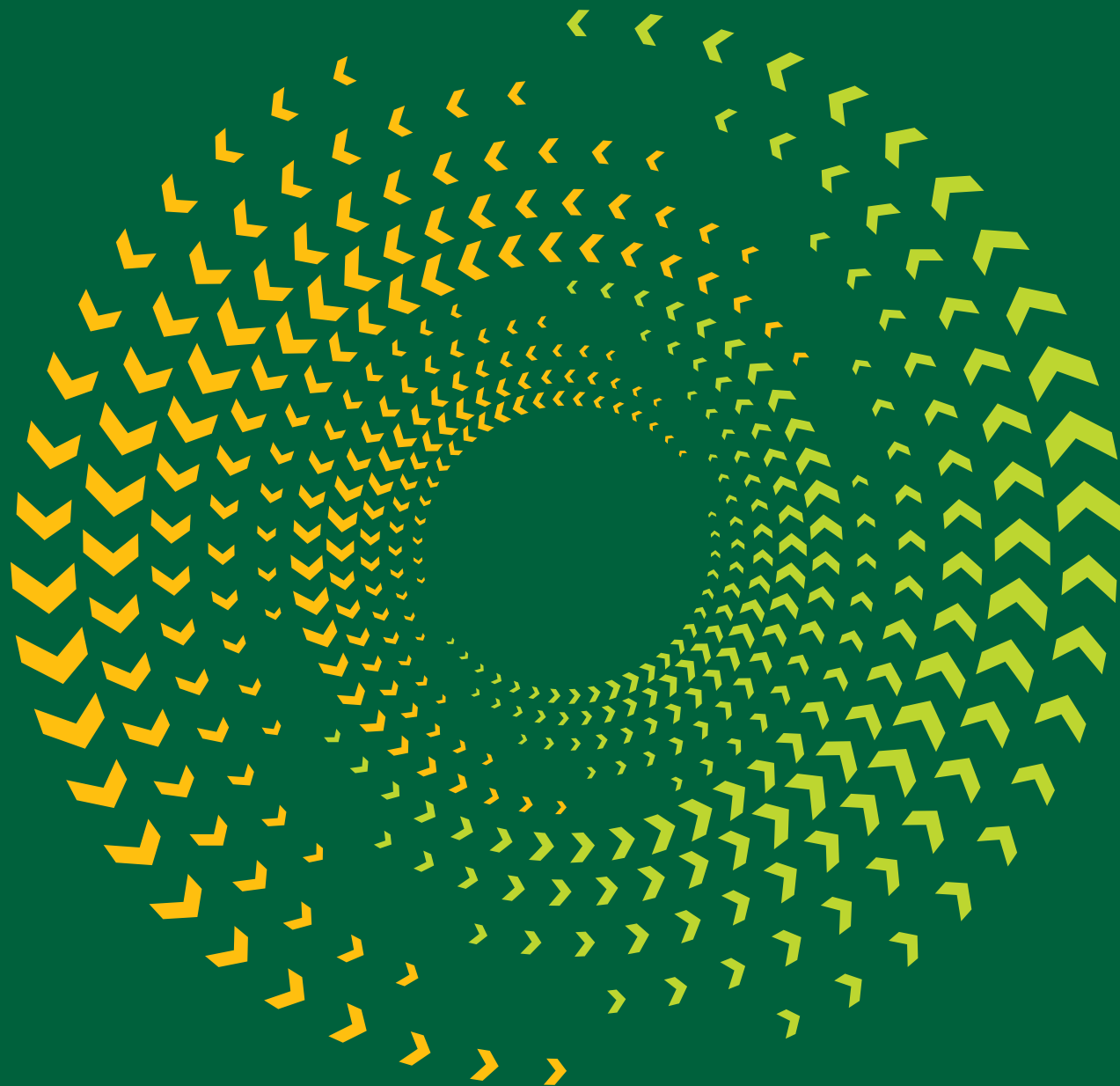


THE LIBRARIES AT
MASON

SPRING 2024

PEOPLE • RESOURCES • EVENTS



HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY

CONNECTIONS



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About the cover

The libraries are the heart of the university—vital, central, and organically connected to every person, entity, and function at Mason, designed by Anne Chesnut.

The Libraries at Mason

The Libraries at Mason is published by the George Mason University Libraries.

Questions or comments?

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FROM THE DEAN

Celebrating growth and preserving history



I love the new vision of the University Libraries, selected through the 2025 and Beyond planning process: The libraries are the heart of the university. We are deeply invested in serving as a connector, collaborator, and transformational partner for the full range of research and learning that takes place across the Mason community.

It is this commitment to supporting growth in understanding and scholarly production that leads the Libraries to provide a wide array of services, from intensive research data support, to curating collections that respond to curricular changes, to celebrating and sharing knowledge and creative expression through events and exhibits.

It is especially exciting to celebrate our student workers in this issue. They are essential to our success in making the Mason Libraries a center for scholarship and a welcoming research and study home for our students and faculty. We are proud to have had a role in their academic careers and amazed by what they have achieved.

The Libraries are here to provide comprehensive services and support—to preserve history and serve as leaders in technology; to provide a place for quiet study and dynamic collaboration. Above all, the Libraries are here to support personal growth for everyone, whatever their goals. I hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful services, collections, and community that our Libraries provide, and I'd love to hear what resonates with you.

Anne C. Osterman
Dean of Libraries

A CONVERSATION

with Libraries Advisory Board Member Kathleen Kehoe



Kathleen Kehoe retired from Mason in 2023 after 32 years. She served as Director of Development for the George Mason University Libraries until her retirement. Prior to her position with the Libraries, Kathleen served 3 years as Director of Stewardship in the University Development Office.

While at Mason, Kathleen served in a range of senior advisory roles including as Mason's Representative to the Virginia Network and as a member of the Academic Library Advancement and Development Network.

Kathleen holds a M.Ed. in Education Leadership from Mason's Graduate School of Education. Kathleen currently serves on the Fall for the Book Board at Mason and on the Libraries Advisory Council for her alma mater the University of Dayton. ■

1 In this new issue, we are showcasing the impact of the Mason Libraries as the heart of the university to our community. Mason embraces a multitude of people and their ideas before, during, and after their time at the university.

Why are these experiences important to reflect on for us?

When I reflect upon my experiences at Mason Libraries I must confess that libraries have always had a special place in my heart. From my childhood days it seems I understood how important libraries are to a community and later—when I was in college—how important they are to the success of students.

It is said that no student graduates from the library, but every student needs the library to graduate. I think this is essentially true. Libraries are more than part of the fabric of a university. They are its centerpiece—and that's especially true of the Mason Libraries.

When I met with prospective library donors in my role as the Director of Development, I always emphasized to them how impactful the Mason Libraries are to the success of our students. I believe this success owes much to the extraordinary diversity of ideas and information that students encounter at the Libraries.

2 Since beginning your time at the libraries, and now as a board member, what are some of the challenges you have seen Mason face regarding diversity, equality, and inclusion and how have you seen them improve throughout the years?

I have to say that in my time at the George Mason Libraries I have always been impressed by our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusiveness. The term “DEI” was not in widespread use when I started at the Libraries, but its spirit certainly was and I’ve never seen it waver.

One challenge I have seen is trying to build a library staff that reflects the diversity of our university. I know from first-hand experience the strong efforts that have gone into attempting to meet this challenge and, based on that experience, I believe it will remain an ongoing challenge.

“...the issue that will continue to be the most challenging for the Libraries relates to the role of communications...internal and external are especially important in an environment where change is constant.” — Kathleen Kehoe

I think the issue that will continue to be the most challenging for the Libraries relates to the role of communications. During my time at the Libraries I could see how ongoing changes in digital technology had the Libraries continually adapting its organization to best serve Mason students. The lesson I took away from my experience is that clear and timely communications—internal and external—are especially important in an environment where change is constant.

3 What are you most excited to see in the future of the libraries and what opportunities do you see for staff, faculty, and students?

I think I'm most excited to see our Libraries transforming into really vibrant hubs for learning, research and the open exchange of ideas. Yes, there will always our quiet library places—such as the “stacks” and study carrels—but there are now many other library locations and tools that provide the opportunities for Mason students to engage and share perspectives. I think these opportunities will help prepare students for the many new challenges they will encounter in a world that is continually transforming.

4 Based off this year's theme of *Reflection...Crafting Identity through Experience*, how do you believe the libraries at Mason continues to impact our community?

One of the initiatives I'm most proud of in support of this year's theme is the scholarship endowment the Mason Advisory Board created for student library assistants. Each year the Student Assistant Scholarship Endowment provides scholarship support to students who are employed by the Libraries.

Also, in keeping with this year's theme is the Advisory Board's initiative to establish an endowment to support excellence in student research. This endowment funds both an Undergraduate Research Prize and a Graduate Student Research Fellowship.

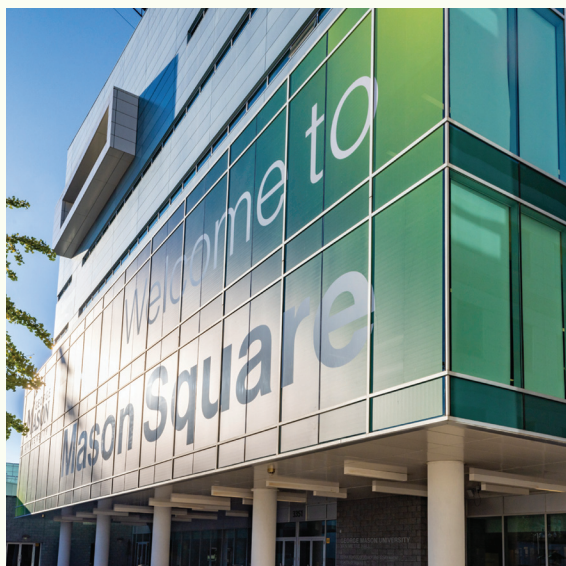
I believe these two initiatives provide a real sense of how the Mason Libraries and its Advisory Board are actively working to help support and shape the future success of our students. ■

Supporting Generations of the Past and Present

With her husband, Kathleen established the John F. and Kathleen M. Kehoe Film and Video Studies Endowment for the Libraries in 2016, to support the acquisition of resources for the study of film and video history, theory, and production. ■



LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS



The Mason Libraries continue to create a safe and resourceful space for the community. This past year our campuses collaborated with our university partners to host events and workshops, and to provide new technology at the library. We acknowledge our donors and their support on these accomplishments. As we strengthen our partnerships and support our community, we are excited to see the growth to come in 2024. See our year in review at our multiple branches across Virginia.

