Libraries Are People

By Joseph G. Reish
Interim Dean, The University Libraries
Dean, Carl & Winifred Lee Honor's College

When, in May of 2001, the Provost asked me to stay another year at the administrative helm of the University Libraries, I answered affirmatively, but quickly added that the past months of "maintaining" could no longer be the guiding principle of my "deaning." There were serious issues that could not wait for another year to be resolved.

During my first year, I learned a great deal about the actual operations of the University Libraries, the individual and collaborative services, the capabilities of the academic and technical staff, and the needs and desires of faculty and student patrons. I had also made many welcome discoveries with respect to the modern, high-tech library driven by electronic systems and collections. Yes, I am still in awe of the evolution of the hard copy of "Hamlet" into the digitized format. Yes, I continue to be amazed by the nearly 200 online indexes and databases, in addition to our sophisticated online catalog, that locate innumerable references for users. Yes, I find an enormous wealth of subject guides and numerous user aids on the several thousand pages that make up our Libraries' WWW site. But, in the end, the key factor that has marked my continued tenure here is the human factor—the supportive, dedicated, knowledgeable women and men who work in the University Libraries. These individuals are the University libraries; they are the best and the brightest and, indeed, without them, the technology is nothing.

Our University Libraries are, first and foremost, people serving other people. Public service is the raison d'être of our operations. First, we support the intellectual growth and development of patrons (students, faculty, staff, and general public) through the provision of information from our wealth of local resources, what we call the University Libraries. Equally important, there is an extended information environment. Through resource sharing (interlibrary loan) and the visible world of the World Wide Web and Internet I and II, not to mention all of the invisible worlds hidden behind the search engines and directories, we have almost unlimited online resources. All that we own and/or can access electronically can now be harnessed to serve our users. Many library personnel and services are physically accessible and upfront to users, while an equally large number is not. The information desk in the rotunda of Waldo Library emblematically is the first line of service. Initial queries about library resources and functions commonly occur here. Patrons then fan out to pursue their research in the stacks or with personnel located in more than a dozen public service areas located on each floor of Waldo Library and in four branches. There they find faculty, staff, and students whose assistance demystifies our collections and the access to them.

But what the library user rarely encounters are the cohorts of individuals who acquire, catalogue, process for use, shelf, and maintain the electronic systems that really make accessible items (books, government documents, media, magazines and journals, online full text, Web pages, and more) for patron use. Without the dozens of guides, catalogs, indexes, and databases found on the Libraries' Web pages, few could locate anything among the four million items that comprise the libraries' physical collection—much less the infinite resources external to the University collections. There are dozens of employees hidden behind the doors of the Technical Services areas, Resource Sharing, the Systems and Web offices, the Administrative Offices, and other locations that provide essential support to every public service location. The technical staff members and heads of units are those in the "wings," "scene shop," and "front of the house," while the "actors (public service staff)" interface the "audience." All facets must function together to put on this "production," but there would be little to "put on" if the behind the scenes individuals were not there!

Efficiency, patron-orientation, and a strong sense of humor characterize our staff. I know first-hand of these characteristics because more than occasionally over the last two years I have been a library user while wearing the Interim Dean’s mantle. Let me describe one small incident that illustrates the people synergy of the Libraries. Just before spring break, I was assisting my teenage son in finding sources for two school projects. Alex was to serve as a "theatrical consultant" producing the French comedy The Imaginary Invalid by Molière in a style reminiscent of Japanese Kabuki theatre. He also was to prepare a paper showing common ground between Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte. (The topics were of his own choosing, but his school media center was not built to provide answers.)

Ever the helpful father researcher, I entered Waldo Library stacks with a list of references, found through WestCat, in...
Why do libraries collect in certain areas? This question is often asked—not only by patrons who visit libraries and discover unusual collections, but by colleague librarians who uncover unexpected resources within the buildings in which they have worked for many years. Such a question occurred recently at Waldo Library when a display of pop-up books piqued everyone’s attention and brought queries as to its purpose and use. One answer, “we bought a bookstore,” didn’t readily satisfy anyone, but did lead naturally to the larger question of collection philosophy.

The University Libraries, given the University’s historical emphases on elementary education and elementary school libraries, acquired children’s books to support each phase of the institutional development. Beginning almost a century ago with the original Western State Normal School, through the expanded Western State Teachers College and the evolving Western Michigan College of Education to, ultimately, Western Michigan University with its extensive graduate and research mission, there was an emphasis on the study of children’s literature. Our lifelong goal to educate elementary and middle school teachers is part of WMU’s past and future. This goal was further enhanced when it became part of the curriculum of the Department of Librarianship in the 1940s and has continued unabated.

