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Archives Annual Report, 2022-2023

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2022-2023¹ Tate Archives & Special Collections Report

July 24, 2023

Meg Miner, University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian

Staffing, Accessions and Service Summary

Julie Wood and two students assisted me in processing collections and providing services to our community this year. Our volunteer, Richard Nielsen, also continued his activities throughout this year. His work involves creating enclosures, primarily custom boxes, for books and artifacts. The supply costs for creating them in-house are a fraction of what it would cost to purchase pre-made enclosures. Beyond that, Richard's creations save us shelf space since his boxes are just the right size to meet our needs. In addition to the demonstration pictured below, he also shared his techniques with colleagues at Bradley University's special collections during a staff development field trip we made.



Archives volunteer Richard Nielsen demonstrates his box making techniques to library personnel. April 19, 2023

Julie's responsibilities increased when Amy Sutter retired in October. In addition to her usual metadata and processing duties, Julie started harvesting press releases and adding them to Digital Commons. Julie also provided oversight for the last two of Amy's students who were creating and reviewing transcripts for our [WGLT Interviews](#) collection and for the backlog of transcripts for the [Oral Histories](#) collection.

Three Library Services students assisted with an evaluation of a large (3 lin. ft.) transfer of printed press releases. While still staffing the Library Services Desk, they compared these printouts to the [press releases](#) already captured in Digital Commons and identified approximately 1,600 new documents. I taught them how to use Acrobat to make them text-readable and compile pages into separate files. Julie set up a spreadsheet for relevant metadata that the students filled

¹ This report covers August through June instead of July to accommodate the time needed for data collection and summary before my retirement on July 31, 2023.

and then Julie reviewed the metadata and used the Digital Commons bulk upload feature for processing the materials. Along with the [student](#) and [alumni](#) newspapers, I have found that press releases are valuable for learning about campus activities that we do not hold other types of records for. The press release collection is indexed by Google and fully searchable from both the IWU website and within our Digital Commons interface.

Our holdings grew by a little more than 31 lin. ft. but we also deaccessioned 4 lin. feet. Therefore, our collections within the department comprise an approximate total of 1545 linear feet. We also accessioned 32 GB of digitized and born-digital materials, and I added 194 GB in 563 files to DuraCloud. I calculate our total in this preservation system² at 2.45 TB.

One of the deaccessioned collections was a group of family material (2 lin. ft.) that we returned at the request of the donors. I also transferred approximately twenty printed photos of Bloomington buildings and a box of five 78 rpm LPs containing civil defense medical training lectures recorded in 1952 (2 lin. ft.) and corresponding digital files to McLean County Museum of History.

There were 249 patron encounters this year with 168 interacting with collections on-site. Six faculty brought a total of 107 students for on-site collection use. All of these were in the Humanities: one Gateway, three lower and one upper division course; four of the total utilized the entry level pottery, basketry and/or Chinese scroll collections (photos are appended from one of these). One other group was comprised of students involved in the School of Theatre Arts production *Men in Boats*. These students explored materials from Special Collections that gave them insights into the characters they would be playing and the environment the 19th century explorers lived in during the 1869 the Colorado River expedition led by John Wesley Powell.

We fulfilled 109 requests for full research support with the most (61) originating with faculty, staff or administrators. Most questions (61) took between 21-60 minutes of staff time. There were 140 walk-ins that did not require full research assistance, and we recorded 171 that met the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) criteria for “brief encounters,” defined as ≤ 20 minutes.

We loaned materials 12 times over this year. The ways in which these materials supported our community are described in the Special Collections section below.

Archives Accessions and Activities

We accessioned a little more than 28 lin. ft. in 21 donations of archival records and 32 GB of born-digital and digitized audiovisual recordings. I completed the last transfer of campus publicity material from the basement of Holmes Hall. Photos of that location and the preliminary arrangement work are [in a blog post](#). Processing is complete on the printed photos and most of the negatives that were in those boxes. One of my student assistants undertook a complete review of our printed photo collection, culling duplicates and integrating the photos from the basement transfer and from one other group of materials in the University Communications office into our existing print photo collection. We also transferred such a large quantity of other types of records from these offices that we asked Physical Plant personnel to move all of the lockable cabinets they were stored in to the public area of the library’s 4th floor. These cabinets are taking up 15 lin. ft. of wall space at this time. Further assessment and processing from that transfer will take place as time allows, and I expect there will be able a sizeable reduction in that amount.

I completed “harvesting” a group of Titan Talk and other Alumni event recordings from IWU’s YouTube and Vimeo accounts that were available as of the end of June. Born-digital

² Comparing this number to last year’s is not straight forward because our accumulated total in previous years included a large quantity of files I stored there temporarily while editing took place. With the completion of the digitized media project, I deleted all of the temporary files.

audiovisual quantities are reported in DuraCloud accumulated totals. As with regularly-occurring text-based records, I do not treat these types of accretions as countable donations. They do not involve donor relations, and they also come only become available in small, irregular increments. The time needed for individual documentation isn't warranted, but audiovisual recordings are accounted for in our DuraCloud totals.

