
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

April /May 2024 News

Dear Friends,

April is one of the busiest months of the year, and in addition to spring flowers, it brings forth spring performances, project presentations, capstone exhibits, and then finals.

A Message from Dean of Libraries Susan Fliss

The new Neilson Library marked its third anniversary since opening on March 29, 2021. Students who entered in September of that year are now juniors. Every day, the library bustles with life: students work quietly in our four large reading rooms; students gather to work together in group study rooms, in the Digital Media Hub, and enjoy a cappuccino in the Compass Cafe. Faculty and library staff teach classes in our seven teaching spaces and students actively use the services and tutoring in the Learning Commons. The entrance to the Gloria Steinem Reading Room in Special Collections just received new furniture to accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors. The staff and I remain deeply grateful to the community of alums who came together so generously to help fund the library's construction and the new resources that make Neilson Library a true hub for learning and discovery for the campus.

Spring Events

Students observe the solar eclipse on April 8th in Neilson's amphitheater. Photo by Samm Smith

Professor of Theatre Kiki Smith '71's excellent talk, "[Beyond the Seams: Noticing Lives in the Details of Old Clothes](#)" is now available for viewing on the Libraries' YouTube channel. We are very grateful to Oculus Society members who made this event possible. Kiki's book [Real Clothes, Real Lives: 200 Years of What Women Wore](#) is available for sale at the Smith Museum of Art and many bookstores.

The annual Enid Mark Lecture on Contemporary Book Arts and Poetry, was presented on April 10 by poet and visual artist Jen Bervin. Titled "[Draft Notations](#)," her presentation will be available for viewing [here](#).

Smith Arts Day

3rd Grade Campus School students display their artwork in Neilson Library. Photo by Samm Smith

On April 13 the Smith Office for the Arts (SOFA) organized the first-ever Smith Arts Day with events across campus and in the Libraries. Campus School of Smith College students displayed their river-themed art in Neilson; Cut Loose Collage hosted a bookmark making workshop in Hillyer, and open rehearsals took place in Josten Library for Blackappella, POCappella, Western MA Sacred Harp Community, and the Ukulele Strum Group. Library Communications Manager Samm Smith compiled [this video](#) of the day's library events. Many visitors, including future Smithies and families of accepted students were on campus. It was a joyful and memorable day.

Reunion Activities in Neilson Library

Memory Booth sign in Neilson Library. Photo by Jim Gipe Pivot Media

It's almost time to don the white duds and head to Northampton for Reunion. Congratulations to all our readers in classes ending in 4's and 9's; we hope to see many of you here on campus. Oculus Society members: wear your pin!

Activities are planned on both weekends in Neilson Library:

The Smith College Memory Booth will be open to all who wish to record a short video, throughout the day on Friday and Saturday, on both weekends, in the Learning Commons, Neilson Library 1st Floor.

An Open House is planned in Neilson for both Fridays of Reunion and on Saturday May 18, from 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Explore the library at your own pace, and view exhibits on the Ground Floor, 2nd and 3rd Floors.

Visit Special Collections, meet archivists and curators and view student capstone exhibits (Book Studies & Archives Concentrations), 3rd Floor. Hands-on button making and postcard writing activities will be available.

Library hours for Neilson, Josten, Hillyer and Special Collections will be listed on [this page](#). Note that the Special Collections Reading Room will be open to visitors but closed for research during Reunion.

Friends of Smith Reunion Award

Help your class compete for the 2023 [Friends Reunion Award](#). Join one or more Friends groups—Athletics, the Botanic Garden, the Libraries, the Museum of Art. The class with the most members in any group will receive the award which is announced on Ivy Day.

As classes end, the Libraries will soon bid farewell to sixty six graduating student library assistants. We invited them to reflect on their work experience, their plans for the future, and

any advice they would offer incoming first years. [Here are some of their contributions.](#)

Smith College Libraries now has its own Linked In page. The page will be used as a tool for posting news, events, and featured stories pertaining to the Libraries, as well as job postings and updates on alums. Make sure to follow our [Linked In](#) page and invite classmates and friends to follow as well!

