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# Friends of the Smith College Libraries

## March 2026 News



Neilson Library during a recent snow flurry. Photo by Samm Smith

Dear Friends,

We write to you from our beautiful snow-covered campus, where students are tucked into cozy corners in all the libraries. The Friends are excited to host two upcoming virtual events which you may read more about below; we would love for you to join us!

Read on to learn about how students participated in Love Data Week, how the season finale of a hot TV show led to dozens of queries to the College Archives, and a new initiative called "Music to Study By."

Sincerely,

Brandy King '01, Chair

Friends of the Smith College Libraries Executive Committee

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**I Give So that the Libraries Remain at the Heart of Student Growth**



*I am a Friend of the Smith College Libraries because Neilson Library shaped my Smith experience. It was the heart of my academic life—from study groups and late-night sessions to quiet naps and my work-study job with the Friends of the Libraries. Returning to the renovated Neilson, I found it felt more vibrant and open, yet still unmistakably the same beloved place. Supporting the Libraries helps ensure that Neilson, Hillyer, and Josten libraries remain second homes and at the heart of student growth for every Smithie, now and always.*

--Erinn Summers '16

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.

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## Upcoming Friends of the Libraries Events



Dean of Libraries Nancy S. Kirkpatrick. Photo by Samm Smith.

### **A Chat with the Dean of Libraries**

**March 25, 4:00 p.m., Webinar.**

Join us for this virtual session to meet the new Dean of Libraries, Nancy S. Kirkpatrick. Since arriving last August, the Dean has been focused on understanding the operations of the Libraries, observing how students are using our spaces, and reviewing priorities for our collections. Get an insider's look at early impressions and the strategic vision for the Libraries' role at Smith. [Watch this brief video](#) to learn more about Dean Kirkpatrick. Information on how to register for this event will be sent to members of the Friends and the Oculus Society.



Julie Dobrow '81 and her latest book. Photos courtesy of the author

## **Love and Loss after Wounded Knee: A Biography of an Extraordinary Interracial Marriage**

**April 7, 4:30 p.m. Neilson Browsing Room, and via Zoom.**

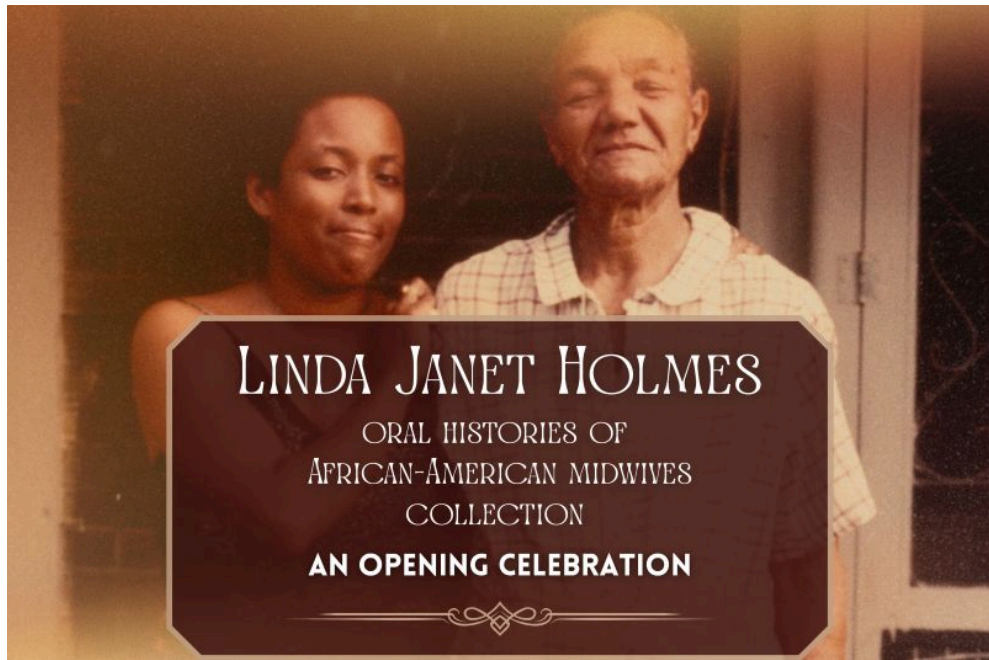
Author and Tufts University professor Julie Dobrow '81 is delighted to return to Smith to share her research into the remarkable lives of [Elaine Goodale and Dr. Charles Eastman \(Ohiyé Sá\)](#). She first discovered their papers while a student at Smith, and she remained intrigued by their experiences until she was able to devote herself fully to the extensive research necessary to produce this biography. All are welcome. This is a hybrid event - [register here to join online](#). Sponsored by the Friends of the Smith College Libraries.

