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## Archives Annual Report, 2019-2020

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# 2019-2020 Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian  
December 28, 2020

## Staffing, Accessions and Service Summary

Four students assisted me in processing collections and providing services to our community this year. We also benefitted from two project-specific volunteers this year. Both Julie Wood and Amy Sutter continued harvesting selected e-records (distributed online and by email) and added them to DigitalCommons.

The only accessions I will be reporting on this year are for digitized archival materials (see below). Physical collections processing and accessioning typically takes place in May Term and the summer. Due to both personal schedule changes and the global COVID-19 pandemic, that work was delayed. During the work-from-home time of the pandemic I was able to edit and upload audio recordings and enhance descriptions for digital collections. Some of my student assistants worked on oral history transcripts before the end of the semester. One of Amy Sutter's students also assisted with transcripts for the WGLT recordings collection.

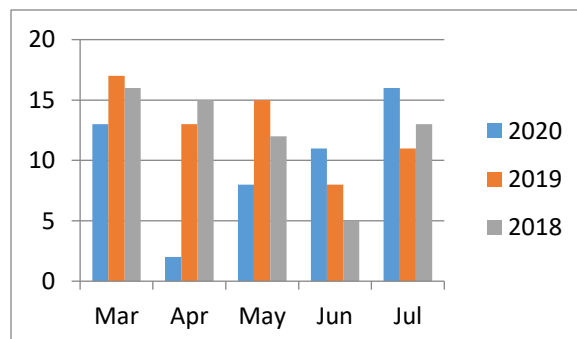
Overall, we had 155 on-site visitors this year. This included a total of 75 students enrolled in four humanities and two social sciences courses in the fall. One additional humanities class with 21 enrolled students canceled due to the pandemic, but I was able to provide the faculty member with access points in our digital collections to meet course goals.

One outcome of two of these class visits was the use of materials from archives and special collections to engage students in the high-impact practice of creating exhibits. A faculty member for one of these classes followed their visit up with a thank you note: "You really got those students jazzed up--and those are four of my shyest students who \*never\* speak! It was a miracle!"

We fulfilled 145 requests for in-depth research support with 78 of them coming from faculty, staff or administrators. There were 125 patron encounters of a less research-intensive nature, 116 of whom were students or alumni. Loans from our collections supported two classes, one on-campus event and one off-campus exhibition.

One of the more time-intensive research requests involved identifying images over a time spanning 50 years of a trustee who had also been a student. I ultimately provided 100 images for the retirement celebration. The trustee/classmate who requested them commented that the pictures "were so so special" and also noted that the honoree wanted copies of them all.

This graph shows a substantial drop off of in-depth research requests for only two months of the pandemic-induced campus shutdown compared to activity in the two previous years.



## Archives Accessions and Activities

The digitized materials we added to our preservation system this year are seven titles of IWU publications spanning the years 1890s-1960s (47 GB of tiffs for 156 issues), 54 reformatted video recordings (351.7 GB) and 29 audio recordings (.5 GB). We also accepted an mp3 file containing the recollections of Emilie Kuner, the sister of Associate Professor of Organ and Composer in Residence (1951) Frank Bohnhorst, Class of 1946. Bohnhorst organized the Symposium of Contemporary Music at IWU.

We hosted a formal collections transfer for the entire archive of works composed by retired Professor of Music R. Bedford Watkins in mid-September. The collection was still being processed a volunteer from the community at the time the pandemic forced us to close our doors, but a [partial description is available online](#). The photos below show some of the attendees and the materials displayed during Dr. Watkins' reception as well as a harpsichord he donated to the School of Music.

Our biggest activities with archival collections this year took place during Homecoming. We hosted a formal Mark Evans Observatory time capsule opening on Saturday, on the Quad due to the large crowd. On September 23 we had a smaller ceremony at the observatory for the time capsule's removal from the wall (see photo). When Physical Plant personnel cut the welded seal we discovered extensive damage to the contents, presumably due to environmental factors. An alumna later commented that she was contemplating a publication on the topic: "As a chemist, I'm especially interested in the unintended reactions inside the copper box." I [created a blog post](#) showing the condition of the materials and both the poster I created and the salvageable original artifacts are awaiting transfer to the Physics Department for permanent display within the observatory.

A student volunteer in the archives was interested in researching the history of the "space food," created by local candy company Beich Industries, that was in the capsule. The student discovered an interesting connection to IWU and [created this blog post](#) reporting on his findings. We also greatly expanded the artifacts available to alumni in the Homecoming museum in Memorial Student Center's Eckley Lounge and supported alumni who were interested in self-recording memories for the oral history program.

## Special Collections Accessions and Activities

The [official opening](#) of the Dave Kindred ('63) collection also took place during Homecoming and the event was well-attended. As reported last year, we completed processing and [an online description](#) of the collection. This year saw requests for access to the materials and [the filmed interview](#) we sponsored has had 54 views.

Also previously reported, through connections made by our summer 2019 graduate school intern Cynthia O'Neill, we loaned four items from the Leslie C. Arends Congressional Collection for the Apollo-related exhibition titled "Moon" at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. The materials were exhibited from August-December. On their return, the museum director noted that the flag that had flown on the Apollo 16 mission was an especially significant contribution.

## Progress on last year's goals

Processing and describing previously digitized A/V recordings went well but more remain to be completed.

I did not make any progress on the following goals:

1. formalizing preservation plans for School for Music recordings,

2. preparing cost estimates for the preservation needs in the Arends Collection, and
3. identifying another series of the University's Archives for reappraisal followed by input into ArchivesSpace with enhanced descriptions.

### Goals for 2020-2021

I plan to renew my efforts with members of the School of Music about the types of recordings that are of long-term value to the University and in what format will ensure their longevity.

In addition to continuing work on digitized media, born-digital A/V content collecting increased as the University started creating videos that extend beyond promotional topics. Beginning in the early months of 2020, different University offices and organizations began recording videos and live Zoom sessions in response to a desire for community engagement due to the pandemic, as community-building opportunities, and as a result of anti-racism efforts. Some of these videos raise privacy concerns and most raise questions about rights and permissions for re-sharing. I need to create selection criteria and access policies. I also need to create a publicly-accessible finding aid for links to access copies and give some thought to how they might be described in the online catalog.

### Photos from events mentioned above



Dr. R. Bedford Watkins (center, facing camera)  
at the September 16, 2019 reception in his honor.



Selections from the Watson collection displayed  
during the reception.





Faculty, staff and students gather around the Mark Evans' Observatory's time capsule on September 23, 2019, the day it was removed from the wall.



Classmate Bob Vyverberg talking with Dave Kindred at his collection opening on October 4, 2019.



Dave Kindred poses at the end of the shelving containing the books in his collection (the boxes behind contain the bulk of the materials).