
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

May 2025 News



Spring! Burton Lawn viewed from Neilson Library

Photo by Mary Irwin

Dear Friends,

Spring has arrived in Northampton! As the temperature warms, academic work also heats up. With the academic year winding down, Smith students are busy producing final papers, reports and posters. Library staff are also busy assisting them with podcasts, project websites and exhibits. Please read more about those exhibits below!

Celebrating Faculty Scholarship

Students aren't alone in their academic endeavors. Last week, the Libraries hosted the 4th annual Celebrating Faculty Scholarship event in Neilson's Skyline Reading Room. President Sarah and Provost LaMothe were on hand to congratulate the many faculty members who published articles and new books since last year. This year's faculty publications can be viewed in [ScholarWorks](#).





Clockwise from top: President Sarah browses published works by faculty; Assistant Professor Jiayan Sun displays his new album of music by Ferruccio Busoni; Librarians Esther Roth-Katz, KellyAnne McGuire, Jessica Ryan and Instructional Technologist Abril Navarro; Professor Kiki Smith '74 lifts up her book "Real Clothes, Real Lives." Photos by Jessica Scranton.

Students Present Capstone Projects

Students completing the Archives Concentration, Book Studies Concentration and Museum Concentration presented their capstone projects followed by a reception and project exhibition on April 28. Students created both digital and physical exhibits, some of which can be seen below.



Access the Past, Archive the Present: Accessibility at Smith College

By Sarah Mitrani '25

The history of accessibility at Smith is inaccessible.

I began this project in the fall of 2023 after struggling to find evidence of disabled students at Smith in the archives. My goal is to make the history of disability services, accessibility, and student activism at Smith more accessible to everyone, and especially to the disabled students at Smith.

This research project has taken me in multiple directions over the last two years, and now I seek to add to the archives.

Access the Past:	Building the Bridge:	Archive the Present:
<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">An Archival Exploration of the Evolution of Disability Services and Accessibility at Smith, 1970s-1990s</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Special by the Student: 2025 Smith College Archives and Special Collections Under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License</p>	<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">An Oral History with ej seiberl '03, Director of the Accessibility Resource Center</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Photograph of a subject by Jordan DeBelle, 2022 Smith College Special Collections</p>	<p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Documenting Dis-Organizing, a Disability Justice Student Organization</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Dis-Organizing Logo, 2022</p>

Exhibit this way!

Explore this physical and digital exhibit and contribute your experience and ideas to the archives!



Link to digital exhibit.



Above: Digital capstone projects on view in the Lane Reading Room. Exhibits of Archives Concentration projects are on view on the 3rd Floor. Photos by Travis Grandy and Mary Irwin

Graduating Student Library Assistants



Student library assistants help keep the libraries running, providing assistance at service desks, mentoring their peers, retrieving rare books and manuscripts, shelving books, and gaining work experience in a variety of other behind-the-scenes jobs. Some library assistants recently [shared reflections](#) about their jobs and their academic experiences. Wren Colwell '25 (left) is one such student who has worked in the Friends' Office and in Josten Library, and is planning to pursue a library degree next year. We congratulate all the members of the Class of 2025 as they prepare to graduate. Photo of Wren by Gena Levin '25.

Reunion 2025

Library Workshop

Alums are invited to attend, “Library Lifers: What the Libraries Can Still Do For You.” These days, knowing how and where to find reliable information is more important than ever. Learn how current Smith students are navigating research in the classroom, and how you can apply those skills in everyday life. This session will also cover the library resources available to Smith alums. **Space is limited so sign up soon.** Fridays, May 16 and 23, 3-4 p.m., Neilson 011. Register [here](#) for Reunion I, or [here](#) for Reunion II.



Alums examine yearbooks in the Gloria Steinem '54 Reading Room, 3rd Floor.

Other Reunion activities in Neilson Library:

Record a two-minute memory from your time at Smith in the Memory Booth, Learning Commons, 1st Floor.

Take a self-guided tour of the building - or a staff-led tour of the closed Special Collections stacks.

Stop by the Friends' welcome table in the central hall of Neilson's 1st Floor on both Saturday afternoons. If you are an Oculus Society member, please wear your **Oculus Society pin** to be recognized for your support of the Libraries, and to connect with other Oculus Society members throughout your stay.

There are exhibits to be seen on the Ground Floor, 2nd Floor and 3rd Floor, where you can

try button-making and pick up some Special Collections swag!

Josten Performing Arts Library and Hillyer Art Library will be open 11 am to 5 pm on Saturday, May 17.

Friends of Smith Reunion Award

If you haven't renewed your membership yet this year, remember that the class with the most members in any [Smith Friends group](#)—Athletics, Botanic Garden, Libraries, or the Museum of Art— has a chance to win this award. Join one or more of the groups [here](#).

