



Pink blossoms emerge on the trees beside Paradise Pond. *Photo by Samm Smith*

Dear Friends,

I write to you from the Northeast, where sun and spring flowers have made a return appearance. This newsletter edition contains glimpses of library-related spring activities as well as Reunion happenings coming up in Neilson Library. You can also keep up with the Libraries on social media! Check out [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to see the latest events, photos from Smith College Special Collections, and information on library exhibits. Event recordings can also be found on the Libraries' [YouTube Channel](#). Thank you all for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Brandy King '01, Chair
Friends of the Smith College Libraries Executive Committee

"Libraries are the heart of any community."



"For me, becoming a Friend was a no-brainer. Ever since I was a little girl, through my years at Smith, and to this day, libraries serve to uplift my spirits and feed my wildest dreams.

As an English major, I spent many, many hours in Neilson, finding just the right spot to 'study,' and then I'd promptly fall asleep! I spent a great deal of time at the Josten Library as well, listening to my favorite music while studying—in the days before smart phones and Spotify, this was an enlightened luxury.

Libraries are the heart of any community, and it was so during my years at Smith. From my frequent visits to Smith, I can tell that the Libraries remain at the heart of that community, and it is exciting to see how they continue to evolve to serve 21st century scholars. Being a part of that vision, even in a small way, continues to connect me to Smith, and its libraries that were such a part of my experience."

— Jennifer Vacca '89

If you have given to the libraries in the past year, we'd love to hear from you. Use [this form](#) to tell us about what the Smith College Libraries meant to you as a student, and why you support the Friends today. In doing so, you will help us get to know our members better, and guide us as we plan future Friends activities and outreach.

Smith College joins Boston Library Consortium



BOSTON LIBRARY CONSORTIUM

Smith College has become the newest member of the [Boston Library Consortium \(BLC\)](#), a library consortium serving public and private universities, liberal arts colleges, state libraries, special research libraries, and public libraries in the northeastern United States. As a member, Smith becomes part of a diverse and collaborative network of library professionals working together to advance shared goals through collective action and shared leadership. Library staff will have access to BLC's robust professional development ecosystem, including curated webinars and workshops, leadership and development programs. In addition, Smith College will participate in BLC's innovative resource sharing programs and values-based licensing and content initiatives—efforts grounded in expanding access, strengthening shared infrastructure, and advancing collective impact across member institutions.

"Smith College and its libraries have long been committed to collaboration, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving – values that align closely with the BLC's purpose and priorities. Membership in the consortium will strengthen our ability to support student learning, faculty

research, and community engagement," says Dean of Libraries Nancy S. Kirkpatrick. Read more about the consortium [here](#).

Community Gets Creative at Smith Arts Day



Smithies, parents, and community members enjoy book making in Hillyer's classroom.
Photos by Samm Smith



On April 18, Smith Office for the Arts (SOFA) presented [Smith Arts Day](#), a daylong celebration of the artistic and creative communities across disciplines and across campus. As part of the day, Josten and Hillyer Libraries offered a fun array of events, including mini book-making, a mending workshop, ukulele strumming, and vocal performances by recent Smith alums. View the complete lineup [here](#).

Love & Loss after Wounded Knee lecture now available online



It's always a pleasure to welcome an author or faculty member whose research is anchored in our Special Collections. Our guest speaker on April 7 was Dr. Julie Dobrow '81, whose research for her latest book, *Love & Loss after Wounded Knee*, began while she was a student working in the Sophia Smith Collection. Julie gave a wonderful talk about Elaine Goodale and Dr. Charles Eastment. A recording is available for viewing on our [YouTube Channel](#).



The Libraries are thrilled to welcome students, families, alums, and the community to campus throughout Commencement and Reunion weekends. Below are just a few of the Libraries' offerings; for the full schedule, download the [Smith College Reunion App](#).



Memory Booth

Saturdays, May 16 & 23, during open hours
Learning Commons, Neilson Library first floor

Record a two-minute memory of your time at Smith. Bring your friends and make it a group video!



Friends Welcome Table

Saturdays, May 16 & 23, 1-4 p.m.
Neilson Library first floor

Stop by to chat with Mary Irwin and members of the Friends' Executive Committee, pick up some swag and bottles of water. Dean Kirkpatrick will join us from 2-3 p.m.



Special Collections Open House

Fridays, May 15 & 22, 10 a.m.- 12 p.m. & 1-4:45 p.m.
Saturdays, May 16 & 23, 1 - 4:45 p.m.
Neilson Library third floor

Explore unique materials from the College Archives, Mortimer Rare Book Collection, and Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History. Hourly staff-led tours of the closed stacks. Exhibit displays, button-making and exclusive Special Collections reunion swag!



