknowledge your generosity.

For more information about ways to give to the Libraries contact library@gmu.edu.



Top to bottom

Vista featuring a thru-hiker's pack, circa 1960s.

Maine Appalachian Trail sign, circa 1960s.



Walter D. Greene, builder of the Maine Link

C0336_glassplates1939_004, Special Collections
Research Center.

TEACHING WITH DATA

In the Social Sciences

By
Wendy Mann & Jasmine Spitler

To read about the October 2021 results for the Mason Libraries, see mars.gmu.edu/handle/1920/12109.

The research team from this study have also presented their findings at the Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy 2022, WRLC Annual Meeting 2022, the Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference 2022, and the Association of College & Research Libraries Conference 2023.

Fostering Data Literacy: Teaching with Quantitative Data in the Social Sciences was published on September 27, 2022, by the research organization Ithaka S+R. The research report “explores why and how instructors teach with data, identifies the most important challenges they face, and describes how faculty and students utilize relevant campus and external resources” (Ithaka S + R).

The research study relied on a cohort of twenty university libraries in the United States. They conducted interviews with instructors of quantitative undergraduate courses in the social sciences. Ithaka S+R provided a suggested list of disciplines and departments to consider within the social sciences, but ultimately it was up to the discretion of the participating universities which would be suitable for the study. Overall, 219 instructors were interviewed, 14 of whom were from George Mason.

After the publication of the national report, the similarities in findings across participating institutions was notable. It seems that many instructors are facing the same problems. From these themes, the George Mason team developed recommendations, including:

- Improve outreach & marketing specifically focused on the support the library provides for teaching data

- Work with campus stakeholders on data literacy initiatives
- Connect with relevant campus partners to improve students’ access to software, technology, and data support
- Address the lack of foundational computational skills needed to work with data

The national report includes a more robust list of recommendations directed at libraries, university leadership, departments, and vendors. These were informed by recommendations from participating institutions, and we agree that many of them are relevant and worth pursuing.

Our recommendations are similar to the national report because all the participating institutions had recommendations for specific stakeholders outside of the library. At the Mason Libraries, we determined that our success at promoting digital/data literacy is in fostering these relevant connections across the campus. Through contributing to this study, we confirmed some previously held assumptions and learned insightful details about issues faced by instructors. As a result of these reports, we are hoping to follow up on some of the recommendations both from our report and the national report in providing an excellent data-focused education for our students and collaborating with instructors. ■

THEMES AND FINDINGS FROM GEORGE MASON’S STUDY

Teaching	Learning	Working with Data	Challenges
○ Chief pedagogical concern is helping students to think critically about data and to interpret it; ○ Project-based and active learning strategies dominate; ○ Little professional development in teaching with data.	○ One mid-level research methods course may be students’ only exposure to data analysis. ○ Students vary significantly in motivation, knowledge, and skill levels. ○ Learning statistics, software, and research methods in one semester is difficult for the students and for the instructors	○ Assignments and projects vary by course & discipline ○ Datasets are often provided or directed for expediency ○ Each department has own software preferences but there is interest in moving to open/free packages like R	○ Teaching ethical research and having students collect own data is time-consuming ○ Class design is tricky due to time limitations ○ Many students have math anxiety ○ Many students lack the basic computer skills needed to use statistical software and to work with data files.

ENSURING A SMARTSTART

The Mason Libraries host an annual orientation event at the beginning of each Fall semester called SmartStart! This program was designed to reach first year, returning, and transfer students who may not have had a library orientation experience and to reduce library anxiety by introducing students and the Mason community to as many valuable library resources, services, and library personnel as possible.

In previous years, this program was a “drop-by” orientation table with handouts, free food, and one raffle prize. In the Fall of 2019, the Teaching & Learning Team piloted a new choose-your-own-adventure, library-wide open house iteration of SmartStart. The idea was to present new, transitioning, and returning students to ten choose-your-own-adventure raffle stations located on the first and second floors of the Fenwick Library. These stations provided a great opportunity for each library department to market their own services and programs and to have a chance to open their doors and meet with students one-on-one. There were raffle prizes for students at this event as an incentive to participate. If students visited each station to learn about the service/program/department, they would receive a raffle ticket entry. If the student visited all ten stations, they would be given ten raffle entries and be more likely to win a prize. The opportunity to win a prize and the game quality of the event proved to be highly successful with an attendance of 312 participants. The organizers Kayla Gourlay, Anna Murphy-Lang, and Katara Hofmann presented a poster about the event; “SmartStart: Empowering Students through a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Library Orientation,” at the 39th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience (FYE), Washington, D.C. that year.