In Special Collections, the ongoing focus on children’s resources led to the acquisition, years ago, of an Historical Children’s Book Collection that consists, among other things, of several items from the original Children’s Collection of the Kalamazoo Public Library. One of its highlights is a complete run of first editions of Horatio Alger’s “rags-to-riches” stories for the young. (Another Children’s Collection, built on the library school’s model collection, with ongoing acquisitions, exists as a separate collection that is also located in Waldo and further supports the pedagogical rational at work in Special Collections.)

In 1998, I decided to add a couple of pop-up books to the Historical Children’s Book Collection. These were spectacular medieval castle pop-up books that would also look good in exhibitions of our other well-established medieval holdings. Another book that seemed most appropriate was Nancy Willard’s *Gutenberg’s Gift* (Baltimore: Wild Honey, 1995) a pop-up book illustrating the invention of the printing press; it included a pop-up version of the first press. In searching for these items, I made the acquaintance of Trevor Blake, who owned J. Whirler Books in Portland, Oregon. Ergo, Special Collections acquired its first seven pop-up books, and the world continued to turn on its axis!

We may think of pop-up books as just another variation on “engineered” children’s books and of little real significance. Indeed, the official Library of Congress subject headings guide calls them TOY AND MOVEABLE BOOKS. That was not always the case. The first such books date from the Middle Ages, and were considered objects of cosmic significance. Philosophers and theologians who sought to classify all human and divine knowledge into systems took ideas and concepts and assigned them into a lettered or numbered key. They placed groups of numbers and letters on wheels, and fitted two or more of these wheels onto the pages of manuscript books. The reader could turn one wheel within one or more other wheels on the page to combine ideas and make new ones from the resulting combinations. Working these *volvelles*, as the wheels were called, enabled the reader to try and seek the key to all knowledge according to the author’s system. The first author to describe this technique was the Catalan theologian and mystic Ramon Lull in *Ars Magnus*, 1274. He had a small but important number of successors.

The invention of printing saw the *volvelles* continuing to turn. Vico used them, and Leibnitz’s attempt at a universal cosmology depended heavily upon them. A large number of 16th and 17th century hermetic authors sought the secrets behind our apparent world in the spinning of such wheels. One of the most elaborate pop-up books in history was an English translation of Euclid’s *Elements* printed in London in 1578. Over seventy fold-up representations of the geometric shapes, which Euclid described mathematically, were included in this edition. Each fold-up shape was hand-colored so that its properties could be more easily appreciated. The complexity of these works lead to their demise by 1700. And, some of you may notice that we are now miles (or centuries) away from the acquisition of children’s books.

The application of these book-making techniques to material for younger readers came in the 19th century. Pop-ups began simply with lift-up windows on the page, like Advent calendars, from the 1820s. About mid-century, more elaborate folded constructions on pages could be pulled toward the reader to create a sort of three-dimensional effect. These are known as peep shows, and the technique is still used in the making of both children’s pop-ups and artist’s books, such as Julie Chen’s *Octopus* (Berkeley: Flying Fish Press, 1992).

The man who put pop-ups back on the map of publishers was a Munich author and book designer named Lothar Meggendorfer. He made a series of tab books in which the tabs were pulled by readers to make figures on the page move. Just as the pistons of a steam locomotive pushed a rod which turned the wheels of a train, Meggendorfer used paper structures to get his tabs to make a dancing master tap his feet and play a violin. Or, in another illustration, he had a maid polish a large mirror while the housekeeper flapped her jaw to keep the work moving along. These books were immensely popular in Germany in the 1870s and 1880s. English translations quickly appeared from London and New York, and other authors tried to equal Meggendorfer’s ingenuity. From 1879, not a year has passed without the publication of ten or more pop-up books.

Continued on page 3

Samantha Cairo and Tom Amos, pop-up book selectors

Moreover, pop-ups are fun to show and exhibit. Watching the faces of people during presentations as the pop-ups are cautiously opened and put through their paces is always a joy for both demonstrator and the observers. They always establish and capture their own audience. In this academic year alone, seven classes from English, Art, Graphic Arts, and Education have made nine visits to see the pop-up books. Those visits brought over 270 people to the Libraries. Sixty-eight readers have come to use the pop-ups for assignments which range from class papers to making their own pop-up books. Another fifteen have come in for reasons that involve smiles of satisfaction. And, there is no doubt, as word of the collection spreads, that audiences will only grow over time. In fact, in a world of declining library turnstile counts, Special Collections readership has continued to increase every year.