I created two more Digital Commons galleries (photos with award details, when available) this year: one for the [Max L. Starkey staff award](#) and one for the [Distinguished Nursing Alumni award](#). As I mentioned last year on completing the [Alumni Awards](#) galleries, these collections serve biographical research purposes and, due to the benefits of the highly ranked search results available to us through the platform, may also aid in promoting the achievements of the IWU community to the larger world.

A notable personal donation came from Emeritus Professor of Music Composition David Vayo. We processed 8 lin.ft. of printed scores, and we also accepted the collection of CD recordings of his performances which we transferred off-disk to a near-line networked location to provide access within the archives. The library budget supported digitizing performances that we received on reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, and a student assistant edited these recordings according to Dr. Vayo's specifications. All of the Vayo content (48 files, 11.8 GB) that was transferred from analog audiovisual formats is being actively preserved in DuraCloud.

We are also preserving, but not making immediately accessible, 39 wav files of Symposium of Contemporary Music performances (1980s-1990s) that we transferred from cassettes held in the archives as part of our multi-year "old media" assessment and reformatting project. IWU started this series in 1952 and, while these files require access limitations due to performance rights issues, I determined that these significant events in IWU's history warranted this higher preservation standard.

We added two interesting artifacts this year:

1) The Acheson Medal awarded to John Marden '09 that was stored in another office since it was donated to IWU in 1978. This acquisition came about after an inquiry from Marden's great grandson who wanted to donate papers related to Marden's achievements and Marden's and his wife's student days. The donor only wanted these things to go to the institution that had received the medal. Since the medal was not located in the archives, I conducted research into the events surrounding the donation. Its existence had been noted [in the Myers/Teichman book](#), (p. 101) but I only located it due to the personal knowledge of an Office Coordinator. When we received the additional documents, Julie processed the family's collection entire collection so that it is now [fully described](#) and accessible for future use.

2) The tennis uniform (1918) and doubles championship cup (1917) belonging to Rachel Green Gage, Class of 1919. I wrote a [blog post](#) to explain this acquisition. The event represented by these artifacts had previously been described in the [1919 Wesleyana](#) (p. 130) and in an IWU Magazine (Spring 1999) story. Due to the old media digitization project of the last few years, it is now possible to hear Mrs. Gage's sister and doubles partner, Grace Green Shields, [relate the story herself](#).

The University held its first in-person Homecoming since 2019 and I supported the event by creating another mini-museum with materials from the archives. Photos and details are available [in this blog post](#). Since this was my last year, I asked the Alumni Engagement staff to remove the long-standing offer to collect alumni stories (written or recorded) from their promotional materials.³

³ I also asked Human Resources to remove mention of the [Oral History](#) initiative from the information provided to faculty and staff retirees.

Special Collections Accessions and Activities

We accessioned five donations for special collections which equaled 2.9 lin. ft. Notable among the special collections donations are a two volume set of the 1718 edition of *A Voyage into the Levant*, and several additions to the records we hold on behalf of the Zeta Eta Chapter of Delta Omicron. Some of the latter extend these holdings back 50 years.

Loans of special collections materials totaled twelve and all but one were made at the request of individuals who selected artworks from storage for their offices. The other loan was a book for a faculty member to use in preparing for a theatrical production.

I completed working with the appraiser on our Campus Art Collection and updated the Vice President for Business and Finance office's spreadsheet for all of the works that IWU declares to its insurance agency. At the recommendation of the appraiser, I also created an [Accession](#) and [Deaccession Policy](#) for this collection. Personnel in the School of Art and in Advancement reviewed/revised these drafts before they were sent to Cabinet and approved.

Progress on goals from previous years

I am very happy to report that I completed a carryover item the last several years: editing (when needed), cataloging, and describing the previously digitized A/V recordings for preservation and access. Both the public and the preservation locations are noted in the in-house audiovisual materials finding aid. This completes the multi-year project that began in [2016 with the first "summer of old media."](#) The remaining work is to make a meaningful, easily navigable list of these works ready for public use.

Julie has reviewed her areas of responsibility and completed the training she will need for that work. Julie also agreed to convey my assessments of the physical backlog to the next archivist, and to serve in the interim as the person who will update the two CONTENTdm collections we maintain for others: the [David & Sarah Davis Family Correspondence](#) (1800 - 1886) and the [Letters Received by the Powell Survey 1869-1879](#). Julie also shadowed me on the Digital Commons work for the JWP Conference and Honors collection. However, I want to emphasize that supporting these campus activities are not in her regular areas of responsibility. We did this training so that she will be able to guide the new archivist through the written workflows I created to ensure continuity.

Goals for future projects

I am leaving a list of projects on an internal document for the next archivist to consider. I've created workflow documents for everything that I could and there are two sets of videos: one on the way we change out the Chinese scrolls and one on how to clean the pottery/basketry collection. It has been a true privilege to curate and share the many interesting aspects of IWU's history with others.

Appendix:

October 25, 2022 Professor Kristine Nielsen's Art 110 students engage in a "close looking" exercise with the John Wesley Powell Collection of Pueblo Pottery. She also brought students in her spring course to use the collection.