The major goal for SmartStart 2022, following the Covid-19 pandemic, was to use the previous choose-your-own-adventure model from 2019 but expand it across the libraries to include a SmartStart station table at both the Mercer and Mason Square libraries. This idea inspired by Denise Klasen-Lopez proved to be a huge morale booster for all library personnel involved and turned out to be a successful way to promote the libraries across campuses. In future, the hope is to continue to have SmartStart tables at each campus for this event each year. Special thanks to Denise Klasen-Lopez, Mel Kujat, Liz Bass, and Audrey Richardson for making this cross-collaboration happen!

SmartStart 2022 was also co-hosted by Katara Hofmann, the Peer Referral Coach Manager and the Peer Referral Coaches (PRCs). A PRC is an academic student employee hired by the Teaching and Learning Team here at Mason Libraries to assist in carrying out various research activities. The idea was to have the PRC's provide students with a



peer-to-peer experience and gave them an opportunity to ask a student worker within the libraries about the work they do and how to apply for jobs themselves.

This was the first interdepartmental, tri-campus event hosted by Mason Libraries since the Covid-19 pandemic began, so the turnout was much larger than anticipated. The attendance number for this event was 173 participants! This number only reflected the amount recorded in the QR code Microsoft form that participants were asked to fill out as raffle ticket entries. There were quite a lot of participants that just wanted to chat about library services or have food but were not interested in participating in the raffle, so the attendance was much greater than what was recorded. The participants were also asked in this form what events and services they were interested in seeing happen at Mason Libraries. Most of the responses were to have more events like SmartStart and more library workshops, books, and author events. There was also a huge request to have additional Mason Libraries Student Book club meetings and for the libraries to host a book challenge. In response, the Teaching & Learning Team has begun hosting more student book club meetings and has since created a 2023 Book Challenge that can be found on a flier in the Recommended Reads collection near the Information desk at the Fenwick Library. The goal for next year is for the Teaching & Learning team to host both a SmartStart event not only in fall 2023 but also in spring 2024.

This event also sparked a collaborative relationship with the Mason Ambassadors, the campus group that provides tours of the Fairfax campus. A representative from Mason Ambassadors talked with our Special Collections folks at their station and are now coordinating with the Libraries to have updated library information for their tour.

The SMAC committee and Kevin Sanders helped secure food and prizes for the event. Thanks to everyone who participated! The Teaching & Learning Team is excited to organize this event again in the Fall 2023 and to launch a SmartStart event in Spring 2024! ■

— Anna Murphy-Lang, Taneisha Mazyck, & Trevor Watkins

EXPLORING ARTISTIC DIVERSITY

In Recent Exhibitions

By
Chen Bi

Fenwick Gallery has showcased a diverse range of contemporary art in its exhibitions from May 2022 to the present. In this article, we will highlight the work of a few artists whose exhibitions stood out in terms of their unique perspectives and artistic styles.

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Stephanie Benassi

Money, Beauty, Rank: The Measure of All Things | Summer 2022

Stephanie Benassi (Asst. Professor, GMU School of Art) is a conceptual artist working primarily with photography. She uses photographic images and processes to conceptually engage the contradictions, limitations, and material conditions inherent to the photographic medium.

Money, Beauty, Rank: The Measure of All Things is a solo exhibition by artist Stephanie Benassi, showcasing her recent collage and assemblage-based works. The exhibit explores the intersection of representation, ornamentation, and beauty in history, media, and design. Benassi drew materials from Mason Libraries collections, including reproductions of botanical prints and drawings. The Urns series presents 32 collages on watercolor paper, where images of women, jewelry, and luxury products are mixed with silhouettes of urn forms, representing a collective death of agency for American women. All is for the best combines elements reminiscent of the mood or vision boards used in advertising campaigns, putting forth a critique of the way the economies of desire reinforce the status quo. American Woman features Meghan Markle's face on a mermaid-like body, referencing the tabloids' portrayal of her as a siren leading Prince Harry astray. ■

Paper collage, acrylic, gelatin silver
collage, 2022





Abpve

Stephanie Benassi's *Money, Beauty, Rank: The Measure of All Things* is at Fenwick Gallery until Summer 2023.



