Upcoming Event

Wednesday, November 12, 4:30 p.m., Neilson Library Browsing Room

What Does the Future Hold for the Past? Envisaging Smith College Special Collections

Smith's new Director of Special Collections, Dr. Beth Myers, will talk about the place of Special Collections in the scholarly world of tomorrow. How will the Sophia Smith Collection, College Archives, and the Mortimer Rare Book Room respond to the shifting learning landscapes of the future? What will their impact be on future scholarship in the Humanities?

A reception will follow.

Up Close and Personal with Piper Kerman

On October 2, John M. Greene was filled with Smithies and local fans of Orange is the New Black. Piper Kerman '92, author of the bestselling memoir, spoke with tremendous candor about the experiences which formed the basis for the book and the hit Netflix series. Interviewed by Bethanne Patrick '85, Kerman was thoughtful about her past and passionate about her advocacy work on behalf of incarcerated women. The Friends co-sponsored the event with the Student Events Committee, and the proceeds from ticket sales were donated to the Women’s Prison Association. The interview can now be viewed on the “Smithcollegelibraries” You Tube channel.
FSCL News

By Jenny Frost ’78, Chair

This newsletter reaches you at a tremendously exciting time for the Libraries and Smith. With the support of President Kathleen McCartney and the board of trustees, Smith has begun the process of hiring an architect to design an extensive renovation of Neilson Library. Not only will this bring the Libraries to the cutting edge of academic research and collaborative learning environments, it will transform the physical and spiritual role of the Libraries on campus!

If that wasn’t enough excitement, we are also embarking on the fulfillment of the incredibly generous challenge presented by Francie Pepper ’62 to endow the new position of Director of Special Collections. The FSCL heartily supports the vision behind this new position and the creation of a Special Collections Department. We urge all Friends to consider an additional gift and lend their own financial support to fulfilling this challenge grant!

The Friends newsletter is going digital as well. We will be moving to one printed newsletter each year. Look for a spring e-newsletter and a special and visually exciting roundup of events and activities in print next fall. Don’t miss out: please make sure we have your email address so we can continue to keep you informed about all that is happening at the Smith College Libraries.

And, last but not least, this is the time of year when we ask you to renew your membership. If you haven’t already renewed, you will soon receive our annual membership renewal mailing. The Friends could not provide the extensive support for students, faculty, and staff that it does without your commitment. If you care about the Libraries’ unique assets, please consider pairing your renewal with a gift in support for the Francie Pepper Challenge Grant.

Special Acquisitions

Celia S. Gilbert ’54 recently made a very substantial gift to the Hillyer Art Library, donating ninety-six art books and catalogs, primarily about ancient art. She also presented two special volumes to the Mortimer Rare Book Room (MRBR). One is a splendid copy of Edward Young’s Night Thoughts (1797), containing many extraordinary full-page engraved illustrations by William Blake. Even though the MRBR already owns a copy (beautifully hand colored by Blake himself), Mrs. Gilbert’s uncolored copy was eagerly accepted. This is a book that is often shown to classes in English literature and art history, and it is fascinating to view the two copies side by side and compare their attributes. This book and a facsimile edition of William Blake’s Water-colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray. London: Trianon Press, 1972, were presented in memory of Mrs. Gilbert’s father, I.F. Stone.

Last month, the Sophia Smith Collection welcomed the papers of Aileen C. Hernandez, a lifelong advocate of workers’ rights, racial justice, and women’s equality. Born in 1926, Hernandez became involved in civil rights as a Howard University student in the 1940s. After a decade as a labor organizer in the garment trades, she became the only woman President Johnson appointed to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1965. Hernandez was the first African American president of the National Organization for Women, and she founded many groups, including the National Women’s Political Caucus, Black Women Organized for Action, and Black Women Stirring the Waters. She has championed human rights at local, national, and international levels.

The nearly 200 boxes of materials document in rich detail the life of an activist at the intersections of struggles against race, class, and gender discrimination. Once processed, the Aileen Hernandez Papers will become a “go-to” collection for scholars of twentieth-century social movements.
Envisaging the Smith College Special Collections

By Beth Myers, Director of Special Collections

For those whose idea of creating knowledge from history conjures up leafing through brittle papers, musty boxes and microfiches, I welcome you to a new era for special collections. No longer the exclusive haunt of only the most experienced researchers, special collections as a place and as a practice is undergoing a multifaceted change. Not surprisingly, new technologies have transformed how users conduct their research and access collections; how they experience instruction and outreach, and even come to co-create new collections. Freed to explore new learning and research paradigms, special collections can be envisioned as a dynamic place of physical and virtual interaction, a public community of intellectual engagement that consistently holds the potential to transform our understanding of the world.