But, in the end, the simplest and most direct response to why the University Libraries should spend money on pop-up books is also obvious: the collection supports the teaching and research missions of WMU. That, as the current television vernacular has it, is our final answer. But, if you only come because they’re fun, we’re here for you!

---

**Blueprints of the Past — II**

By Suzanne Husband, Curator, Regional History Collections

[In the Winter 2002 issue of Gatherings, Sue Husband discussed “architectural treasures” including the Ernest Starr Batterson papers, the Norman Porter Kellogg drawings, and the George Gilbert Worden collection. Continuing her theme, Ms. Husband concludes by describing four additional blueprint “treasures” found in the Regional History Collections.]

In the fall of 1976, Isabel, the widow of WILLIAM ADDISON STONE, JR. donated a large number of his architectural drawings, blueprints, and photographs to the Regional History Collections. In 1978, additional drawings, reports and photographs were added. Most of the material is from the 1930s through the 1960s and there are approximately 300 rolls plus 10 cubic feet of manuscript materials.

William Stone, Jr. was born in 1902 to prominent Kalamazoo physicians, Dr. William A. Stone and Dr. Harriet McAlmont Stone. William Jr. graduated from the Yale University School of Architecture in 1928, and practiced with architectural firms in New York City until 1931 when he returned to Kalamazoo and opened his own office. In 1937, he took as a partner Randall Wagner. During World War II, Stone contributed to the design of a munitions factory in Dixon, Illinois. Subsequently he had partnerships with Kalamazoo architects Colbert C. Smith and James L. Parent. In 1967, he became an independent architect again.

Stone’s principal works include the Westnedge Apartments (1949), the J.C. Penny Store on South Burdick Street (1955). Sarah DeWaters Hall at Kalamazoo College (1965), branch banks for the First National Bank & Trust in Kalamazoo (1966, 1967), and the Great Lakes Computer Center in Portage (1968). He designed the First Congregational Church in Kalamazoo; the Congregational Church in Cooper, Michigan; and the Church of the Good Shepherd in Allegan. He also prepared the blueprints for several schools and fire stations in the Kalamazoo area. However his major interest was in private residences and he designed several of the homes in the Orchard Hills development on Long and Short roads. In the collection are a number of unidentified exterior and interior photographs of area homes built during the 1960s.

During the period when Stone was a member of the Gull Lake Country club, he was involved in planning a new clubhouse and grounds. The collection includes a history of the clubhouses, topographical...
maps of the area, and correspondence about the project. In 1951, the Michigan Chapter of the American Institute of Architects gave Stone their Grand Award for Residences for the design of his own home at 529 Pinehurst Boulevard.

The LOUIS C. KINGSCOTT & ASSOCIATES COLLECTION is the Regional History Collections largest architectural collection, encompassing over 37 cubic feet of material. It includes blueprints, photographs, and manuscripts relating to projects primarily located in Michigan, although Kingscott & Associates was registered in Iowa, Illinois, Washington DC, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Louis Clifton Kingscott, Sr. was born in Bear Lake, Michigan, in 1898. He received a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Michigan in 1922. As of 1922, he was also partner in the firm of Stewart & Kingscott, where he worked with Donald A. Stewart until 1929, when Stewart died and Kingscott became an independent architect. The firm was then known as Louis C. Kingscott & Associates.

From 1940-45, Kingscott Sr. served as chairman of the Michigan International Bridge Authority, which studied plans for the eventual construction of the Sault Ste. Marie Bridge linking the U.S. and Canada. Some of his principal works include the old Kalamazoo Public Library & Museum, a number of buildings on the west campus at Western Michigan University as well as buildings at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He died in November 1962.

Louis C. Kingscott, Jr. was born in Kalamazoo in 1928. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1953, worked for an engineering firm in Morocco, North Africa, and then joined his father’s firm. He was elected president of Louis C. Kingscott & Associates, Inc. after his father’s death. In 1972, Louis Jr. sold the firm and retired a year later. Some of his principal works include Kohrman Hall, the industrial and engineering technology building at Western (1965); dormitories at Northern Michigan University (1966); Union High School in Grand Rapids (1967); and Fenton Public School (1969). He died in November 1994 in Battle Creek.