Friends News



Jean Ferguson, Brandy King '01, Ann Alpers '84 and Mary Irwin. Photo by Samm Smith

Interim Dean of Libraries Jean Ferguson welcomed Brandy King '01 and Ann Alpers '84 to campus on April 30. Brandy will succeed Ann as Chair of the Friends, beginning in July.

Three librarians received Staff Development grants from the Friends this year. These grants are made available for special training opportunities. Topics included Artificial Intelligence in Science, library instruction, and managing library services for diverse populations.

This year's **Friends of the Libraries Travel to Collections Fellowship** has been awarded to: LaNesha DeBardelaben, who will spend time delving into the National Archives of the YWCA (yes, located in Special Collections,) for her research into "A History of Race Relations in the YWCA, 1946-1976."

As the semester comes to a close, the Friends will once again provide evening snacks in all library locations for students working on final papers and exam prep.



Recently, the **Friends of the Libraries Preservation Fund** made possible a large binding backlog project. Five hundred and forty journal series were gathered from all three libraries, and sent to Greensboro, NC, where they were bound and returned in preservation quality bindings. "This represents an important investment in our collection of print journals," said Head of Collection Strategies Jodi Hoover, "ensuring complete serial runs, and protecting them for longterm use." Above are examples of bound journals in the stacks.

Special Collections News

In this sesquicentennial year of Smith College, Special Collections' focus on documenting the lives and experiences of women and gender minorities [has never been more important](#). In honor of the College's anniversary, Special Collections is launching a new fundraising initiative, \$150 (or more) for the 150th!



The goals of this campaign are 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.

A Mystery Woman No More



We are all aware of Sophia Smith's great legacy, but what do we really know about this astute and visionary woman? On March 8 - Founder's Day - Co-Executive Director of Historic Northampton Laurie Sanders '88 lifted the veil, and delivered a superb lecture

about Sophia's life with "Smith and Northampton: A History of the College's Founding." You may listen to it [here](#). Her talk begins 14 minutes into the video following President Sarah's address.

The Last Book Stand



Check out this selection of photos documenting [student life at Smith College](#) in 1948 taken by LIFE magazine photographer Peter Stackpole. Notice the sturdy wooden book stands that can be seen supporting the students' books in Neilson Library.



Today, only one of these carved book stands remains in Neilson, and its survival is due to a member of the Class of 1960. The alum in question (who shall remain nameless) mailed it back a few years ago, explaining that she had borrowed it for her room, and then took it home "by accident." It followed her through various homes for 60 years. Had she not taken such good care of it and returned it, it too might have been lost. It is now on display in the Dean of Libraries' Office.

Staff News

Final interviews have been completed in the search for the next Dean of Libraries, following Susan Fliss's retirement last month.

Head of Public Services **KellyAnne McGuire** joined the staff in February. She oversees the Central Service Point in Neilson. With an MSLIS from the University of Illinois's ISchool, KellyAnne has worked, volunteered, and taught at public, academic, and high school libraries in Massachusetts and New York. Most recently, she served as Acting Library Director at the Alumni Library at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, MA.

Sarah Hunter joins the Libraries this month as Data & Social Sciences Librarian. She most recently served as a lecturer in the Political Science department at Clemson University. Previously, during her time at the University of Colorado Boulder, she began a collaboration with a colleague in their libraries involving active learning and data literacy. This collaboration sparked Sarah's interest in working in libraries to promote data literacy. It also resulted in two ALA presentations and an article in preparation.

Erin McGuirl will join Special Collections as the new Curator of Rare Books, on July 1, 2025. Erin comes to Smith with tremendous experience, most recently as the executive director of the Bibliographical Society of America, but also The New York Society Library and Columbia University Avery Art & Architectural Library. Erin's extensive work in the rare book trade accompanies her academic achievements, including research into women's work in the film industry and as an instructor in several rare book school programs.

Library Exhibits

Smithies! Celebrating 150 Years of Student Life

A compilation of photos curated from the Smith College Archives.
Neilson Library, Ground Floor Gallery, throughout 2025.

Senior Capstone Exhibits

Archives Concentration student exhibits.
Neilson Library, Third Floor, through June.

Handel's Julius Caesar

An exhibit celebrating the first performance in the U.S. of George Frederick Handel's Julius Caesar, conducted by Professor Werner Josten.
Josten Library, through May.

Thank You

We are very grateful for your support of the Friends and the Oculus Society, and for the library programming and opportunities that your gifts make possible. The spring semester is ending but the Libraries will continue to provide beautiful spaces and scholarly support to Smith School for Social Work students and faculty and other seasonal programs throughout the summer. It's always a good time to be a Friend.

If you have not yet done so, I encourage you to [renew your support](#) today. We welcome

new members, and we encourage you to share this newsletter with your classmates.

When you give to the Libraries, you are supporting the heart of Smith's campus.

Sincerely,

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

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