## **More Library Events**

### **The Future of Privacy: Working Towards a Society That Protects Our Personal Data**

**March 23, 5:00-6:30 p.m. Neilson Browsing Room**

Guest speaker Sarah Lamdan is the Executive Director of the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom. A former law professor and librarian, Lamdan is a nationally recognized expert in information access, privacy, and censorship defense. Her research focuses on data privacy, open government law, and other information law topics. This is an in-person event, and open to the public. Sponsored by the Five College Libraries Development Fund.



**Linda Janet Holmes Oral Histories of African-American Midwives Collection: A Celebration and Panel Discussion.**

**March 26, 6-7:30 p.m., Neilson Browsing Room, and online via Zoom.**

In 1981, Linda Janet Holmes conducted a series of oral histories with 46 Black midwives in Alabama. Her interviews explored birthing practices that had been handed down from ancestral foremothers and enslaved midwives. To mark the opening of the collection, Sophia Smith Collection Archivist Mariana Brandman will moderate a discussion with Linda Janet Holmes, Byllye Avery, and Dr. Nikia Grayson. [Read more about this event here.](#) All are welcome at this hybrid event; [register here to join online.](#) Sponsored by Smith College Special Collections.

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**Library News**

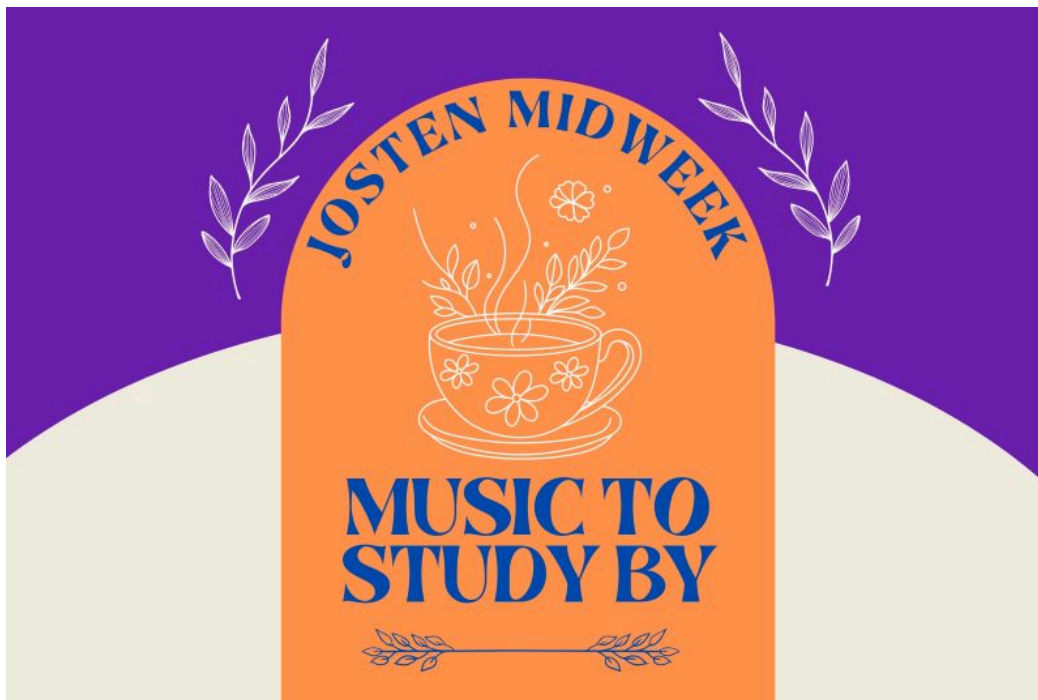


Sarah Hunter. Photo by Samm Smith.

## **Sarah Hunter digs into—and loves—all things data**

[New Data and Social Science Librarian Sarah Hunter](#) loves demystifying data, and teaching others how to collect, analyze, and use data appropriately. "I find a lot of data sources for political science, economics, and sociology papers, but I also answer random questions. I've helped a student get the right kind of data for a project about NASA and satellite launches. I helped somebody write a program for finding certain types of verses in the Bible. I guide students when they say, 'I have the data, but how do I use it?'" That is why she chose to give up her faculty position teaching international affairs and political methodology, and dedicate herself to working as a librarian. The recent [Love Data Week](#) provided Sarah with a perfect opportunity to connect with community members about data resources and raise awareness about how data permeates our lives.