But what does our existing program look like? Smith College Special Collections is one of the most spectacular research resources at the college. The rare and valuable materials that make up the Special Collections unit—Sophia Smith Collection, College Archives, and Rare Books—represent a world-class research collection unparalleled at schools of Smith’s size. The sheer scale of the collections—27,000 linear feet of manuscripts, maps, objects, audiovisual resources and 46,000 rare books—magnifies the diversity of content and subject matter. The Sophia Smith Collection is one of the largest and oldest collections of women’s history in the United States. The College Archives serves as the principle caretaker for the College’s institutional memory, its sense of self, and historical evolution as well as a treasure trove of information about college women since 1875. The Rare Books collection spans from cuneiform tablets to contemporary artist’s books with much about the evolution of books and book culture in between. Very few other colleges in the country can boast of providing next-door access to such incredible resources for their undergraduates.

At this time of great imagining, Smith College Special Collections sits at a pivotal juncture. Our current programs and initiatives—exciting digitization projects, powerful program partnerships, and the exponential growth in instruction—point to our proactive response to the changes within the larger information management culture. Yet, there is much still to do. At its core is the question: how can Special Collections wrestle with and meet the challenges and opportunities of the future? The best answer is to build upon our existing programming while always stretching our vision, to be bold, and to be inspired stewards of the irreplaceable collections under our care.

Retirements

The Libraries bid a fond farewell to two longtime staff members at a garden themed party in June. Circulation Associate, Gail Adametz, retired after forty eight years in the Science Library. She started out in 1966 in the Science Library when it was located in Sabin-Reed. Gail mentored scores of students, served on several standing committees, and witnessed many changes in how the faculty conducted their research and teaching.

Electronic Resources Supervisor, Mimi Lempart, retired just before her fortieth anniversary at Smith. Mimi began and ended her career in Technical Services (now called Collections Services). In between, she spent sixteen years in Hillyer Art Library, from 1976 to 1992. Her work in recent years evolved in tandem with the shifts in information technology. Trained as an artist and a teacher, Mimi’s contributions at Smith went well beyond her sphere of work. Before they retired, both Gail and Mimi recorded oral histories about their experiences for the College Archives.

Staff Changes

Anne Houston has been named Director of Teaching, Learning & Research. She leads this newly formed department which works closely with faculty and students to support research at the college, build library collections, improve learning spaces in the library, and promote student learning through information literacy instruction.

Anne came to Smith from the University of Virginia Libraries where she served as Director of Humanities and Social Sciences Services since 2009. Prior to that she served for seven years as a librarian at Tulane University in New Orleans. She holds an MLS degree as well as an MA in English Literature. Of her new role, she said: “I love that my job allows me to interact with students on a daily basis. The Smith students are among the brightest, nicest and most self-motivated students I’ve encountered. It’s a pleasure to work with them!”
FSCL MEMBERSHIP FORM

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE SMITH COLLEGE LIBRARIES BY JOINING OR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

Your tax deductible gift helps purchase library materials and enhances the services offered to the college community. Members of the Friends receive this newsletter, invitations to events and other benefits – for more information, see www.smith.edu/libraries/friends/membership.

Membership Levels

☑ $20 Student/Recent Alum  ☑ $50 Individual  ☑ $75 Family/Dual
☑ $150 Contributor  ☑ $500 Sustainer  ☑ $1,000 Patron  ☑ $2,000 Champion

☐ My/our company will match the gift.

☐ I wish to make my gift in honor/in memory of ____________________________________________

Name ____________________________________________ Class ________ (if alumna)

Address ________________________________________

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EXHIBITIONS

Robert Seydel: The Eye in Matter

Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Level 3
September 2 - December 15, 2014.

Artist and writer, Robert Seydel (1960-2011), left behind a multi-layered, highly original body of work marked by an unrelenting sense of play. His extraordinary and eclectic production incorporated collage, drawing, photography, and narrative, and lyric writing.

Twenty Years of the Double Elephant Press

Mortimer Rare Book Room Foyer, Neilson Level 3
September 2 – December 15, 2014


2014-2015 FSCL Executive Committee

Jenny Frost ’78, Chair; Ann Alpers ’84; Julie Iatron ’97; Marcia MacHarg ’70; Carolina Miranda ’93; Susan Novick ’81; Bethanne Patrick ’85; Betsy Pepper ’67.

Ex-Officio: Kathleen McCartney, Honorary Chair; Christopher B. Loring, Director of Libraries; Mary Irwin, Executive Secretary.

Joining the Executive Committee is Ann Alpers ’84, President of the S. H. Cowell Foundation. Ann has chaired the San Francisco Public Library Friends Board of Directors and serves on the Board of Legal Services for Children in San Francisco. With a JD in Medical Ethics, she previously served as Deputy City Attorney for Health and Human Services and also as a faculty member at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine.

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