Below

Abdulrahman Naanseh in his studio preparing his pieces for the Fenwick Gallery.

Abdulrahman Naanseh

The Kingdom of Red Lines | Fall/Winter 2022

Abdulrahman Naanseh's exhibition *The Kingdom of Red Lines* is a personal response to the tangled narratives of religion and politics that characterize life in his native Syria. Grounded in classical forms while evolving his own stylistic methods, Naanseh has developed a practice that incorporates research and readings of ancient Arabic language and modern Arabic poetry, linguistic analysis of Arabic words and sounds, as well as direct experience of the social pressures engrained in religion and politics.

In an interview with us, Naanseh spoke about his inspiration for the exhibition. He explained that "The 'red lines' or dangerous boundaries drawn by culture, politics, and religion that people are forbidden to cross. These 'red lines' are held in place by internal and external pressures: those at the top watch those below; neighbor watches neighbor; family watches family. Like mice in a maze, people are held within boundaries as they navigate life, forced to stay silent, and survive only by following the unspeakable rules." ■





Kat Thompson

Looking for My People | Winter/Spring 2023

Kat Thompson's exhibition *Looking for My People* features a collection of Thompson's works, including photography, textile, sculptural collage, and installation. Her works explore the complexities of Black selfhood within the African diaspora and the struggles of finding and maintaining a sense of identity in a limiting binary.

The works presented in *Looking for My People* are a record of Thompson's process of self-discovery. Using materials from personal archives as well as found objects and photographs, Thompson seeks the patterns and parallels that might form an interconnected Black transnational identity, while also forming a new relationship with her Jamaican identity.

Thompson's re-creative practice continues in her textile work, which uses the language of southern African American quilting to fill those historical gaps in a more personal, imaginative, and speculative manner. Using found and purchased materials, she looks for the lingering presence of memories in each scrap to find what belongs together and reconnect what was potentially lost.

Through her works, Thompson presents a social critique of American and Afro-Caribbean family spaces and the concerns of alienation, assimilation, and authenticity among second and later-generation family members. It pushes the audience to question the notion of home in historical, political, and contemporary contexts. ■

Looking for My People captures the act of conserving and preserving to create visual memories to show that we are all connected by complex common threads found within our family heritage.

LIBRARIES STUDENT ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIPS

Three undergraduate students were selected to receive the Libraries Student Assistant Scholarship Award for the 2022–2023 academic year:

- **Andrea Morales**
Peer referral leader with the Teaching & Learning Team
- **Hanuel Song**
Student assistant with Mason Square Library
- **Garima Anand**
Student assistant principally with SP@RC and secondarily with the Office of the Dean



Andrea Morales



Hanuel Song



Garima Anand

About the Scholarship

The Student Assistant Scholarship Endowment for the Libraries was established through Giving Day efforts by the generosity of the Libraries Advisory Board and Mason alumni, faculty, and staff and friends of the university. The purpose of the endowment is to award scholarship(s) each year in order to assist student employee(s) of the Libraries with their educational expenses at Mason.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PRIZE

Jae Hoon Jeong

The Mason Libraries Undergraduate Research Prize has been awarded to Jae Hoon Jeong for the paper “Enhancing Public Trust in the Accounting Profession in the United States: A Review of Literature.”

In making this award, the selection committee noted about this paper, which was written for ENGH 302: Advanced Composition in the Fall 2022 semester, “The topic was timely, and the paper was well written and engaging. The committee was impressed by Jae Hoon Jeong’s use of a variety of scholarly sources for the literature review. It was evident that the applicant spent significant time researching, as Jae Hoon Jeong cited a variety of authors from multiple scholarly journals. We wish all the applicants success in their academic endeavors.”