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### **Music to Study By**

A new collaboration between Josten Library and the Music Department is providing “Music to Study By” on Wednesday afternoons throughout the semester. This series provides student and faculty instrumentalists an informal way to make music in the community while providing a soundscape for library users to enjoy for an hour each week.

### **Robin Buckley’s (Theoretical) Smith College Life**

When Robin Buckley was admitted to Smith on the TV show “Stranger Things,” and is seen wearing a 1989 Smith T-shirt, nostalgia and Smith pride immediately took hold of students and alums alike. Interest in that era spiked, and a multitude of queries landed in the College Archives, prompting staff to put together [a montage of photos from 1989](#) as context for this theoretical student. There was so much interest that the college created a pop-up online store so people could order their very own black on yellow, now famous, 1989 Smith T-shirt.



Dr. Theanne Griffith '08 and her family wore the 1989 Tshirt on Rally Day. Photo by Mary Irwin

## Rally Day Medalist

Hearty congratulations to Dr. Theanne Griffith '08, on receiving the Smith Medal last week. As a student, Griffith spent a great deal of time in Young Science Library: it was her favorite place to study alone or with friends, or to take a nap between classes. She became a neuroscientist, and today runs her own lab at UC Davis. Griffith is also an award-winning author with her series for children, *The Magnificent Makers*, and the co-author of the nonfiction series *Ada Twist, Scientist: The Why Files*, which accompanies the Netflix series of the same name. She has been a staunch supporter of the Libraries, contributing to the Friends every year since she graduated.

[Read the remarks of this year's medalists](#) Elim Chan '09, Wendy Brown Dean '87, Theanne Griffith '08, Lori L. Tharps '94.

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## Special Collections News

Smith College Special Collections has embarked on a project to catalog all 1,100+ periodicals located in the Sophia Smith Collection of women's history in order to make them more accessible and usable by researchers. Additionally, a major box shift is underway across all storage areas to make better use of space, and open up room for collection growth, especially for rare books. Standard sized books will be stored in archival trays, and heavy boxes will move from top shelves to lower shelves, ensuring a safer working environment for all.

Special Collections will host a Career Insights open house on March 5 for students curious about career pathways in archives and rare books. Students will have the opportunity to get

an insider tour of Special Collections, and meet staff with backgrounds in archives, museums, libraries, historic houses, and more.



Special Connections in Special Collections. Photos by Samm Smith and Mary Irwin

On February 13, Special Collections hosted the very popular *Special Connections in Special Collections* event. In addition to displays of sweet and spicy items from the collections, there was fun swag, romantic decorations, and a WOZQ DJ spinning tunes. This year, 678 students and community members attended the afternoon event.

## March is Women's History Month



Black Reproductive Justice HERStory Walk exhibit. Photo by Mary Irwin

Throughout the month of March, in partnership with the Human Rights Initiatives at Smith and several campus departments, the traveling exhibition, *Black Reproductive Justice HERStory Walk*, will be on display on Neilson Library's 3rd floor. This showcases the history, stories and continuing impact of the Black reproductive justice movement, including that of Smith professor Loretta Ross.

The exhibition is shown alongside *The Path to Reproductive Justice: National and Global Movements, 1970's - present*. STRIDE scholar Olivia Manchand '27 curated this exhibit of archival materials drawn from the Sophia Smith Collection of women's history which traces the evolution of the global movement for women's human rights and reproductive justice. A must-see pairing and open to the public.

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## You Help Make So Much Happen

Your contributions as members of the Friends of the Libraries support student programming, staff development, research in Special Collections, ScholarWorks, collection development, and our Friends events. The strength of the Friends lies in our collective annual giving, and the long term support we provide for all three Smith's Libraries and Special Collections.

To renew your support, [you may make a gift here](#), or send a check to the address below. We

welcome new members, and we encourage you to share the work that we do with your alum classmates.

Note: if you use the online giving form on the main Smith website, and you don't see the library fund you wish to support on the "Designation" drop down menu, you can simply enter the fund name in the "Special Instructions" box. Thank you for supporting the heart of the campus!

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Friends of the Smith College Libraries  
Alumnae Gymnasium, 83 Green Street  
Northampton, MA 01063

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