
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

November 2023 News

Dear Friends,

Smith's Libraries this fall celebrated several events including President Willie-LeBreton's inauguration, a spooky Halloween complete with a grimoire, the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop, and the art of protest posters. Our academic and collaborative spaces and extraordinary collections reflect the diversity of activities, learners and events that shape life on campus and in the world beyond. Read on to learn more about how the campus libraries serve as "the heart of Smith."

The Inauguration and the Libraries

The Libraries joined the celebrations and marked the inauguration of Smith's 12th president, Sarah Willie-LeBreton, with an open house. There were staff-led tours of Neilson, a virtual reality display in Hillyer, an open house in Special Collections, and a retrospective exhibit about Smith's past presidents.

From the top: Neilson entrance hall, Director of Special Collections Beth Myers gives a tour, The Presidents of Smith College exhibit, 12th president and other buttons. Photos courtesy of College Relations

Halloween Shenanigans

It's always fun to witness students' creativity at Halloween. New this year, student assistants prepared a "séance," a themed open house in Special Collections. Two hundred students and other visitors came to see materials with themes of magic, witchcraft and divination, and take part in Halloween craft activities that included making monster masks. Spell books, a 17th-century Grimoire, photos from Sessions House hauntings, and Sylvia Plath's Tarot Card guide were on display for visitors to enjoy. Everyone left with glow in the dark stickers and new postcards.

Halloween festivities. Photos courtesy of Special Collections

Friends of the Libraries News

This fall, the Friends provided considerable support for library departments. Friends funds supported the library orientation program for new students and ScholarWorks, the college's open access repository. Additional funding allocations included a User Experience (UX) summer fellowship, two research fellowships in Special Collections, a staff development grant, Access Services student programming, new acquisitions, preservation software for Special Collections, a faculty grant to create an Open Education Resource (OER), and a subscription to JSTOR for all alums. Gifts from Oculus Society members will underwrite the Exhibition Program through June 2024.

The Friends Fund has long been an important supplement to the Libraries' budget, addressing various areas of need, and it is largely supported by modest gifts from alums, parents, faculty and friends of the college.

New members join the Friends' Executive Committee

Members of the Friends Executive Committee (left to right,) front row: Julie Richter '83, Liisa Rogers '82 MSW '85, Susan Fliss, Paulina Do '10; back row: Ann Alpers '84, Mary Irwin, Patty Gray '91, Judy Campagnari '85, Stefanie Frame '98. Not pictured: Lesley L. Joplin '09, Emily Knox '98, Sandra Landau Rippe '67 and Serena Williams '81. Photo by Samm Smith.

The Friends Executive Committee met on campus on October 26 & 27. New to the committee are:

Paulina Do '10, a life scientist who works with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), based in Boston. Before joining the EPA, Paulina backpacked along the West Coast and throughout Canada and SE Asia, developing her Vietnamese language skills. As a student, Paulina served on the Libraries Student Advisory Committee.

Liisa Honkalehto Rogers, BA '82, MSW '85. Following a career as a social worker, Lisa spent 14 years as a medical librarian and researcher at Healthwise Inc. in Boise, ID. A graduate with an MLS from the University of Washington, Lisa has a long connection to Smith's libraries; her grandmother was the head of circulation services in Neilson in the 1940s.

Julie Richter '83 directs the National Institute of American History & Democracy (a partnership between William & Mary and Colonial Williamsburg). She is also a lecturer in the History Department at William and Mary.

The Friends office welcomes recommendations and self-nominations for the Executive Committee.

800,000 Books and Journals Reshelfed

Climate controlled stacks in the Five College Library Annex. Photo by Samm Smith.

Visitors to Neilson sometimes ask, "where are the other books?," a nod to the Libraries' lesser-used collections that are stored off campus at the Five College Libraries Annex facility in Hatfield. Recently, a crew of eight workers completed a project to re-shelve the entire Smith collection there. The goal was to enable the Libraries to store the books and journals in

this shared space in the most effective way. Take a [peek inside the facility](#) to see the work in progress. The project took 27 weeks to complete, and over 800,000 items were re-shelved and stored in 50,000 bar-coded trays. These materials are available upon request, and ensured by deliveries to campus five days a week.

The Power of Art as Protest

Protest Posters exhibit. Photos courtesy of College Relations

The “[Radical Visions: The Art of Protest Posters](#)” exhibit currently on display in Neilson has garnered a lot of interest both from visitors and the campus community alike. Co-curated by the Director of the Smith Office for the Arts Leigh Fagin and the Libraries Exhibition Coordinator Sydney Nguyen and drawing upon the large quantity of protest posters in Special Collections, it has inspired class activities for middle schoolers, Smithies and programming for prospective students. It has also sparked number of associated programs and events. In the New Year, the Libraries will partner with the Wurtele Center for Leadership and the Smith Office for the Arts (SOFA) to sponsor Smith’s 2023-24 [Amplify Public Art Competition](#).

Exquisite New Additions to Special Collections

Detailed illustrations from SEEDS by Beverly Duncan. Photo by Samm Smith

The Mortimer Rare Book Collection recently acquired two beautiful collections of miniature proportions from Beverly Duncan, a botanical artist from Ashfield, MA: *SEEDS*, a series of 19 5”x5” books, and *52 Weeks of Observations*, two clamshell-boxed sets of equally small paintings. Each collection, created with watercolor and pen-and-ink illustrations, details the life cycles of flora and fauna close to her home. The two collections took more than nine years to complete. [Read more](#) about Duncan and what led her to create these exquisitely detailed works of art.

Josten Celebrates Hip Hop's 50th Anniversary

Kat Godfrey shares items from the Hip Hop exhibit. Photo by Mary Irwin.

A selection of Hip Hop books and music is on display in Josten Library to mark the 50th anniversary of this influential genre. Curated by Collection Services & Circulation Associate Kat Godfrey with assistance from Rachel Yang ‘25, the materials feature various artists as well as the art and culture of Hip Hop. “Since we serve the departments of Music, Theatre and Dance, we had a large range of materials from which to choose,” said Godfrey. Students and faculty are invited to browse, borrow, and

add their favorite artists to a growing list.

A Seasonal Reading from ScholarWorks

How does food, and the food we choose to eat, reflect our sense of who we are and where we understand ourselves to belong? In “[Comfort Food, Acquired Taste, and Fusion Cuisine: A Migrant Journey](#),” Italian Studies professor, Giovanna Bellesia explores this topic. From the humorous insight afforded by how we consume coffee, to the immigrant’s complex relationship with their adopted country and former homeland, the food we eat is strikingly revealing of one’s internal compass of who and where they are, where they came from, and where they are going. A fascinating area of study and a delicious read! Salute! This article was selected by Scholarly Communications Librarian Jessica Ryan.

Current Library Exhibits

Radical Visions: The Art of Protest Posters, Level G through January 2024.

The Presidents of Smith College, Level 3 Main Hall, through November 2023.

50th Anniversary of Hip Hop, Josten Library 1st Floor, through mid-December 2023.

Neilson Library: An Evolution, Exhibition Gallery, Level 2, ongoing.

Thank you for your support of the Libraries this past year. I encourage you to [join or renew your support](#) today. Unrestricted dollars provided by the Friends enable Smith’s Libraries to test new programs, support innovative research, and broaden access to the College’s world class collections. Your gift to the Friends helps more students and scholars experience the Libraries and learn from their collections. Thank you for being a Friend!

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

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