Jae Hoon Jeong

In receiving this award, Jae Hoon stated, “I wanted to express my sincerest thanks for selecting me as the award recipient for the 2023 Undergraduate Student Research Prize. It is truly an honor to receive this recognition, and I am grateful for the support and resources provided by the library throughout my research process.

The library’s extensive collection of books, databases, and other resources, as well as the helpful assistance of the librarians, staff, and faculty, were invaluable in helping me to complete my research project. Without their support, I would not have been able to achieve the level of depth and analysis that my paper required.

Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity and for all that you do to support student research. I look forward to continuing to make use of the library’s resources and services throughout my academic career.”

Selection Committee

This year’s committee was comprised of Ashley Blinstrub, Student Success and Inclusion Librarian, Jennifer Disano, Executive Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Alyssa Fahringer, Digital Scholarship Consultant, Katara Hofmann, Peer Referral Coach Manager.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Bernard Atieme

This fellowship was made possible by “The Student Research Endowment for the Libraries,” which was a funding initiative of the Libraries Advisory Board. This is the inaugural year for this award, and we are excited to be recognizing the research of Bernard Atieme, a PhD candidate in the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution.



Bernard Atieme

Atieme's dissertation will examine the motivations of rank-and-file party members that perpetuate election violence in Ghana. He plans to use the fellowship funds to travel to Ghana and interview research subjects using qualitative research methods. When Atieme returns, he will require the assistance and expertise available in the Digital Scholarship Center in learning how to use qualitative research software as well as determining how to manage, analyze, visualize, and present the data collected.

Congratulations to Mr. Atieme as the first recipient of the University Libraries' graduate student research fellowship award, along with our best wishes for continued academic success!

Selection Committee

This year's committee was comprised of Alyssa Fahringer, Digital Scholarship Consultant (Chair); Jennifer Disano, Executive Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Carl Leak, Life Sciences Librarian and Interim Head of Mercer Library.

KIMBERLEY EDWARDS

2023 Distinguished Faculty Award

Kimberley Edwards, Head, Database Integrity and Interim Head, Analysis and Metadata Services and Maoria Kirker, Lead, Teaching and Learning Team are the recipients of the 2023 Distinguished Faculty Award. “While it is unusual to have two winners for this award, I completely concur with the selection committee that both individuals are fully deserving of this recognition,” said Anne Osterman, Interim Dean of Libraries and University Librarian.

Kimberley Edwards has been with the Mason Libraries for almost twelve years. She was recognized by the selection committee for her “enthusiasm for cross-departmental collaboration, making connections within the Libraries, and her ability to work through complex questions and issues.”

Letters of recommendation came from throughout the Libraries and beyond. The writers noted that Kim is an “exceptional librarian with an unwavering commitment to continual learning, collaboration, and enthusiasm for the impact libraries can have on students and faculty,” a “gifted editor” and the “regional leader in her field.”

She is said to be an “extremely valuable resource to the libraries, always willing to be involved in a variety of projects and explore new ideas,” and someone who “leverages her own experience to elevate her colleagues.”

Her care for others and thoughtfulness were clearly demonstrated through her planning and management of potential telework projects for all employees in the Libraries during the pandemic, and her robust data analysis and management skills have been essential to projects across the Libraries.

Kim expresses her values through her dedicated librarianship, puts users first, and is clearly incredibly valued by her colleagues. ■



The Award was presented at Mason's annual Celebration of Teaching Excellence ceremony, hosted by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning in April 2023.

MAORIA J. KIRKER

2023 Distinguished Faculty Award



Maoria J. Kirker has been with the Mason Libraries for almost nine years. She was recognized by the selection committee for “how well she embodies our organizational values,” the “tremendous resource she is to our entire community,” and “her willingness to mentor and support.” Letters of recommendation came from throughout the Libraries, across the University, and beyond. The writers noted that Maoria “thoroughly embodies innovation, collaboration, leadership, and fostering a diverse and inclusive environment,” is “an accomplished instructor who is well loved by her students,” is “always eager to face a problem head on and is one of those rare individuals that sees a problem as an opportunity to create something new,” “is an advocate for anyone and everyone who works for her,” and “has a vision for the profession, and also cares deeply about individuals.”