The Kingscott architectural materials arrived in the Regional History Collections in several stages. The first acquisition was in 1980, the second in 1983, and a third deposit came in 1988. Because of space and time limitations, the curator, then Phyllis Burnham, established criteria to select from the vast amount of materials offered. The majority of the Kingscott materials cover the city of Kalamazoo. Second, anything related to southwestern Michigan was chosen, and, finally, materials related to Michigan in general were selected. In addition, several out-of-state projects were chosen due to their unique nature. In 1989, more plans were added to the Kingscott collection. These were primarily buildings at Western Michigan University designed and or renovated by Kingscott. The Kingscott blueprints for the Kalamazoo public school buildings are housed in East Hall, but the majority of the Kingscott collection is in off-site storage, where it can be retrieved by staff upon request.

Because of its historical coverage and size, the Kingscott & Associates Collection contains blueprints and photographs for all of the following building categories: commercial and industrial; religious; educational; recreational; health facilities; penal institutions; public buildings; military structures; and transportation, communications, and scientific structures.

An inventory of the earlier drawings received in 1980 was provided by Kingscott, but later acquisitions do not have an inventory or a finding aid, which makes access more time consuming, but not impossible. While the Regional History Collections does not have the entire run of the Kingscott architectural materials from 1935 through late 1980, there are enough blueprints, photographs, negatives, and correspondence to make this the largest and most significant collection of architectural design in the Regional History Collections.

While preparing this article, two additional collections came to my attention as key research resources found in WMU's architectural databank. First, our "blueprints of the past" would not be complete without mentioning the very first set of drawings that the Regional History Collections received. They are not by a local architect, but are of an important landmark on Kalamazoo's historic landscape. In 1878, the LADIES LIBRARY ASSOCIATION in Kalamazoo built the first structure erected by a women's library group in the U.S. A sheet of hand colored ink on linen drawings is not only beautiful to look at, but extremely practical as well. The blueprints were invaluable in the 1975 and 1991 restorations to the century old building when copies were made for the consulting architects. The unique building, still maintained and used by the Ladies Library Association as well as for many special cultural events, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The last set of blueprints brings us full circle to the windows of East Hall and the campus itself. Numerous architectural drawings are available for buildings and landscaping located on WMU's campus. The most famous are the Olmsted brothers drawings for landscaping the East Campus, or Prospect Hill, as it is called on the 1904 drawings. Additional world-renowned landscaping designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and later his sons, includes the original landscaping of Central Park in New York City, Belle Isle Park in Detroit, the grounds of the 1893 Columbian World's Fair, and the grounds at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina.

The original Prospect Hill plans submitted to the State Board of Education proved to be too costly, and were modified. There are 11 sheets of drawings, showing the exact location of proposed plantings. A botanical list is included on one of the sheets and a copy is also found in the Papers of Dwight B. Waldo. Nothing physical remains today of the modified plan but, as the University plans for WMU's Centennial in 2003, these drawings have been of considerable interest to our own landscape staff as well as those interested in the history, preservation, and restoration of the East Campus.

Also found in the University Archives, not the Regional History Collections, are select older architectural drawings of East Hall and some buildings of the West Campus such as Wood Hall. The Archives material has not been cataloged and is not generally open to the public. This is also true of a large collection of the more contemporary blueprints of the University's buildings held by the Planning Department of Campus Facilities. Regardless of the University and the Regional History Collections are preserving a significant portion of the architectural record of the University. Indeed, as with all of our "blueprints of the past," future researchers will be able to see through the eyes of creative, imaginative designers who established, through their design, the solid and enduring structures that define our living space.
A College of Distinction

By Margaret Merrion
Dean, College of Fine Arts

[Margaret Merrion, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, spoke at the annual meeting of the Friends held on April 4, 2002. Dr. Merrion addressed her favorite subject, the College, which is the only College of Fine Arts in Michigan that includes all four of the fine arts. The following article is excerpted and paraphrased from her presentation.]

A n angel appeared at a faculty meeting in a major university, and told the dean that in return for her unselfish and exemplary behavior, the Lord would reward her with her choice of one of three things: infinite wealth, wisdom, or beauty. Without hesitating, the dean selected infinite wisdom.

"Done!" said the angel, and disappeared in a cloud of smoke and a bolt of lightning. After a few moments, all heads turned toward the dean, who sat surrounded by a faint halo of light. At length, one of her colleagues whispered, "Say something." The dean looked at them and said, "I should have taken the money."