• • • • •



◀
Mason Square
Campus

Mason Square Library

Mason Square Campus

Things are always changing at the dynamic Mason Square campus in Arlington. With the Plaza newly revitalized and FUSE nearing completion, the team at Mason Square

Library have continued to adapt to the needs of their evolving environment. This past academic year saw the completed refresh of Mason Square Library's upper floor. This refresh was part of an ongoing partnership with the College of Engineering and

Computing and involved new carpeting, a fresh coat of paint, and a modernization of the ever-popular group study rooms.

Mason Square Library also collaborated with University Life on multiple events. These included the National Library Week Read-In in April and the recurring outreach and consultation event, Night at the Library, where students stop by for free pizza and meet and greets with their subject librarians.

Much like its home campus, Mason Square Library continues to provide excellent service to its present community, all while keeping one eye wide-open on the future.

• • • • •

◀
Chris Magee, *Social Sciences Librarian*, consults with a student at a Night at the Library event.

◀
Lex Spencer and Denise Klasen-López channel mascots past and present at the Plaza Ribbon Tying and grand re-opening in March 2024.



Fenwick Library

Fairfax Campus

In May 2023, Stephanie Grimm, Anna Murphy-Lang, and Gavin Thibodeau presented a proposal to establish a studio in Fenwick Library for producing DIY (do it yourself) artists' books and zines, including a risograph printer as well as a new location for housing a circulating collection of independent art publications.

A risograph is now located at the SP@RC Lab

Wait, what is risograph printing?

A risograph (pronounced "ree-so-graph") is an alternative printing technology that can feel like a cross between a copy machine and an automatic screen-printing process. It uses inexpensive and more environmentally friendly inks than traditional toner, producing vibrant colors and unusual surface textures that make it an appealing and affordable format for artists and independent publishers. Students and faculty in Mason's School of Art, Creative Writing, and Dynamic Publishing programs regularly work with risograph printing.

This Riso model RZ590 UI is on extended loan from Provisions Research Center for Art and Social Change in CVPA, and includes a partnership with Christopher Kardambikis (School of Art faculty & resident riso expert) for guidance and troubleshooting.

The Printing Arts Lab became available for use by Mason students at the beginning of the 2024 spring semester.



Mercer Library

SciTech Campus

The Life Sciences and Engineering Building, slated to open in January 2025, is a 132,000 square foot facility that will bring many more students and classes to the SciTech Campus, and is expected

to significantly increase foot traffic to Mercer Library. A mixed-use Town Center (University Village) is also under construction nearby.



Riso color swatches

Riso model RZ590 UI located in the Printing Arts Lab, SP@RC Kab.



Training sessions led by Gavin Thibodeau, SP@RC Coordinator, are offered every Thursday from 1–2 pm.

To register visit library.gmu.edu/sparc

A snapshot of Special Collections Research Center endeavors

Left

Photographs and negatives related to Lavinia's work and personal life. The contents cover a wide array of sizes and mediums, including gelatin prints, black and white and color snapshots, and color processed prints.

Right

Donor Dr. Peter Stearns, Lavinia's nephew and former GMU *Provost* and *Professor of History*, spoke about the history of the collection's materials and Lavinia's life and work.

• • • • •

On March 13, 2024, the SCRC celebrated the official opening of the Lavinia Scott papers. This collection of over 70 boxes of correspondence, reports, speeches, sermons, writings, travel maps, postcards, and photographs date between 1900–1997. These materials help to document her life in total, and her work in South Africa from 1932 until 1974. She served the bulk of that time period as the Principal for the Inanda Seminary. During that time period, Ms. Scott challenged the apartheid policies of the South African government, particularly the Bantu Education Act of 1953. She also kept a vibrant correspondence with individuals and organizations that help to show the personal behind the professional in her advocacy and educational responsibilities. Her travel maps and postcards document her travels primarily around Africa and America. Dr. Peter Stearns, former *George Mason University* Provost, who is also the donor and Lavinia Scott's nephew, talked about her life and the value of her records for historic research. Meghan Glasbrenner, former *Lavinia Scott Project Archivist* and current *Processing Manager*, presented on the work organizing the papers, and spoke about some of the highlights of the collection. As is the case with any collection opening celebration, there was an accompanying display in the SCRC seminar room of highlights from the collection. We look forward to more researchers using the collection! ■



One of many displayed artifacts from a special exhibition in partnership with the Embassy of Viet Nam.



Several women demonstrated the traditional costumes of Viet Nam from various regions and eras.

Vietnamese Cultural Space

The SCRC staff has also been working with the Costello College of Business and staff from the Embassy of Viet Nam as they installed an exhibition in the Special Collections Exhibition area. University Archivist Bob Vay's popular exhibit *Slideshow: An Image, A Light, A Lens, and An Audience* was removed after its run of more than five months, and the Embassy's exhibit installed during the week of March 18th. The exhibit formally opened on Tuesday, March 26th, and features books, photographs, and a wide variety of beautiful artifacts from the country of Viet Nam. The exhibit will be available for anyone to visit in person through August 2024. ■



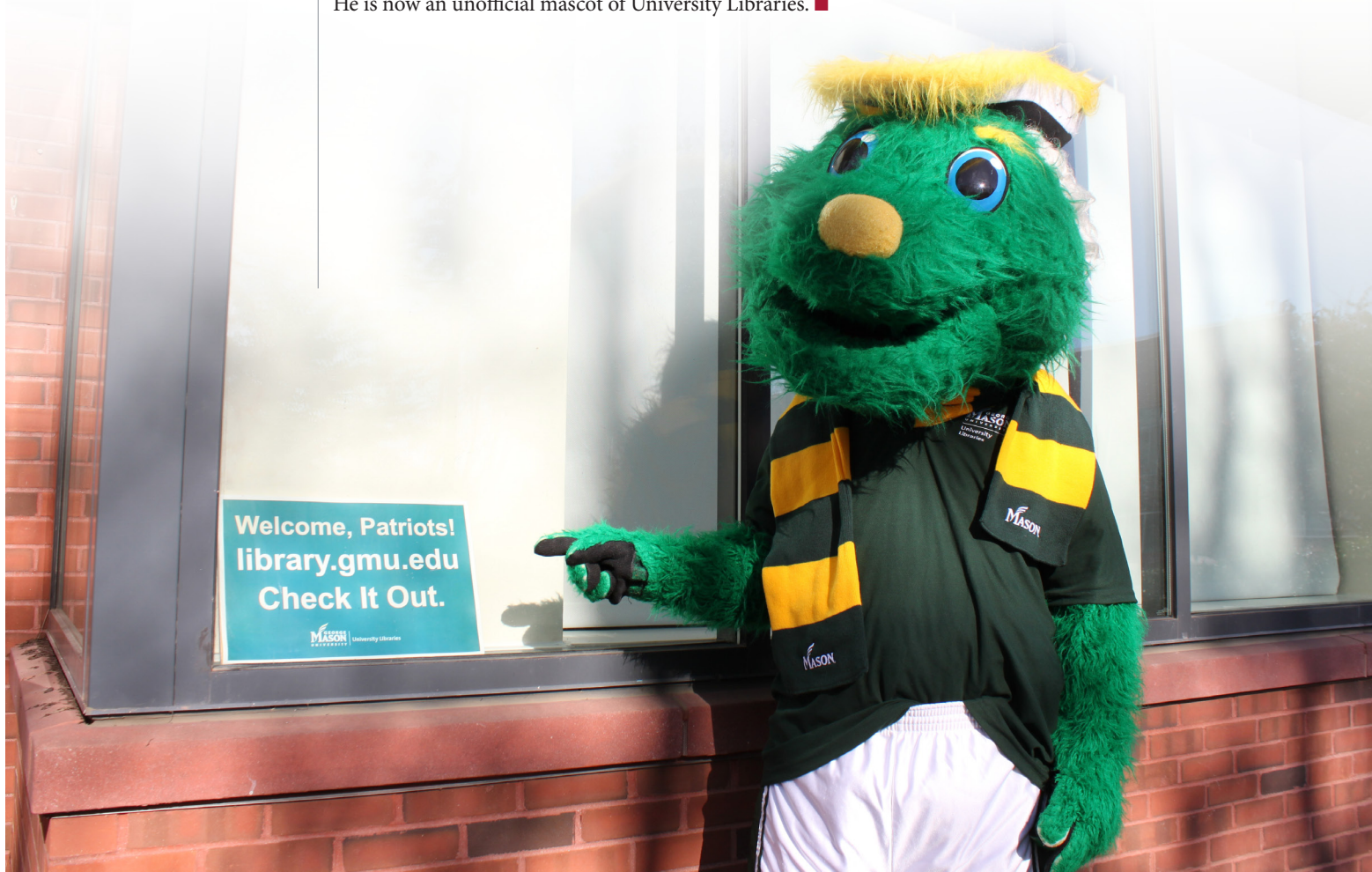
Our Green Furry Friend

In the fall of 1994, a 7-foot-tall fuzzy green creature made his debut at George Mason University's basketball games. He went by the name "Gunston" and initially wore a GMU warmup jacket, a black tri-corner hat, and exceptionally large black Converse Chuck Taylor high-tops. A year later, a second-generation Gunston added Mason basketball shorts and a basketball tank-top to his bushy green frame. Gunston was a character and a Mason institution. He had a penchant for trampoline dunks and surfing down guardrails in Eagle Bank Arena on a boogie board. He could also dance, joining the cheerleaders and Masonettes dance team during their performances at Mason Madness, the start of basketball season. Gunston knew how to entertain a crowd and generate school spirit. During Mason's miracle 2005–2006 season and Final Four Run, Gunston was an integral part of Mason Nation. In 2008, Gunston even recorded a set of YouTube videos that became instant classics.