Maoria’s work to found and co-organize the Conference on Academic Library Management, her contributions to the process of revising the information literacy module of the National Survey of Student Engagement, and her broadly recognized success with the Honors College are just a few among her many, significant achievements. ■

Selection Committee

Thank you to the selection committee, chaired by Jocelyn Lewis and including Elaine Ding, Jen Fehsenfeld, George Oberle, and Jack Tieszen.

The Award was presented at Mason’s annual Celebration of Teaching Excellence ceremony, hosted by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning in April 2023.

HUWYMIN LUCIA LIU AND JESSE KIRKPATRICK

2022–2023 Fenwick Fellows



Jesse Kirkpatrick

Professor Kirkpatrick's digital humanities research project,

The Cultural, Economic, and Institutional Determinants of AI Infrastructures and their Consequences in Global Contexts, focuses on the ethics of peace and security, with an emphasis on the ethical, social, and policy implications of emerging technologies. His research is interdisciplinary, cutting across such fields as Philosophy, Political Science, Public Policy, and the Life and Computer Sciences. At its core, it aims to explore two central, interrelated themes: (1) how a suite of technologies, singularly and in convergence, impact peace and security, and (2) what the ethical, social, and policy implications of these impacts may be. Representative areas of technology that Kirkpatrick's research has addressed include AI and autonomy, biotechnology, and tele-operated systems.



Huwymin Lucia Liu

Professor Liu's social science research project, *Governing Nature in China: The Emergence of the Chinese National Park System*, will focus on social change in authoritarian and socialist regimes. Specifically, she explores how ordinary Chinese people navigate through and respond to structural changes through topics on citizenship, identity, governance, and activism.



Former Dean of Libraries and University Librarian John Zenelis remarks, “Each year the Fenwick Fellows program receives a number of creative and innovative proposals from Mason faculty members, and I am grateful for the work of the review committee in selecting this year’s recipients. It is rewarding to read in the proposals of this year’s fellows of their intent to work with two important centers within the Libraries—the Social Sciences and the Digital Scholarship Center. The breath of the research offered in these proposals—is reflective of the Libraries’ range of collections and expertise. We look forward to hearing about the project results next year when Professors Liu and Kirkpatrick share their findings.” ■

About the Fenwick Fellowship

The Fenwick Fellowship is awarded annually to Mason faculty to pursue a research project that uses and enhances the University Libraries’ resources while advancing knowledge in the faculty members’ field. The annual Fenwick Fellows Lecture takes place each spring and is open for all to attend.

For more information, visit

library.gmu.edu/about/fellow.

LIBRARIES FACULTY AND STAFF SERVICE RECOGNITION

The following Libraries faculty and staff were recognized for their service to George Mason University and/or the Commonwealth of Virginia at the 2022 University Day Service Awards celebrations on November 8th and November 9, 2022. ■

► 5 Years

Rebecca Arm, *Head, Document Delivery Coordinator*
(Learning, Resource and Engagement)

Elizabeth Bass, *Mason Square Library Manager*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

Stephanie Grimm, *Art and Art History Librarian and Fenwick Gallery Manager*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

Michael Hunter, *Resource Sharing Librarian*
(Access and Resource Management)

Hannah McLaughlin, *Design and Production Lead*
(Digital Strategies and Systems)

Anna Murphy-Lang, *Teaching and Outreach Specialist*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

Bradley Saunders, *Access Services Specialist*
(Access and Resource Management)

► 10 Years

Lynn Eaton, *Director, Special Collections Research Center*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

Kimberley Edwards, *Head, Database Integrity and Analysis*
(Access and Resource Management)

Debby Kermer, *Data Services Research Consultant*
(Digital Strategies and Systems)

LeighAnn Skeen, *One Button Studio Technology and Spaces Manager*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

► 15 Years

Elyse Becker, *Access Services Specialist*
(Access and Resource Management)

Denise Klasen-Lopez, *Reference, Research, and Instruction Specialist*
(Learning, Research and Engagement)

► 20 Years

Jessica Bowdoin, *Head, Resource Licensing and Delivery*
(Access and Resource Management)

