
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

June 2025 News



Class of 2005 alums chat on the steps by Neilson Library

Photo by Jess Scranton

Dear Friends,

Happy summer! Last month, Smith's Libraries helped celebrate the end of the academic year and welcomed returning alums during reunion. With the shift in seasons, preparations are already underway for the next academic year. This seasonal cycle signals new beginnings and renewal for the campus community.

Please read on for an exciting announcement about a new beginning: the College has announced the appointment of Nancy S. Kirkpatrick as Smith's next Dean of Libraries.

Renewal is also a theme for the Friends Executive Committee. My term will end on June 30th. It's been a joy to engage with Smith's outstanding Libraries and the people who make them such rich resources for teaching and learning. Thanks to all of you for welcoming me and the Friends to your inboxes. Brandy King '01, our new chair, looks forward to continuing to keep you updated on the latest library news and all things Friends.



Incoming Dean of Libraries Nancy S. Kirkpatrick

New Dean of Libraries

Nancy S. Kirkpatrick has been named Smith College Dean of Libraries. She will join the staff on August 1st.

Nancy joins Smith from Florida International University, where she has led a \$17 million library system spanning two campuses and more than 100 staff. With a Juris Doctor, a master's in library and information science, and decades of leadership experience in both academic and nonprofit sectors, Nancy brings a unique approach that combines strategic vision with scholarly dedication.

"I'm honored and excited to join the Smith College community—a place whose mission, history, and spirit I've long admired," says Nancy. "The libraries at Smith are more than repositories; they are dynamic spaces for discovery, connection, and transformation. I look forward to partnering with students, faculty, staff, and community members to continue advancing that vision. It's a privilege to steward such extraordinary collections and to help ensure the [Smith] Libraries remain inclusive, innovative, and deeply engaged with the world around us." [Read the press release.](#)

Friendship & Joy



President Sarah with members of the Class of 1975 in Neilson's Skyline Reading Room; Melissa and Adrienne Class of 1990; two alums find a comfortable spot from which to admire the Oculus. Photos by Jim Gipe, Pivot Media.

Every reunion is memorable, but it was extra special for this year's returning classes who hadn't been to campus since 2015. It was significant too for the Class of 2020, whose graduation was virtual. Thus, spending time in Neilson Library was on the to-do list for many.

The Libraries' workshops on research skills for life were well attended. Over forty memories were recorded at the Memory Booth (group recordings were popular this year,) and the Friends Welcome table provided an opportunity to connect with alums, members of the Friends and the Oculus Society, and to share information about [library resources for alums](#).

Friends of Smith Reunion Award



Members of the Class of 1970 were photographed next to the class memorial tree.

Congratulations to the Class of 1970 for winning this year's Friends of Smith Reunion award. This award goes to the class with the greatest number of members in any of the four Friends groups on campus: Athletics, Botanic Garden, Libraries, and Museum of Art. Thank you to everyone who joined or renewed their memberships in April and May to help their class compete for the award—it was a close contest this year!

Friends News



L-R: Jean Ferguson, Brandy King, Ann Alpers and Mary Irwin

Photo by Samm Smith

A message from Interim Dean of Libraries Jean Ferguson:

“Ann Alpers ’84 has chaired the Friends Executive Committee since 2019, and she will be succeeded by Brandy King ’01. Ann led the Friends during a time that was characterized by transition: throughout the pandemic and the final two years of Neilson’s construction, followed by the re-opening of Neilson and the return of books, students, faculty and staff to campus. The funds raised by the Friends were especially valued during this time, and many unexpected start-up needs were met. I would like to thank Ann for her dedicated service, her flexibility and commitment to our Libraries.”

Brandy King '01

As a student, Brandy worked as a Reference Assistant in Neilson. She was impressed by her supervisor’s seeming ability to answer any question under the sun. Mentored by said Reference Librarian Bruce Sajdak, and encouraged by other staff librarians, Brandy decided to pursue a Masters in Library Science at Simmons University. Today she is a self-employed librarian working in the non-profit sector. She has been a member of the Friends since she graduated, and she previously served on the Friends Executive Committee from 2013-2019. Welcome, Brandy!

Memorial Gift

A significant gift has been received from longtime member of the Friends, Carla Montori ’72, providing for the purchase of books, ebooks and other materials related to the study of French language, literature and culture. Carla’s gift is made in memory of her mother, M. Elizabeth Roy Montori 1944 and her great-aunt, Esther Roy 1920, both of whom majored in French.

Special Collections News

Special Collections hosted 1,070 visitors during both reunion weekends. Those who signed up for tours of the locked stacks were thrilled to get a behind-the-scenes tour of rare books, the College Archives, and Sophia Smith Collection for Women's History manuscripts. New acquisitions from all three repositories were on display, as well as capstone projects by Archives Concentration seniors.





From top; Class of 2020 alumns look at yearbooks; "Dressing like Shirley" capstone project about 1930's children's clothing; alumns pick up Special Collections swag, and reminisce over College Archives materials.

Photos by Jim Gipe, Pivot Media



Special Collections had a surprise during reunion – their first-ever proposal in the Gloria Steinem '56 Reading Room! Olivia Blackmer proposed to Sofie Koonce '22 during the open house on Saturday May 17. Sofie was a book studies concentrator at Smith, and the couple have a shared love of books, book history, and the Mortimer Rare Book Collection. Their engagement included an impromptu photoshoot in the rare book stacks. Congratulations to the happy couple!

\$150 for the 150th Anniversary

In honor of the College's anniversary, Special Collections [has launched a fundraising initiative](#) to raise the profile of the collections and their use; bolster future activities, including acquisitions, digitization, reference, teaching, exhibitions, and events; and connect with the many donors who have historically made the work possible. Please help spread the word that [gifts of \\$150](#) or more will directly help meet our mission to foster inquiry, critical thinking, and knowledge building through an active engagement with the past and a focus on the future.

Fragile Perfection



Photos by Samm Smith

The Mortimer Rare Book Collection recently acquired an unusual work created by lettering artist and designer Suzanne Moore. Moore's 1996 [Fragile Perfection](#), comprises a tiny artist's book encased within a sea shell, which is housed in turn in a small custom box. The hand-lettered book includes an excerpt from Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea*. [Smith's miniature books](#) range from centuries-old pocket prayer books to modern day artist's books like this one.

Library Exhibits

[Smithies! Celebrating 150 Years of Student Life](#): A compilation of provides glimpses of students at work and at play from 1880 to 2018, selected from the College Archives. Neilson Library, Ground Floor Gallery, throughout 2025.

[Theatre of the Oppressed](#), Josten Performing Arts Library. Open 1-5p.m., weekdays in summer.



Hillyer Art Library presents a rainbow display of works by and about LGBTQ+ artists to mark Pride month; through June 30. Open 1-5 p.m., weekdays in summer.

Thank You

As we approach the end of the Fiscal Year, we are very grateful for the support you have provided, and continue to provide, to the Friends, to Special Collections, to library endowed and other special funds. As we plan for the coming academic year, know that the discretionary Friends income is important. Federal policy, inflationary pressure, and the growing needs for academic resources have combined to strain our Libraries' budgets. [A gift to the Friends](#) will make a meaningful difference in our Libraries' ability to support Smith students' research and learning. Thank you for being a Friend!

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



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