In 2009, Gunston was retired and replaced with the current mascot, The Patriot. Though Gunston was out of the spotlight, he was never forgotten. Fans lobbied, and still lobby, to bring Gunston back. In March of 2014, the Special Collections Research Center received an email from a colleague at Athletics stating that they were doing some cleaning, found the Gunston costume, and were wondering if the libraries would like to have it. The answer was an immediate "YES" and Gunston was transferred to SCRC in Fenwick Library.

Recently, Gunston has been featured in our social media channels and the libraries' holiday card. He is now an unofficial mascot of University Libraries. ■

▼
Gunston posing outside of
Fenwick Library.





Mason Past and Present is available through the App Store and Google Play.

The Mason Experience *Mason Past and Present*

As part of the University Libraries' 2022 celebration of George Mason University's 50-Year Anniversary, the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) launched a digital project intended to help users understand a little more about their university by learning about its four campuses, the buildings on those campuses, university traditions, and the people behind them.

During the fall of 2022, members of the SCRC began working on a project to help connect members of today's Mason Community with those of the past. Using a new digital humanities platform developed at Cleveland State University called Curatescape, SCRC is revealing the history behind university buildings and landmarks and linking them to the greater Mason story.

Mason Past and Present allows users to visit each of Mason's four campuses virtually, learn its history through photographs, documents, and media, and meet some of the individuals behind their early years. The project uses new and original research and recently digitized collections in SCRC. The project makes use of materials in University Archives, particularly several photograph collections, including the *Broadside* photograph collection (#R0135), George Mason University photograph collection (#R0120), and the Doug Nelms photograph collection (#R0152), among others.

Mason Past and Present is accessible through a mobile app, which allows a user to view related content based on their current location. This content features photographs of the buildings across the years, documents which help detail the history of buildings, as well as sound and video. SCRC staff members Charlotte Corneliusen and Bob Vay conducted research and assembled a collection of essays explaining the histories behind each of Mason's campuses, many of their buildings and landmarks, and people who were associated with them. ■

Arts for Social Change

This fall, SCRC will celebrate and spotlight this collecting strength with a speaker series and an exhibition. In September 2024, SCRC will host an exhibit guest curated by three subject librarians: Cindy Badilla-Meléndez, *Music and Media Librarian*; Stephanie Grimm, *Art and Art History Librarian*; and Megan Reichelt, *Theater, Dance, and Women & Gender Studies Librarian*. Each librarian will review and pull materials from performing arts-related collection informed by the topic of the arts for social change.

We will also be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Zelda Fichandler, one of the three cofounders of the regional theatre Arena Stage, as well as an artistic director, producer, and educator. SCRC holds her papers, which are currently being processed.

More information will be available in the coming months about these exciting plans! ■

OUR NATION'S PAST AND PRESENT

Latest Research from Center for Mason Legacies

By
George Oberle

CML's research agenda employs novel methodologies to probe two seemingly independent yet interconnected topics: the Mason family's complex heritage, including as enslavers of people; and the silenced histories of African Americans in Northern Virginia from the Civil War through the twentieth century. The Center explores these subjects under two umbrella projects, the *Mason Family Papers: The Digital Edition* and *Black Lives Next Door*.

• • • • •

Mason Family Papers

Exploring and annotating the university's rich Mason family archive provides subject matter for a popular spring semester course co-taught annually by Professor Cynthia Kierner and CML Director George Oberle. Students in the course hone document-editing and historical skills by transcribing and annotating sections of the voluminous account book kept by Stevens Thomson Mason (1760–1803) and Armistead Thomson Mason (1787–1819), nephew and great-nephew of school namesake George Mason IV.

Entries created by prior students exemplify how this annotated resource augmented with transcriptions and biographical sketches sheds light on the experiences and relationships

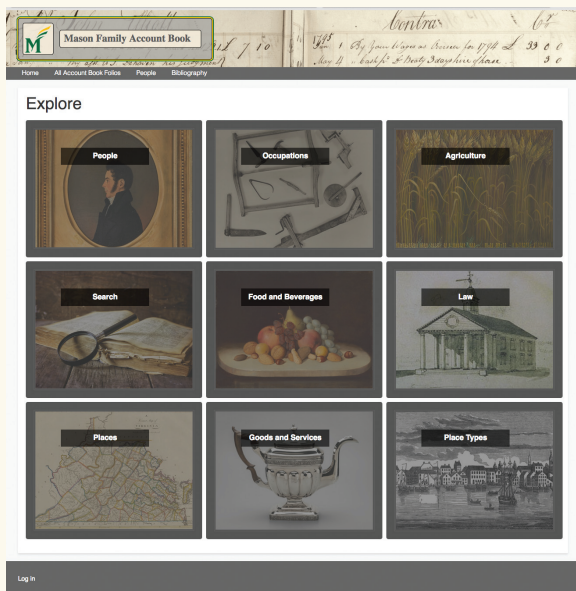
of elites and plain folk alike—men and women, white and Black, free and enslaved. The born-digital edited version of the Mason Family Manuscript Account Book will be provided free and accessible to the public as an offering of Mason Libraries. This rounds out our understanding of the society, politics, economy and people of Loudoun County and Virginia at large in the post-revolutionary era.

Black Lives Next Door

CML's second major research enterprise, the *Black Lives Next Door* website, features new work including a troubling story that, until recently, remained largely buried. The story highlights a culture of racism from a much more recent era right on our own campus, the tradition of mock “slave days.” The web exhibit, “From Slave Day to Derby Days: Racial Ridicule in Northern Virginia and GMU,” is by Integrative Studies master's candidate Jacob Connelly. Another *Black Lives Next Door* web exhibit, “Carow Hall and Black Methodist History,” by master's in history candidate Annabelle

Spencer, recovers the silenced histories of a building on the university's Fairfax campus that Annabelle shows to have been the county's earliest Black Methodist church.

▼
The landing page of the
Mason Family Account Book: The Digital Edition
masonfamilyaccount.gmu.edu



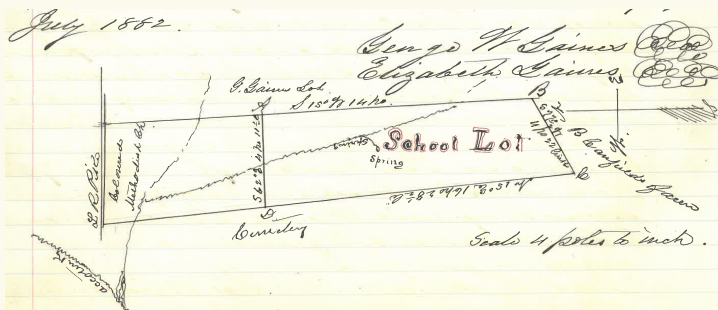
▶ This image of the rededication of the Payne Street Church Memorial Plaque.



▼ This map shows the location of the “Colored Methodist Church” in relation to the cemetery and Bleecker Canfield’s farmland.

*Black Lives Next Door:
Carow Hall and Black Methodist History*

research.centerformasonsllegacies.com/s/blnd/page/carow-hall



CML students and faculty have been taking their scholarship beyond Mason Libraries, producing, and sharing it in important venues for example the 2023 Keystone Digital Humanities Conference and the 2024 Virginia Forum. At the former, Professors Manuel-Scott and Dr. Oberle gave an overview of the work in a panel titled “Using Digital Public History to Uncover Black Lives Next Door,” presenting alongside doctoral student in history Jayme Kurland and Mason Libraries Digital Scholarship Consultant Alyssa Fahringer.

After presenting their innovative pedagogical method of Affective Historical Praxis, Dr. Scott and Dr. Oberle turned the podium over to Kurland. Jayme Kurland showed how mapping slavery’s physical transactions helped her broaden our understanding of the “slave sale site” and the slave trade, as both spatial at the public courthouse and “textual,” while conducted through alternate sites, like newspapers.

In spring 2024, at the eighteenth annual Virginia Forum (taking place in Richmond), six CML students will present *Black Lives Next Door* research they produced with Manuel-Scott’s and Dr. Oberle’s guidance. Three of them will share their projects in a panel titled “Inheritance: Slavery & The Cost of ‘Motherhood.’” A second panel will feature three CML historians, who both completed master’s degrees in 2023, and a master’s student addressing “Geographies of Inequity in Northern Virginia.”

Through these fresh takes on seemingly familiar sites and sources, the Center for Mason Legacies is both raising new questions and complicating “settled” answers about our nation’s past and present. CML is unique in probing Mason Libraries’ rich resources—human, archival and digital—in innovative ways while pioneering innovative methodologies and pedagogy. ■

VISUALIZING GLOBAL COLLECTIONS

Harnessing catalog data to meet the rapid growth of the academic research needs

By
Kimberley Edwards and
Emily Nilson

In 2020, Database Integrity & Analysis and Collections Strategy began discussing ways to harness existing catalog data to help in Collections Strategy's work of aligning collections with current and emerging teaching and research needs. The School of Theater's 2022 shift to a more global curriculum provided the perfect pilot project.