► 25 Years

Lara Bushallow, *Director, Digital Technologies, and Services*
(Digital Strategies and Systems)

► 30 Years

David Alexander, *Fenwick Collections Manager*
(Access and Resource Management)

Kathleen Kehoe, *Director of Development*
(Office of the Dean of Libraries)

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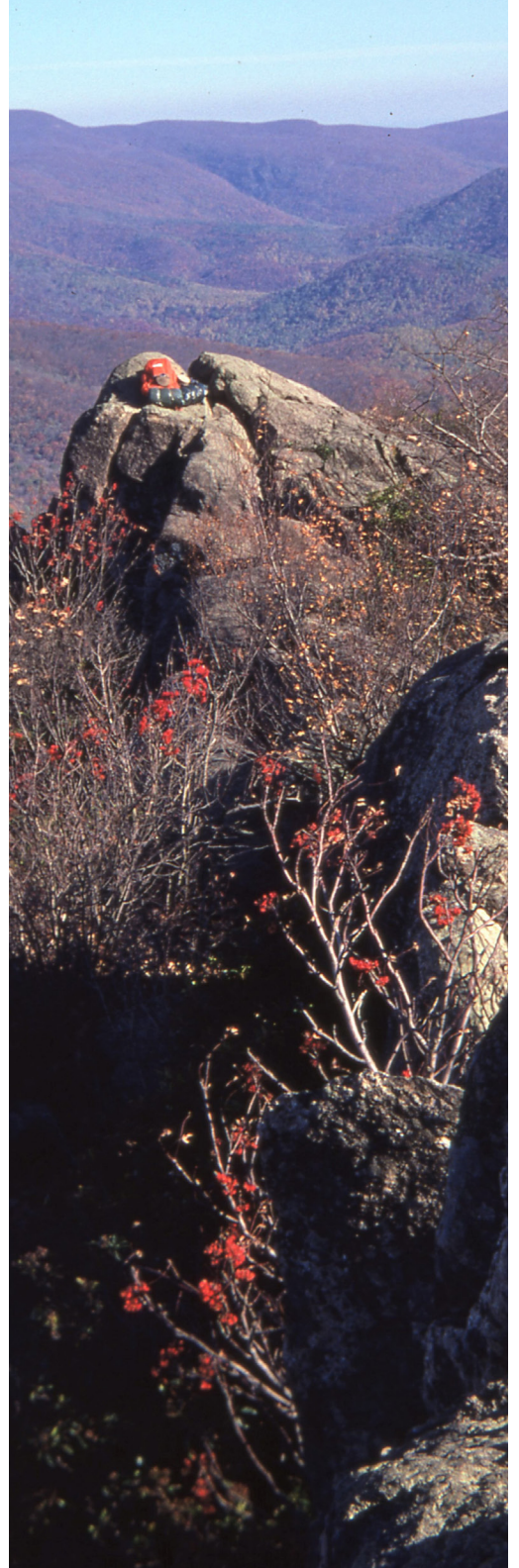
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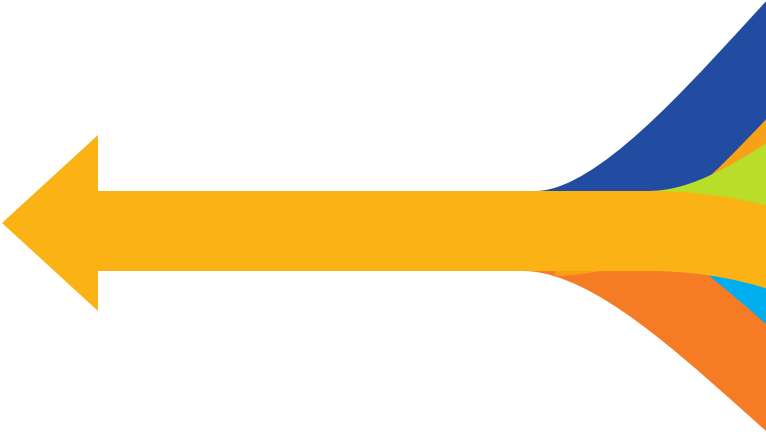




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