Friends News

Next week, the Friends will continue the tradition of providing students with study-break refreshments, puzzles and coloring books to help them get through long study hours before finals. During the course of the spring semester, the Friends provided funding for the following:

- Smith [ScholarWorks](#) Online repository
- The Libraries Exhibition Program
- Two Staff Development grants
- Book acquisitions
- Two Special Collections research grants:
- Friends of the Libraries Fellowship and
- Margaret Storrs Grierson Fellowship

New Online Resource available to Alums

A new resource was recently added to the [collection of electronic resources](#) the Libraries make available to alums on the Smith Alumnae network (including access to JSTOR which is paid for by the Friends.) The newest addition is AM Explorer, a gateway to millions of pages of primary source materials, spanning the 15th to 21st centuries worldwide, with new collections added every year.

Special Collections News

Gloria Steinem '56 Reading Room during Reunion 2023. Photo by Mary Irwin

Recently Processed Collections

Othelia Cromwell and Adelaide Cromwell. Photos courtesy of Smith College Special Collections.

The [Cromwell Family papers](#), a collection of great historical significance to Smith College, has recently been processed by Collections Archivist Dan Michelson and student assistants. The

collection documents the personal and professional lives of members of the Cromwell Family, particularly John Wesley Cromwell, his daughter Otelia Cromwell (Class of 1900), and her niece Adelaide M. Cromwell (Class of 1940). The bulk of the collection consists of the papers of Adelaide M. Cromwell, including her correspondence, research, and writings on a wide range of topics relating to African American history and society.

Technical services staff and student assistants have also been busy processing other collections, including the [Dolores Alexander papers](#). These archival materials document Alexander's participation in the feminist and lesbian-feminist movements, including her work as Executive Director in the National Organization for Women (NOW), and her work as a journalist and co-owner of the feminist restaurant Mother Courage.

Every year, visiting scholars' research leads to articles and books based on the collections in Neilson Library. An example is this article drawing on the Dolores Alexander papers: [The Funky, Fascinating History of America's Feminist Restaurants](#).

Research Fellowships Awarded

Special Collections staff received a record number of travel grant applications this year. Research fellowships have been awarded to 16 scholars, students, and writers. A list of the recipients can be found [here](#).

All visitors are welcome to view Special Collections materials in-person in the Gloria Steinem '56 Reading Room on Neilson's third floor; more information about planning a visit is [here](#).

Neilson Library Exhibits

Grace Phippard '24 with Exhibition Coordinator Sydney Nguyễn, installing Phippard's capstone exhibit about Delores Alexander.
Photo by Mary Irwin.

Amplify Public Art Projects

Gallery Wall, Neilson Library Ground Floor, March 4- May 30

Sponsored by the Wurtele Center for Leadership and the Smith Office for the Arts (SOFA).

Neilson Library: An Evolution

2nd Floor Exhibition Gallery, ongoing.

Dolled Up: Playing with the Dolls of Special Collections

Curated by Vivian DeRosa '24

3rd floor, Neilson Library, through May 30.

Book Studies & Archives Concentrations Capstone Projects

3rd Floor, Neilson Library, through May 30.

ubiquitous before manufactured
dolls became widely available and
affordable.

Right: Smith College Club of
Cleveland Sophia Smith dolls - fill
their skirts with coins and they will
stand up!

Thank you for your interest and support of the Smith College Libraries. We welcome new members, and we encourage you to share the work that we do with your classmates who may be interested in supporting Smith's libraries.

I encourage you to [renew your support](#) today. When you give to the Libraries, you support the heart of Smith's campus.

Best wishes,
Ann Alpers '84
Chair, Executive Committee
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

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