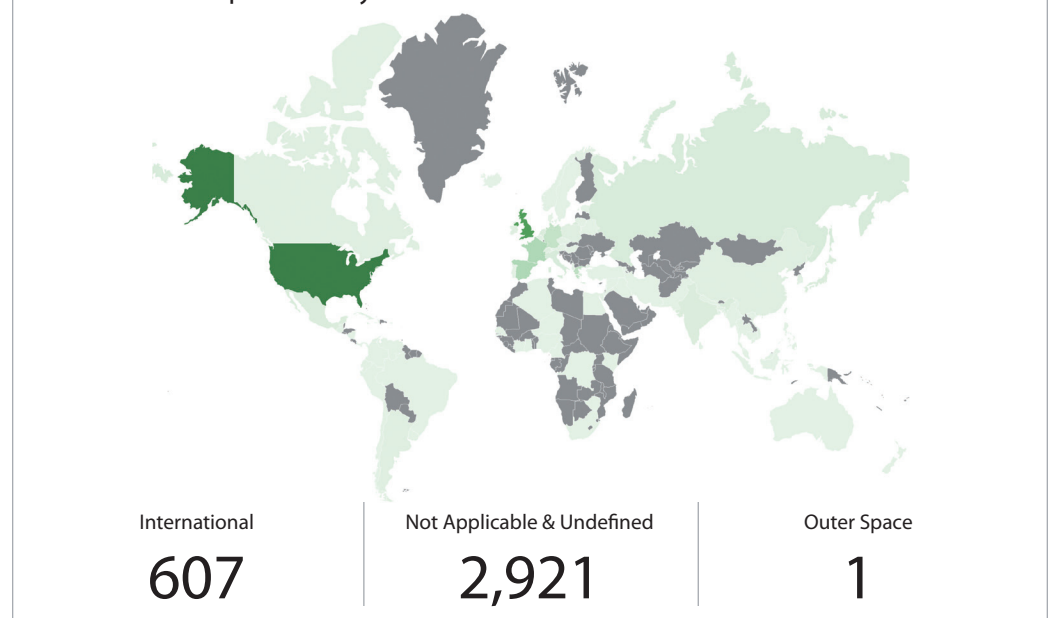
• • • • •

Since the theater collection spans topics, locations, and call numbers, Kim Edwards, *Head of Database Integrity & Analysis*, started by pulling a list of potential titles and associated data from our catalog. She and Megan Reichelt, *Theater, Dance, and Women & Gender Studies Librarian*, collaborated to filter the list to relevant titles. Emily Nilson, *Database Integrity & Analysis Specialist*, then joined the project to create data visualizations illustrating the collection's geographic distribution. Initial graphs included a sunburst diagram showing the number of works by region and country and a line graph showing the number of works by publication date. Emily is now working on creating a sustainable dashboard that will pull live data from Alma and additional data visualizations incorporating maps, fund expenditures and usage. Our goal is to create tools that can be tailored to other subject areas, allowing all subject librarians to perform geographic analysis on their own collections. ■

Map view visualization illustrating the global geographic distribution of the collection.



Number of Titles per Country



A CONVERSATION

With subject librarian Megan Reichelt on the Geographic Assessment Project

1

What is the Geographic Assessment project and what role did you play?

The geographic assessment project came about because of a curricular change. The School of Theater began developing global theater history courses, branching out from the traditional “theatrical canon,” which was predominantly European and American. I wanted to know what we had for each country’s theatrical traditions and reached out to Helen McManus, the Head of Collections Strategy, for assistance. Helen teamed me up with Kim and Emily and we pulled a static list of monographs within the theater call number range and any plays within the literature call numbers. Because the only location fields that were consistently populated were either the subject field or the publication location, we started there. However, we quickly learned that neither would be completely reliable, as a book could be about Japanese theater, but be published in New York, or a play could be about Mexico, but be written by a Canadian playwright. I, and our GPA, Kaylee Williams, came up with parameters for the analysis and manually researched and labeled all 43,000 titles so that we could get the lay of the land and see where we had large gaps in the collection. As the process continues, my role is to help Emily make subject knowledge-based decisions on data parameters, types of visualizations, and particularly difficult classification questions.

2

What inspired the visualization of theatre collections cataloging data?

The visualization idea was inspired by my previous work as a librarian for DC Public Schools. As I was the only librarian for the school, I was responsible for analyzing our collection as a whole and was well-versed in the analytics features of our ILS, which featured data visualizations that pulled from our collection in real time. I was curious if we had something similar for Alma, and Emily expertly began building them. She is now working on new process where we don’t have to enter the information manually, but where analytics can interpret what constitutes a theater book, correctly assign a country and a genre, and show that data in real time.

3

In what ways do you integrate findings from the Geographic Assessment Project and utilize the visualizations in your role as a subject librarian?

I predominantly use these visualizations to look at my collection in different ways and make purchasing decisions. For example, I can see that we have no plays from Morocco, so I seek out any collections of Moroccan plays. This not only supports the curriculum but supports the diverse student body we have at Mason, enabling them to find plays and monologues that might more closely speak to their experiences. I can now also make more informed collections decisions by comparing usage and expenditure by country.

4

How do you perceive the potential of cataloging data in supporting academic teaching and research demands as they continue to expand?

These visualizations have been instrumental to me in helping students and faculty with their research. Instead of having to use multiple search strings and databases in Primo to find resources about a particular country’s theatrical tradition, I can simply click on the country in the data visualization, and it will give me the list of history and criticism, craft books, and plays surrounding their particular art form. This is invaluable, not only for supporting the development of the global theater history classes, and the student projects within them, but also for highlighting traditions that may have previously been lost in the stacks. It also helps me make more precise collection development decisions with limited funds as we expand the scope of these visualizations. For example, I can use the visualizations to see if students are using more physical or digital playscripts and spend the funds accordingly. It helps me to make informed decisions to maximize our limited resources and, more importantly, it helps me to meet the students where they are. ■

LET'S TALK DATA

Text Analysis, GIS, and R

“Workshop attendees were introduced to essential data skills, concepts, and popular tools and methods such as data visualization, GIS, text analysis, and R—all frequent questions received by DiSC from researchers.” —Wendy Mann, *Director*

As a part of the Digital Scholarship Center's (DiSC) mission to facilitate data-focused research and teaching across the university, DiSC offers workshops throughout the academic year that are open to all students, faculty, and staff of the George Mason community.

• • • • •

This academic year Wendy Mann, Debby Kermer, Jack Tieszen, Margaret Calkins, and Alyssa Fahringer offered 15 workshops in two separate workshop series. DiSC staff were ably assisted by DiSC graduate research assistants Chetan Kurmaiahgari and Karthik Ramanujam.

In the fall 2023 semester, DiSC offered a Data Survival Skills workshop series; DiSC staff taught attendees about the basics of working with data and a variety of tools and techniques that researchers can utilize when analyzing data. The weekly workshop series began with a virtual open house in which DiSC staff discussed the methods, tools, and software in which they specialize. The remaining sessions focused on data basics, including computing efficiently for data, computer science for data researchers, organizing data projects, and working with data. Attendees were introduced to the methods of digital humanities and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), tools for analyzing text including ProQuest TDM Studio, how to get started visualizing data, and selecting software for qualitative analysis.

In the spring 2024 semester, DiSC celebrated Love Data Week, an international event in which institutions, scholars, and data lovers celebrate their data hosted by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). DiSC has been participating in the event since 2016 and began offering lightning-round workshops in 2022. This year, workshops included information about selecting software for text analysis, the basics of GIS, getting started with R, and how to begin visualizing your data. ■

By
Alyssa Fahringer

Digital Scholarship Center

The Center partners with students, faculty, and staff by providing research support to facilitate data-focused research and teaching across the university in all disciplines.

Meet the team:

- Wendy Mann
Director
- Alyssa Fahringer
Digital Humanities Librarian
- Jack Tieszen
GIS Librarian
- Debby Kermer
*Data Services
Research Consultant*

Contact us at
datahelp@gmu.edu

Visit our site at
dsc.gmu.edu

Future workshops

While DiSC staff continue to offer a number of drop-in workshops, they also offer workshops by request for groups of three or more.

For more information email datahelp@gmu.edu

EXPLORING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

...and its impacts in academic libraries

Mason Libraries began dialogue around Generative Artificial Intelligence in the summer of 2023, when Dr. Heidi Blackburn co-led the AI/ChatGPT Summer Salon Series, a group of sessions designed to educate employees about these emerging forms of AI.



ChatGPT is a chatbot developed by OpenAI and launched in 2022. It enables users to refine and steer a conversation towards a desired length, format, style, level of detail, and language.



Launched in 2009, Grammarly is a Ukraine-founded cloud-based typing assistant, headquartered in San Francisco.



Google Labs is an incubator created to test and publicly demonstrate new projects. It was revived in 2023 at Google's yearly I/O conference as a new AI search.



Gemini, formerly known as Bard, is a generative artificial intelligence chatbot developed by Google and launched in 2023.

The success of this series led to the formation of two groups: the Artificial Intelligence Community of Practice and the AI Salon Series; the work of each group began in September 2023 and has continued through the spring 2024 semester.

In the summer of 2023, Dr. Heidi Blackburn also proposed the creation of an Artificial Intelligence Tools Task Force, comprised of experts from across the George Mason University Libraries. These experts included Dr. Blackburn serving as chair, Lynn Eaton, *Director, Special Collections Research Center (SCRC)*, Jack Tieszen, *GIS Librarian*, Sarah Bryer, *Systems Technician* and Elena Landry, *Global Programs and Foreign Languages Librarian*.