I love this story because it allows me to pursue the concept of a "college of distinction" since I, too, have gained a little wisdom after 13 years as a dean. Let me begin by emphasizing that there are only 22 colleges of fine arts — by this I mean academic organizations that include the visual arts, dance, music, and theatre within one collegiate structure — in the entire nation. Even more specifically, of these 22, only 14 are professionally accredited across the board. This means that each of the four programs has been accredited by its own accrediting organization. Faculty, student outcomes, curricula, facilities, and resources are deemed to meet national standards evaluated by the accrediting agency. With pride, I emphasize that the College of Fine Arts at WMU is one of the 22 in the nation and, even more important, one of the 14 in which all programs are accredited.

So, we have "deep" excellence and distinction with each discipline meeting the national standards for depth of program, AND we have "broad" excellence and distinction with each unit in the College of Fine Arts sustaining a superior level of "artistry." The potential for working together as a college to address the understanding and appreciation of the arts at such a high-powered level is distinctive. Thus, we make our first claim to be a "College of Distinction."

A second quantifiable measure of distinction is that our College of Fine Arts is the only CFA in Michigan. At a state level, and in a state with several nation-ally recognized universities, this is an enviable distinction. Our sister institutions have not chosen to develop a structural organization that matches our strong approach to governance issues, advocacy, and resource acquisition. We have the clear advantage of a unified voice for the arts. We have harnessed the commonalities of the arts within a single, collegial environment that permits us to work collaboratively to enhance our mission as a "College of Distinction."

The last quantifiable indication of distinction is found right here on our own campus. The students who come to WMU to enroll in one of the programs in the College of Fine Arts have the highest academic profile of any student group admitted to this University. This is to say that based on an analysis of ACT scores and high school GPAs, the students in the College of Fine Arts have the highest scores when compared to the other colleges of WMU. This, too, makes us a

continued on page 6
Libraries …
Continued from page 1

hand. Japanese literature is located some distance away from world theater and both are nowhere near history. I located and placed on a workspace both my references and the books I found in the Japanese section, and walked away to locate references on Caesar and Napoleon. Less than five minutes later, loaded with books, I returned to discover that my first selections had been reshelved and my notes, too, had disappeared. I muttered, “Damn efficiency!” It was all too evident that the staff was what it was cracked up to be!

Since I knew where to find “the behind the scenes” staff, I tracked down the Stacks Supervisor, and she assisted me in locating the vest-clad student who had been so untimely (for me) efficient. Perhaps fearful of my blue suit, the young lady tried to apologize, but I lauded her for carrying out her tasks appropriately. However, I still needed to find the second set of references that I feared had been recycled beyond recovery. The student led me in a floor-wide sweep of waste receptacles. She eventually located my papers and handed them to me with a broad smile: patron-orientation (and a sense of humor) at its best.

A little later, I shared my misadventures with the third-floor administrative staff who have been so supportive of my “interim” role. We all laughed together—each understanding the comedy of errors and requisite sense of humor that marked my efforts—and that of the library staff. However, the last laugh was on me. My wife, a school librarian, when told of the incident, chastised me for leaving my papers strewn about in the stacks. Still, from such a small example, I saw how a library-wide work ethic makes an unbelievably major operation function efficiently day after day after day. One small example, but one that is multiplied each day by the dozens of staff who work every day to keep the University Libraries functioning at its highest level. This IS people service—not virtual but human, every day, every way, and it’s there for every one who visits our University Libraries either entering our physical environs or accessing our extensive WWW site.

The past months as Interim Dean of WMU’s University Libraries have been a truly unique experience for which I am, indeed, grateful. Most of all, beyond all of the technological delights of this increasingly complex information age, I am especially grateful to discover, once again, that the age of humanity survives, and the warmth and personal touch of human “interface” is the keystone, the reach out and “touchstone” of our University Libraries.

A College…
Continued from page 5

artists, composers, designers, and scholars in a way that informs their teaching. This IS distinctive beyond all argument. And so goes the story of WMU’s College of Fine Arts—a veritable “College of Distinction”—as seen in five “distinct” ways. [Dean Merrion then spoke of her leadership role and what is needed for the College of Fine Arts to continue to succeed in a competitive educational and economic environment.] In closing, I am reminded of the story with which I began: wealth, wisdom, and beauty were all offered to the dean. Surely, all three are needed for distinction but, in particular, I am drawn, ultimately, to beauty. Only through the arts can civilization experience and record beauty. As our raison d’etre, we strive to elevate the human condition through the arts. Once we have beauty, then insight, mystery, meaning, humanity, and truth can be achieved. Our College of Fine Arts has the distinction to elevate the human condition in Kalamazoo, the nation, and the world. I’m truly fortunate to be dean of this college, at this time, in this institution, and to have the support of my administrative colleagues, the uniquely talented faculty and staff of CFA, and the students who make all things possible.