Back to Class with MRBC: Botanical Books from the Thornton Collection

Fridays, May 15 and 22, 1-2 p.m.
Neilson Library 303

Join Rare Book Curator Erin McGuirl for a hands-on session with materials from the Edith Thornton Class of 1910 collection of early modern botanical books, including the first printed herbal book intended for the use of small-town doctors in 15th century Europe. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.



What the Libraries Can Still Do for You

Fridays, May 15 & 22, 3-4 p.m.
Neilson Library 011

Knowing where and how to find reliable information is more important than ever. In this workshop, learn about helpful resources available to all Smith alums, and see how current Smith students navigate research in the classroom. Walk away with stronger searching skills that will translate into your everyday life.



Women in Community: Joy and Resilience in the Archive

Saturdays, May 16 & 23, 3-4 p.m.
Neilson Library Browsing Room

Join Sophia Smith Collection Archivist Mariana Brandman to explore the rich history of women coming together in community in the Sophia Smith Collection, from the streets and on the playing fields, to the conference room and on the concert stage.



Kit Messick selected for 2026 Archives Leadership Institute

Following a competitive application process, [Kit Messick](#), Head of Technical Services for Smith College Special Collections, has been selected as a participant in the 2026 Archives Leadership Institute (ALI) at the University of Virginia. Kit is a key member of the team responsible for the long-term stewardship of the Sophia Smith Collection, the Mortimer Rare Book Collection, and the College Archives.

The Archives Leadership Institute is a grant-funded program supported by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), part of the National Archives and Records Administration. Participants were selected based on demonstrated professional achievement, leadership potential, sustained commitment to the archival field, and the capacity to influence positive change across organizations and communities. [Read more.](#)



Linda Janet Holmes Oral Histories of African-American Midwives Collection: An Opening Celebration

On March 26, the Libraries celebrated the opening of the [Linda Janet Holmes Oral Histories of African-American Midwives Collection](#), housed in the Sophia Smith Collection.

Panelists Linda Holmes, Bylye Avery, and Dr. Nikia Grayson discussed the roots and practice of Black midwifery, as well as its legacy in the birthing justice movement today. If you missed the livestream, the celebration is available to view in its entirety [on YouTube](#).

Libraries Staff Attend ALADN 2026



Mary Irwin presents at the 2026 Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN) Conference in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. *Photo by Samm Smith*

This April, Dean of Libraries Nancy S. Kirkpatrick, Library Development Officer Mary Irwin, and Communications Manager Samm Smith attended the 2026 Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN) Conference in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. As part of the conference, Mary presented *Leveraging a Love of Libraries: Successful Fundraising for a New Building*, a presentation exploring the fundraising and building process behind the Neilson Library renovation. Library and development professionals from across the country were excited to learn about Neilson and the deeply collaborative, student-first approach toward its construction.

FSCL Research Fellowships Awarded

Two Friends of the Smith College Libraries Fellowships worth \$2,500 each are among the [Special Collections Travel Fellowships](#) awarded to outside researchers each year. This year's FSCL recipients are:

- Selena Moon, a Ph.D student at the University of Minnesota –Twin Cities, in Minneapolis, MN, for her research "Asian Americans in the Reproductive Justice Movement."
- Pilar Piñon, Executive Director of the International Institute Foundation in Madrid, Spain, for her research "Studying in Spain: Narratives from Smith College's Junior Year Abroad Students and Faculty, 1930–1975."

New this year is the Robert and Judith Raymo Chaucer Fellowship. This fellowship is intended to defray the costs of travel and accommodation in order to consult the Robert and Judith Raymo Chaucer Collection. This collection consists of approximately five hundred distinctive printed items related to the works of the Middle English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1340-1400).

This inaugural fellowship was awarded to Dr. Candace Barrington of Central Connecticut State

University for her research into "Working with Global Chaucers in the Robert and Judith Raymo Chaucer Collection."

Study Breaks Sponsored by FSCL

During the upcoming reading and exam period, the Friends will provide study-break refreshments, puzzles, and coloring books to students as they navigate the final crunch of the semester.

Exhibits

Book Studies, Archives, and Museum Concentration Capstone Projects

Neilson Library third floor
Through May 2026

Smith Faculty and Alums Recent Publications

Hillyer Art Library
May 11-22, 2026

Thank you for your support!



FSCL Executive Committee members: Back row, left to right: Julie Richter '83, Stefanie Frame'98, Judy Campagnari '85, Nancy Kirkpatrick, Catherine Gees '10, Patty Gray '91, Mary Irwin. Front row, Liisa Honkaletho Rogers '82/'85, Elsa Pottala Pauley '66, Brandy King '01, Suzanne Masri '85, Paulina Do '10, Lesley Joplin '09. *Photo by Samm Smith.*

Thank you for your interest and support of the Smith College Libraries. The Friends always welcome new members, and we encourage you to share the work that we do with your classmates who may be interested in supporting the Libraries. When you give to the Libraries, you support the heart of Smith's campus. If you haven't yet made a gift this year, please [renew your support](#) today.

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Our mailing address is:

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