The AI Tools Task Force is in the process of creating a plan for implementing education, training, and patron services regarding artificial intelligence tools. Their initial work began in the Fall of 2023 and will conclude in July 2024. The AI Community of Practice committee was comprised of Dr. Heidi Blackburn, Trevor Watkins, *Teaching and Outreach Librarian*, and Chris Magee, *Social Sciences Librarian*. This group focused on the use of specific artificial intelligence tools for work and research best practices, giving library employees the opportunity to gain experience using existing and emerging AI tools: sessions include ChatGPT, Grammarly, Google Labs, and Bard. These well-attended sessions, held via Zoom, included a ‘sandbox’ and reflection time, giving participants the opportunity to actively learn, experiment with, and think more deeply about the implications of different AI tools. The team’s work in designing, coordinating, and co-leading these sessions exemplifies the applications of AI tools for our community’s day-to-day work.

The second group is the AI Salon Series, a set of scholarly discussions conceived in the spirit of a French salon, with each in-person session designed to facilitate open dialog about artificial intelligence and what it means for Mason and the global community. This group including Dr. Heidi Blackburn, Trevor Watkins, and Chris Magee, organized a total of nine sessions, with each session focusing on a particular theme, and featuring guest moderators from Mason Libraries. Topics range from AI in the arts and STEM; ethical implications of AI; the hidden biases of AI; the impact of AI on copyright; and AI, deep fakes, and misinformation. These in-person sessions have been well-attended, fostering robust conversation and thought-provoking questions about the intersection of AI with higher education and—more fundamentally—our daily lives. With the move to include an online component for the spring 2024 series, attendance has increased even more, and attendees have begun asking for additional sessions this summer and next fall.

The creation of the AI Salons has provided a space for the Mason community to openly discuss their findings, express concerns, or praise AI, whether you have a science background or not. The Mason Libraries looks forward to continued dialog on the how the evolution of AI impacts our educators and academic libraries. ■

By
Viviana Calderon

AI Salon Series

Thank you to the moderators:

- Kayla Gourlay
Business & Economics Librarian
- Lorena Jordan
Policy and Government Librarian
- Trevor Watkins
Teaching and Outreach Librarian
- Stephanie Grimm
Art and Art History Librarian & Fenwick Gallery Manager
- Megan Reichelt
Theater, Dance, and Women & Gender Studies Librarian
- Heidi Blackburn
Computing Librarian
- Chris Magee
Social Sciences Librarian
- Marissa Burkland
Sciences and Data Librarian
- Emilie Algenio
Open Educational Resources and Scholarly Communications Lead
- Wendy Mann
Director of Digital Scholarship Center (DiSC)
- Jack Tieszen
Geospatial Resources Librarian
- Alyssa Fahringer
Digital Scholarship Consultant
- Debby Kermer
Data Services Research Consultant

HALLOWZINES

Special Event Highlight

By
Stephanie Grimm,
Anna Murphy-Lang, and
Amanda Menjivar

In the fall of 2023, staff from across Fenwick Library joined forces to create the ultimate creative workshop adventure. **HallowZines**, held during the auspicious meeting of Halloween and Virginia Archives Month, celebrated archives from around the Commonwealth while also exploring histories of zine-making and self-expression.



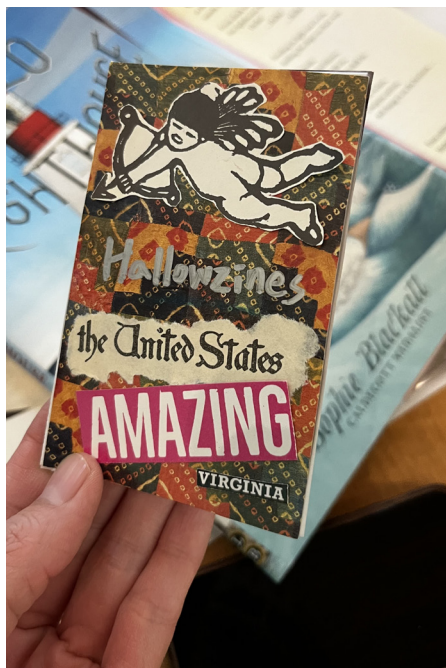
Anna Murphy-Lang, *Teaching and Outreach Specialist*, and Stephanie Grimm, *Art and Art History Librarian*, brought zine expertise and artistry. Amanda Menjivar, *Manuscripts and Archives Librarian*, provided spooky and mysterious materials from the Special Collections Research Center to provide fodder for the art, and Megan Reichelt, *Theater, Dance, and Women & Gender Studies Librarian*, gathered the history of zines as avenues of expression for those whose voices had too often been ignored.

The **HallowZines** workshop covered the basics of what a zine is and provided a brief history of zines. During the workshop, students were encouraged to take time and create their own zine or work together on a group zine that would be archived in the Special Collections Research Center. Amanda also collected deaccessioned and duplicate materials from collections in process at SCRC to be used for zine making. There was also time and space offered to the students to have access and browse through some of the zines and mini comics housed in the Mason Libraries collection.

On the day of the event, the monsters came out to play as students and staff came in their Halloween finery and created zine magic as they listened to spooky tunes. The event was highly attended and praised by both faculty and students. Attendees ranged from individual students, faculty, and staff to the Mentor for Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence cohort. All in all, over 75 participants attended throughout the afternoon, making **HallowZines** the largest workshop the planning group has experienced in their tenure at Mason Libraries. The attendees also created a group zine and expressed great interest in seeing more zine workshops. The hosts of this workshop were excited to meet the needs of the zine community and hope to collaborate more in future. ■

Special thanks to Gavin R. Thibodeau, *SP@RC Lab Coordinator*, for support with our risograph operation and printing, and Soo Paek, *Arts and Humanities Team GPA*, for her work documenting the event.





What is a Zine?

Zines (pronounced “zeen”) are independently-published or self-published books, usually by a single person, created with limited or simple resources (like collage and photocopies).

Zines are often distributed through direct means, either person-to-person or independent bookshops, meetups, or zine fests. While they have deep roots in fandom and counterculture movements, zines have also been taken up by artists, organizers, and storytellers.

The 2023 theme for Virginia Archives Month was *Community Made: Zines and Self-Published Material*, presenting a perfect opportunity to teach students about the Special Collections Research Center at Mason Libraries and highlight how archives could be used in their own zine explorations. ■



Close ups of student zines created during the workshop.

Workshop participants searching for zine materials.



CRAFTING IDENTITY THROUGH EXPERIENCE

By Viviana Calderon

The Mason Libraries have shaped the paths of the many student workers who walked through our campuses. Some continue to share their knowledge at the libraries, and many had paths that led elsewhere. We were able to chat with former library student workers who dedicated their time here as far back as 20 years ago, before the libraries became what they are today. We learned that they all continue to reflect on their experiences and happily pass along their stories to future generations.

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Denise Klasen-López

Reference Research and Instruction Specialist
George Mason University

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I started in the spring of 2004 working at Fenwick Library. That fall semester, I transferred to what was then known as the Johnson Center Library. I worked there for about 2–3 years. When the *Media Assistant* position opened, I applied for it because of my experience as a student worker and working the closing shifts. I started as full-time staff in January 2007.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ The joy and pleasure I feel from helping a student and/or faculty member get the research they need or learn a new skill, that’s what drives me. I have also been very lucky to work with people who support me and mentor me. The people I worked with have been what influenced me to work at Mason Libraries.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ I made many good friends who were also student workers, some who are still my friends now 15 years later. We used to have the JCL Dance Party, once everyone was out of the library at closing time, we did a little dance together to celebrate the day.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ Interacting with the library staff. It all comes down to the people I’ve worked with. The person who was the *Media Assistant* before me was amazing and would always show me how to do things. The staff member who worked in reserves and cataloging, was an inspiration of a human being. She really showed me to fully embody being a human.

"I felt like I could explore different projects throughout the library. Continue to talk to staff members who can offer suggestions and support for your future." — Gloria Dai

Gloria Dai

Graduate Professional Assistant at the Office of
Student Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR)
George Mason University

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ When I was working with Mason Libraries, I worked with VIVA and I supported the OER grant projects, managing the large statewide grants. Another component to my position was that I supported the Anti-Racism Webinar Series. This program was to create a safe space that was accessible, equitable and diverse for the community.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ I had many opportunities to collaborate with different departments and even students. I was able to collaborate with the Fenwick Gallery on exhibitions. The beauty of this space is that it unites people from different communities. I worked closely with the MFA students, we talked a lot about art and healing. This is a common theme and I plan to use it in my upcoming exhibit at Fenwick Gallery.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ That I can translate my experiences and skills from working as a student to my current job at Mason. This was my first time working outside of the for-profit sector, so it was an adjustment on many things. My experience has made me realize that I want to continue to work in this environment.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ I want to help students and I've always felt empowered in all the roles I've had here. I want to continue pursuing opportunities here.



Leigh Norman

Marketing Data Analyst
A cyber security company

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I was a preservation assistant in the Preservation Lab. Over time, I gained the confidence that makes me who I am today. The lab was a safe space for me, where I could create different things and grow, which I never had before.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ It helped me reconnect to my creative side, which also helped me realize that I can do whatever I want in life. This role really unlocked my potential. I learned to just try things.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ We put on the Edible Foods Festival. I chalked the sidewalks, put up posters, and I helped host the event. There were so many moving parts, it was so cool, and I felt so accomplished. It was so much work but so much fun.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ At a specific moment during the Edible Foods Festival, we had a very large group of people show up and my brain immediately knew how to turn on the “handle it” instinct. I knew I had to be resourceful, accommodating and this is something that has helped me in my roles today.

Nick Welsh

Processing Archivist
Washington D.C.

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I started in 2015 as a graduate student. I worked for the Processing Archivist as a Project Archivist working with the Arena Stage records.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ I helped set me on the career path that I’m on. It really indicated my desire to work in the archives. I relied a lot on the hands-on work I did as a student.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ All the opportunities. Being able to contribute to the exhibits, being a part of the transition to the new library and working with the move of the collections.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ The Records Manager at the time guided me to a role in records management, which set me up for the role I am in today. It wasn’t what I thought I wanted to do at the time, but it really helped during my time as a student.



“Make the most of your experience. Get to know your community and create a network for yourself.”

— Jajwalya Karajgikar

Jajwalya Karajgikar

*Applied Data Science Librarian for
Research Data & Digital Scholarship
University of Pennsylvania Libraries*

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I came to GMU knowing that I wanted to be working at Mason Libraries because they had a Digital Scholarship Center. During orientation, I walked into DiSC and said that I would like to apply for a job. It was a lot of training in people skills and bridging the gap to the available technology/software. The libraries aren’t just for books but they’re a place of service.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ This is a trade of minor disciplinary and interdisciplinary that goes on to transdisciplinary just because of the nature of data sciences and computational sciences because it can be applied to so many fields.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ The mentorship. The team was very accommodating when I mentioned that their role is one that I was curious about. The role I have now, I didn’t expect to be a possibility. I attribute so much of the support I received there to the success I have now, even how I interact with my research assistants.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ There are so many moments that I was inspired by. Specifically, one day we had an upset patron that was having trouble with the software. My supervisor guided me through the situation and how to set boundaries in my role. This moment was very important because of the mentorship I received, and it is something that I am so grateful for.





Anthony Guidone

*Assistant Professor of Early American History
Radford University*

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I worked for three academic years and one summer term as a GRA (Graduate Research Assistant) for the Center for Mason Legacies. It was an interdisciplinary project but very rooted in historical research methods. We worked on creating a digital archive of the Mason family court records at the Fairfax Courthouse, and this is still ongoing today. Our goal was to make these records more accessible to researchers.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ It gave me a lot of practice researching local history, experience with student-focused research projects, and doing digital history and digital exhibits. Those are all the things I teach at Radford, and I believe that was valuable in the history department here.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ I really liked having that lasting impact on campus through my work. It is something that I always look back on. I am proud that I was able to be a part of these projects I also really enjoyed researching the university, as an institution, and that is what really got me interested in the history of various universities. Studying local universities' history, how that reflects Virginia history and the 20th century, is something I would like to work on at Radford.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career?

If so, can you describe that moment?

“ There isn't one specific moment but, I really enjoyed working with student researchers, the digital exhibits, and also transcription projects. This helped me decide that I wanted to pursue a faculty position. I also enjoyed a lot of the archival work and forming relationships with community organizations and institutions. Overall, the experience of leading these types of projects was helpful in showing me that this was something I'd like to do as a career.

John Cliburn

*Student at Psychology Human Factors PhD program
George Mason University*

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ As an undergrad I worked at the front desk at Fenwick and then I saw that there was a posting for a grad assistant from the psychology department. I applied and I got to work in the Assessment and Planning department at the library. We conducted focus groups with undergraduates, noise level surveys of the facilities and more. My role in that was to weigh in with a different experimental perspective.

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ The best part of this program between the library and psychology department is that it supported the GRAs while we were completing our master's degree. Which made a huge difference in the freedom we had to explore other options. It provided stability that allowed us to grow and explore other directions.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ The support that the Assessment and Planning team is what I reflect on the most. The team was wholesome, optimistic, and used the resources available to help people. That is one of the best things about the library is that they people working there prioritize the people who really need help. They take the time to ask questions and really get to the bottom of the issues.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ My decision to stick around for the PhD program was independent from the libraries. My advisor, who I’ve had for years, was the one who really recommended it. I always knew I would end up in a research role, I didn’t know if I would also want to have that teaching qualification too.

“Take advantage of every opportunity you have.”

— Chris Magee

Chris Magee

Social Sciences Librarian
George Mason University

Tell me about the time you spent working in Mason Libraries.

“ I applied at a Mason job fair, and I was hired as an Access Services student worker. I worked nights and weekends, shelving, helping students at the desk, and processing interlibrary loan materials

How did your time at Mason and working at Mason Libraries influence where you are today?

“ As a student, I realized we had many databases, and it was more complicated to obtain resources. I eventually became a nighttime staff member and got a better appreciation of managing the space and the collections. Then I moved up to Consortium Loan and I appreciated the wider range of resources at our library and others in the DMV area. Later I moved to Reference, and I realized how deep and rich the organization of information can be. That is when I realized that I wanted to get a library degree.

What was most memorable about your experience working at Mason Libraries that you reflect on today?

“ Subject headings in our catalog organized our collections using hashtags similar to what social media uses today. This had to be explained to me and I learned that it was an avenue for a more efficient search. Once I realized how many



hours I spent staring at the screen not knowing what to do, I knew that this became more than a job, this was potentially something more. That was the turning point for me.

Was there a moment during your time at Mason Libraries that inspired you to take the next step in your career? If so, can you describe that moment?

“ When I was in my master’s program, I had a moment where I looked at all the years I’d been working at the libraries and thought “What am I actually doing? Do I want to take the next step? I’m comfortable, but could I be doing more?” I knew I could leverage what I do and make my master’s program a bit easier.

MURALS, MEMORIES, AND MAGENTA-PINK INK

Reflecting on Fenwick Gallery in 2023–2024

By
Stephanie Grimm

Fenwick Gallery's exhibits maintain a focus on the processes that underpin artistic research. As a space, we are interested in the methods and questions artists follow to arrive at an idea (and often, more questions!). This year featured our first mural and time-based installation, a retrospective from a small-press publisher, the visionary drawings of a major architect and urban planner, historic and contemporary folk art in celebration of Lunar New Year, paper sculptures from plaster castings, and a review of current MFA Visual Arts students.

Featured here are highlights from three recent exhibits, and archives from Fenwick Gallery events can be found on the Fenwick Gallery and Mason Exhibitions websites.

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Perfectly Acceptable

Kicking off Fall 2023, Fenwick Gallery was filled to the brim with books, prints, and behind-the-scenes process work from the Chicago-based publisher *Perfectly Acceptable Press*. This exhibition explored the contemporary landscape of Risograph printing, presented through Perfectly Acceptable's archive and an in-depth exploration of one book: the award-winning comic *Grip* by Lale Westvind. The exhibit also explored the relationship between printers, designers, artists, and materials in the creation of a finished art book—a reminder that creative works are not always solitary acts but often the result of negotiation, collaboration, and experimentation.



Book, prints, and process work from
Perfectly Acceptable installation.



▲
Scanned images from
Cities and Memory installation.

In cooperation with Mason faculty, including Profs. Christopher Kardambikis and Juana Medina (School of Art), Fenwick Gallery presented a full slate of programming to engage students in conversation with the press founder, Matt Davis, and with alumni artists from printmaking and book arts courses. Faculty and students from across the university took part in several creative workshops in Fenwick Library, including a Risograph demonstration with Davis and a Comics Jam led by alum Sylvia Rossi.

Risograph is an alternative printing technology that can feel like a cross between a copy machine and an automatic screen-printing process. Students in the School of Art and in the Dynamic Publishing minor use Risograph printing to produce comics, poetry broadsides, prints, photobooks, and more. Mason Libraries also soft-launched a Risograph printing studio in the SP@RC Lab at Fenwick Library in Spring 2024, a project led by Anna Murphy-Lang, Stephanie Grimm, and Gavin Thibodeau. Through these exhibits and programming, students have space to consider their conceptual and aesthetic interests and to develop their own working processes.

Cities and Memories

Featuring the artwork of renowned architect and urban planner James Rossant, *Cities and Memory* included visionary architectural drawings alongside poems from Rossant's daughter, author and journalist Juliette Rossant. James Rossant (1932–2009) was a graduate of Harvard Design School where

he studied under Walter Gropius, and he became a pivotal architect in the New Towns movement after World War II. Among his many projects, Rossant devised the original master plan for Reston, Virginia.

Cities and Memory developed over 10 months of close collaboration with Mason Exhibitions Director and University Curator, Don Russell, including multiple visits to Reston and research sessions in the Special Collections Research Center. The exhibit also focused on Rossant's more personal work, offering insight into a prodigious imagination and the fantastical processes that underpinned his formal architectural designs. From imagined cities to pastoral landscapes, Rossant's drawings and paintings depart from the conventions of architectural plans to present an ideal, sometimes utopian world.

Juliette Rossant's poems, displayed with the drawings and paintings, are ekphrastic: they are responses to her father's work. They examine memories and reflections about her father's life and ideals as artist and architect, and amplify her father's keen sense of play, whimsy, and intimacy. In celebration of the exhibit and to expand the conversation on the written and visual arts, Mason Libraries and Fenwick Gallery hosted an *Evening of Ekphrasis*, inviting faculty and students to read their ekphrastic poetry along with Juliette Rossant.

We Crawl with Four Paws *The Pretenders in Catopia*

After the exhibit of Rossant's drawings, Fenwick Gallery underwent a dramatic shift and stark new look opening: twenty-six feet of white, unmarked canvas stretched tight across the wall. Instead of seeing a finished work, visitors watched *We Crawl with Four Paws* unfold in real time over six weeks.

Chen Bi, an MFA student in Mason's School of Art and graduate research assistant for Fenwick Gallery, crafted an elaborate, hand-drawn mural that grew day-by-day on the canvas. Bi's interest stemmed from a simple question: "What is going on in my cat Sesame's head?" What developed was an exploration of anthropomorphism, fables and fairy tales, and the uncrossable line between human and animal minds.

▼
Chen Bi being interviewed in front of installation at Fenwick Gallery.





Image from *We Crawl with Four Paws: The Pretenders in a Catopia* installation.

As Bi described, this mural “seeks refuge in the tranquility and simplicity of a pet’s life in a world overwhelmed with the complexities of human existence. This mural is an exploration of my desire to momentarily hide from the cacophony of society, seeking solace and comfort in the silent whispers of my cat Sesame’s existence. [...] Drawing inspiration from this sentiment, ‘Catopia’ is not merely a depiction of an alternate reality, but a narrative. It captures a shared story, a bridge connecting our human complexities with the candid simplicity of the animal world.”

Bi prepared drawings at a smaller scale, then transferred these to the canvas with the help of a digital projector—and with support from another student, recent BFA graduate Juan De Bernardinis. Each week, Bi drafted and expanded the next sections with improvised touches. Many days, Bi’s work was punctuated with visitors stopping in the gallery to watch the work progress and ask questions about her process.

The project concluded with an artists’ talk in the gallery led by Bi—and with many later asking, “Where have all the cats gone?” The answer: back to Bi’s studio. Her mural experiences, meanwhile, are carrying forward into her final graduate exhibition. ■

Special thanks to Mason Exhibitions and University Life for their funding and material support for Fenwick Gallery programs this year, and SCRC staff Kelsey Kim, Mieke Palazzo, Lynn Eaton, and Bob Vay for supporting the research and digitization for *Cities and Memory*.

WORLD HISTORY CONNECTED

Providing publications opportunities for all scholars

By
Joanna Lee

Mason Publishing Group and GMU Press

The Mason Publishing Group offers a range of services to support the creation, dissemination, and preservation of your scholarship.

Meet the team:

- Andrew Rouner
Director
- Hannah McLaughlin
Design and Production Lead
- Joanna Lee
Digital Publishing Lead
- Sally Evans
Coordinator, University Dissertation & Thesis Services

To discuss how we can help support your upcoming scholarly and/or open-access projects contact us at
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Visit our site at
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Homepage of the *World History Connected* journal and downloadable articles as PDFs.

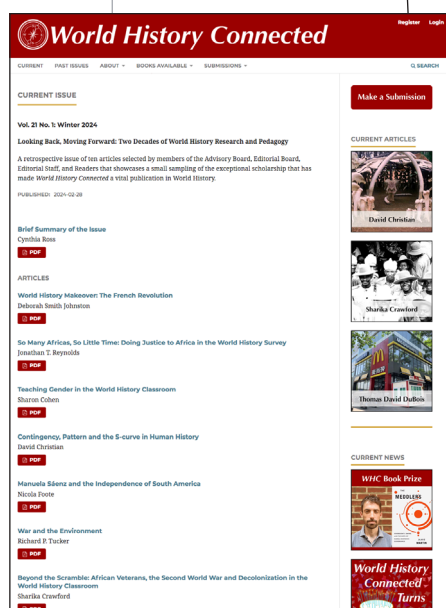
journals.gmu.edu/whc

In 2022, Peter Stearns, *Distinguished University Professor and Provost Emeritus*, connected Mason Publishing with *World History Connected*, a peer-reviewed open access journal devoted to the research and teaching of world history.

The journal was ready for a new publisher and Stearns, an advisory board member of *World History Connected*, thought George Mason University Press could be a good fit. Working closely with the journal's dedicated, warm editorial team throughout the transition, the Press was honored to become the journal's new home with the publication of the Fall 2022 issue.

The Winter 2024 issue (Vol. 21 No. 1), the fifth issue published by the Press, highlights the best of the journal with articles selected from twenty years of archives. Since its inception, *World History Connected* has been guided by world historians and educators devoted to providing publication opportunities for all scholars to reach the highest standards for accessible writing. Issues feature guest-edited forums on focused world history topics, individual articles, interviews, and book reviews.

Mason Publishing is working on migrating the journal's complete archives to the new website, hosted on the Libraries' Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform. Currently, Volumes 13 through the current issue are available. ■



Register with the journal website to receive announcements about future issues:
journals.gmu.edu/whc

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES STUDENT ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIPS

Two undergraduate students were selected to receive the 2023–2024 University Libraries Student Assistant Scholarship Award for the 2023–2024 academic year:

■ **Reece Knowles**

Student Assistant at Fenwick Library on the Fairfax Campus

■ **Takuma Takei**

Student Assistant at Mercer Library on the Science and Technology Campus



Reece Knowles



Takuma Takei

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.

REFLECTING ON FENWICK FELLOWS

From 2018 to 2022

By
Viviana Calderon

This spring, the Fenwick Fellows Lecture Series returned since pre-pandemic with three exceptional researchers' presentations. On Monday, April 8th, 2024 the Mason Libraries welcomed Emily H. Green, *Professor of Music*, Andrea Weeks, *Professor of Biology*, and Jacqueline M. Burek, *Professor of English*, to discuss the research findings from their fellowships. The Fenwick Fellowship is awarded annually to one or two Mason tenured, or tenure-track, or multi-year appointment term faculty members to pursue a research project that uses and enhances the libraries' resources while advancing knowledge in their field. Read more about their research findings below.

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Mungo in the Ballroom(s) *Ignatius Sancho's Abolitionist Country Dances*

Emily H. Green, *Professor of Music*
NAMED FENWICK FELLOW 2021–2022



ABSTRACT: Ignatius Sancho, a formerly enslaved, financially independent individual of color living in eighteenth-

century London, was acutely aware of his position in society: his own letters show he was conscious of his color, its association with enslaved bodies, and the bias against him and those who looked like him. Extant documents from Sancho's lifetime and shortly thereafter—hundreds of letters, business calling cards, a posthumous biographical sketch, several editions of his dance music and songs, a portrait by Thomas Gainsborough—have been rigorously investigated by literary scholars, and Sancho's music has gained popularity among performers. This paper extends existing work by reading Sancho's 1770s dances in their cultural context, arguing that they communicated his abolitionist project, contributed to commercializing his identity, and, like the efforts of many black artists, spoke to multiple audiences.

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Extending the research value of natural history collections with tools from the digital humanities

Andrea Weeks, *Professor of Biology*
NAMED FENWICK FELLOW 2020–2021



ABSTRACT: Advances in biodiversity information standards have improved our ability to use digitized natural history

collections for research, yet other useful data associated with or derived from these specimens, such as field notebooks, remain neither findable, accessible, interoperable, nor reusable. A grand challenge for the 21st century is to link these extended specimen datasets into a network that will enable new discoveries in the sciences and humanities. As a Fenwick Fellow, I built one link of this envisioned network using tools from the digital humanities in collaboration with the Digital Scholarship Center. We modified the Omeka S web platform with Darwin Core to host digitized field notebooks and durably cross-linked their pages with indexed natural history specimen records served from a Symbiota database. The outcome is one of the first examples of linked extended specimen records at scale and establishes a replicable and sustainable method for exploring this frontier for biodiversity research.

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Spice of Life or Stuff of History?

Jacqueline M. Burek, *Professor of English*
NAMED FENWICK FELLOW 2018–2019



ABSTRACT: My Fenwick project, the basis of my first monograph, explored the political undercurrents of the literary variety found

in historical writing of twelfth-century Britain. During this period, English historians struggled to incorporate the Norman Conquest of 1066 into their vision of Britain's history. My book traces how and why historians used literary variety to overcome that historiographical challenge. I show how literary variety (Latin *varietas*) became a crucial rhetorical device that allowed historians to both acknowledge and aestheticize Britain's history of conquest and invasion, thus minimizing the challenges posed by the Norman Conquest to English historians' idealized view of England's history. Ultimately, my book reveals how rhetoric can shape not just how historians write, but also how they think.

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CHRISTOPHER KARDAMBIKIS

Fenwick Fellow 2023–2024

The University Libraries are pleased to announce the annual Fenwick Fellow award recipient for 2023–24: Dr. Christopher Kardambikis, *Associate Professor, School of Art*. Professor Kardambikis' research project, documenting a Quarter Century of Small-Press and DIY Publishing in the United States, will use an oral history format to collect interviews with people who are or were engaged in small-press or independent publishing projects across the country, focusing on individuals who can speak to specific local publishing scenes and describe how these scenes developed since the year 2000.

“I'm looking forward to working with everyone at the Fenwick Library to further study DIY publishing and zines. This specific geographic area has such a rich history of zines, woven through the music, political, and art worlds, and being able to trace some of the connections between here and the rest of the country is a goal of the project.

The very nature of small, independent, and DIY publishing makes it difficult to map, catalog, and study. Many of these publications are produced using home printers or office xerox machines after hours and off the record. The vast majority of these projects did not carry an ISBN number. These publications served various purposes and diverse communities in specific time periods. The projects considered “Small-Press” or “independent” or “Do-It-Yourself” or “Community Based” are often hard to define—and their resistance to definition is often the point. Focusing on the time period after 2000, allows us to understand how the small-press, and the communities served, continue to deal with a rapidly changing publishing and media landscape throughout any number of challenges that have directly impacted our current student body.” — Dr. Kardambikis

Expected outcomes of the project include an interactive map and index of small-press and independent arts publishers in the United States active between the years 2000 and the present, as well as a collection of the zines, books, and publication projects created by the artists and publishers participating in the interviews that can then become part of the Special Collections Research Center at Fenwick Library.

“The Libraries are incredibly excited to partner with Dr. Kardambikis on this project through the Fenwick Fellowship program. Documenting a Quarter Century of Small-Press and DIY Publishing in the United States is an excellent example of how researchers can make the best use of the Libraries' varied resources, as it will involve working with our Digital Scholarship Center, Mason Publishing Group, and Special Collections Research Center.” — Anne Osterman, *Dean of Libraries*

Professor Kardambikis will present on the outcomes of this project at a future Fenwick Fellow Lecture hosted by the University Libraries. ■



ANNA MURPHY-LANG AND EMILY NILSON

Staff Excellence Award for 2023



Anna Murphy-Lang

Anna Murphy-Lang, *Teaching and Outreach Specialist*, was noted as playing a “crucial role in the successful execution of our first ‘Bring Your Patriot to Work Day,’ an initiative that involved coordinating reading circles for children, arts and crafts activities, and free food for faculty, staff, and children who attended.” She has also “done so much to build our recommended reads collection making the atrium space in front of the desk actually feel a part of the library. Access Services receives so many comments from our patrons about how much they love coming to scan the bookshelves there for something to check out.” ■

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Emily Nilson

Emily Nilson, *Database Integrity and Analysis Specialist*, was noted as having done “an incredible job as co-chair of DEIC, during a time when the responsibility of the council increased substantially. When she returned from leave, she immediately took charge of the situation and helped to steer the council through the numerous commitments we had at that time.” She also “presented on the theater assessment tool at the 2023 VIVA Collections Forum with a group from Mason Libraries. Several colleagues from other VIVA institutions were so impressed with the work that she is doing that it inspired a conversation about setting up an Alma knowledge sharing event for libraries across VIVA.” ■

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Thank you to the selection committee chaired by Christopher Lowder and including Tori Rodriguez and Cynthia Bentley.

MIEKO PALAZZO AND AUDREY RICHARDSON

Staff Excellence Award for 2024



Mieko Palazzo

Mieko Palazzo, *Research Services Coordinator*, was recognized by multiple colleagues for her extra work to assist patrons and to make the SCRC's materials available to a range of researchers. Colleagues noted how enthusiastic, communicative, and diligent she is, especially in how she "has dedicated herself to improving the accessibility and usability of Special Collections materials." As one wrote, "Mieko always serves as a positive example of SCRC's dedication to the mission of providing a welcoming environment for researchers and encouraging use of SCRC's research materials," and highlighted how she "values all members of a research transaction: the patron, her colleagues who might provide additional avenues of inquiry, and the records themselves." Colleagues also commended her committee work as a member of Staff Council, the DEIC, and the Dean Review Committee. They recognized her commitment to service and to "help support the Library's mission of supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in programming and services," all while bringing "a quiet positivity to her work with researchers, students, and staff." ■

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Audrey Richardson

Audrey Richardson, *Teaching and Learning Specialist*, was recognized by her colleagues for her work as DEIC chair and how her "enthusiasm for the DEIC is contagious, creating a collaborative atmosphere that fosters productivity and camaraderie among the team." They highlighted her range of responsibilities and accomplishments as Chair, from "starting a new speaker series to implementing manager-specific training, to ironing out workflow issues and documentation," and characterized her as a "mindful and steadfast" leader who will push the "DEIC to be even more successful in the future." Colleagues also noted how much she has developed in her position within Teaching and Learning and how quickly "she jumped in with new ideas, new ways to think about teaching, and new activities." They specifically commended her growth in teaching, her humor, and her commitment to inclusivity. Audrey was appreciated as "a remarkable individual who has consistently demonstrated a positive and energetic attitude, a strong commitment to collaboration and communication, and remarkable accomplishments within the library setting." ■

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Thank you to the selection committee chaired by Nicole Story and including Chan Chet and Meghan Glasbrenner.

ELLA JACKSON

Undergraduate Student Research Prize 2024



The 2024 Mason Libraries Undergraduate Student Research Prize has been awarded to Ella Jackson for her paper, “Government Public Service Announcements: Honduras and Mexico Instagram Campaigns on Direct & Indirect Violence Against Women,” written for the course GLOA 492 – Global Affairs Honors Research. In making this award, the selection committee noted, “We were impressed by the strong literature review and synthesis, which included relevant government reports (something we don’t always see), as well as the clear connections that Jackson made between the various parts of her argument, thoroughness, original research design, and her conclusions and discussion.”

In receiving this award, Ella Jackson stated, “I am particularly grateful for the invaluable support I received from the library resources throughout my academic journey. The extensive research resources available at the university library have been instrumental in shaping my paper...” She also noted to the donors of the Libraries’ Student Research Endowed Fund that enables this prize, “Your investment in my education will not go unnoticed, and I am committed to making the most of this opportunity. I am truly grateful for your generosity and belief in my academic endeavors.”

Anne Osterman, *Dean of Libraries*, stated, “Ella Jackson’s paper makes the tremendous effort by the Libraries to create a collection and supporting services for high quality research feel so worthwhile! It is a joy to honor her well-researched, robust analysis of public service announcements from Mexican and Honduran government social media posts.”

Ella Jackson will be formally awarded in a ceremony on May 1, 2024. ■

Thank you to the selection committee, chaired by Jen Fehsenfeld, and including Chuck Albo, Michael Hunter, David Lemmons, and Megan Reichelt.

LARA BUSHALLOW

Distinguished Library Faculty Award 2024

Lara Bushallow, *Director, Digital Technologies and Services*, has been with the Mason Libraries for 27 years. She was recognized by the selection committee for her “significant positive impact on both library employees and users’ experiences of Mason Libraries” as well as her “hidden achievements performed in a back-of-the-house position.” Letters of recommendation came from throughout the libraries and beyond. The writers noted that Lara “has been instrumental in helping build collaborative relationships between her direct reports and teaching faculty on campus,” performs “highly sophisticated tasks with no fanfare,” and works “tirelessly to ensure that library systems are working.” Lara is a person who leads through example, who is creative and effective with providing technical solutions, and who is clearly a valued colleague in so many ways. As stated by the selection committee the opportunity to spotlight her achievements is important—after all, we only ever notice technology when it’s causing problems, and Lara’s work ensures that it is not.”

The Mason Libraries commends Lara for her contributions to the George Mason University Libraries, George Mason University community, and Washington Research Library Consortium. The Award will be presented officially at Mason’s annual Celebration of Teaching Excellence ceremony, hosted by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning. ■



Thank you to the selection committee, chaired by Amy Sullivan and including Kim Edwards, Wally Grotophorst, Maoria Kirker, and Elena Landry.

LIBRARIES FACULTY AND STAFF

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We recognize the following Libraries faculty and staff for their service to George Mason University and/or the Commonwealth of Virginia. ■

► 5 Years

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Fenwick Stacks Specialist

Xiaohua Ding

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Interim Head of Metadata Services

Desmona Jacobs

Acquisition Fiscal Coordinator

Melody Kujat

Collection Analysis Specialist

Christopher Lowder

Education Librarian

Sarah Madorma

Teaching and Learning Assistant

Sophie Rondeau

VIVA Affordable Learning Librarian

Nicole Story

Document Delivery Coordinator

Trevor Watkins

Teaching and Learning Librarian

► 10 Years

Kathleen Bell

Head of Assessment and Planning

Kaitlyn Kinney

Access Instructional Support Coordinator

Maoria Kirker

Lead of Teaching and Learning Team

John Sherman

Sci-Tech Library Manager

Amy Sullivan

Head of Preservation Services

► 15 Years

Dorothee Schubel

Metadata and Cataloging Librarian

► 20 Years

Jennifer Fehsenfeld

Lead of Arts and Humanities

► 25 Years

George Oberle

*History Librarian and
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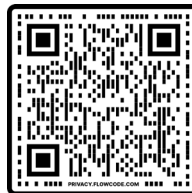
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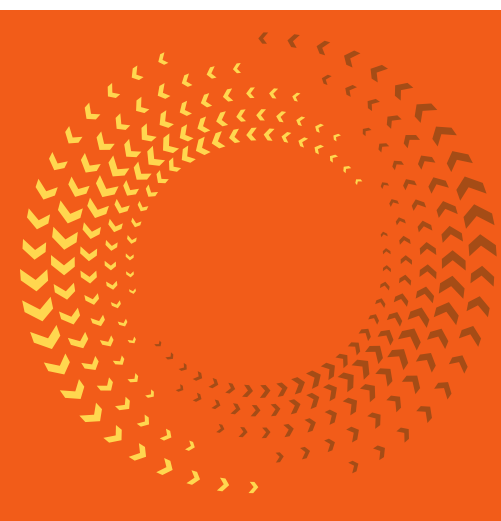
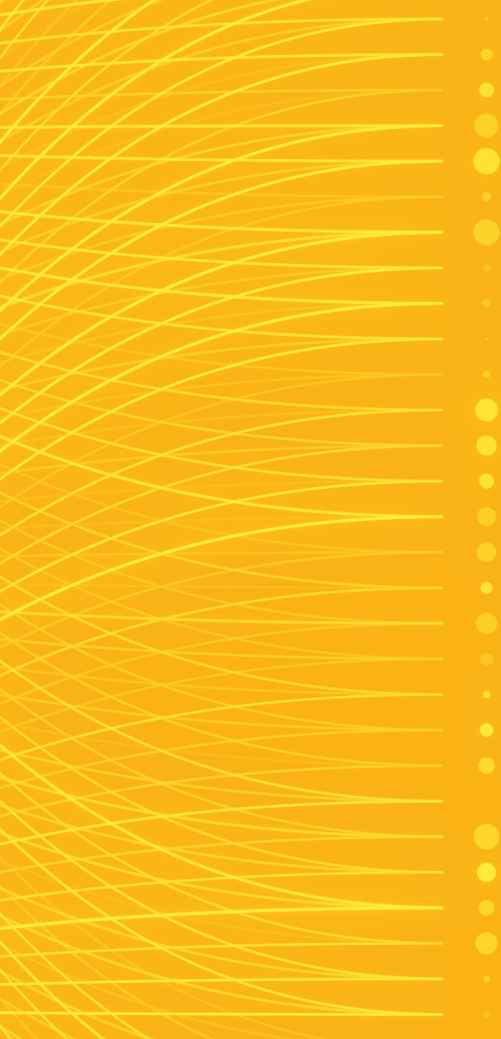
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Zines workshop covered the history of zines. During the workshop, students learned how to design and create their own zine. The zines created during the workshop would be archived in the Special Collections. The zines collected deaccessioned and the process at SCRC to be used for the workshop. The zines were offered to the students to be



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