FONDREN LIBRARY OPENS A NEW CHAPTER

It’s 9:30 a.m. on a sunny Monday in October. Jonathan Williamson sits at one of the tables in Fondren Library’s new Caren H. Prothro Learning Commons, sipping a cup of Starbucks coffee as he reviews notes for a class later in the day. Williamson, a junior civil engineering major in SMU’s Lyle School of Engineering, has spent time at the library every day since the fall semester started.

“Fondren has everything. It’s a good place to study, when you need a quiet atmosphere, or you can hang out in Starbucks. I run into lots of friends there,” he said.

Williamson’s enthusiastic embrace of the improvements is the reaction Gillian M. McCombs and her renovation team were aiming for when the Fondren Library transformation began in June 2015. As Dean and Director of Central University Libraries, McCombs led the effort that breathed new life into SMU’s largest library.

The first phase of the transformation was unveiled in April with the opening of the Fondren Foundation Centennial Reading Room and the Hillcrest Foundation Exhibit Hall. The next stage was ready for students when they returned to campus for the 2016-2017 academic year. In addition to the Prothro Learning Commons, new features include the Starbucks®, Collaborative Commons and Office of Information Technology and help desk hub, all located on the first floor.

Updated computers, moveable furniture and white boards, and the easy-to-use printing station are key features that draw Williamson and other students to the Prothro Learning Commons. The new space was named in honor of Caren H. Prothro, SMU trustee and SMU Libraries Executive Board vice chair, by a gift from The Hoblitzelle Foundation. The spacious area also accommodates librarian offices made possible by the contributions of several longtime supporters of SMU’s libraries (see page 3).

On the fourth floor, café height tables and seating, along with large upholstered chairs and occasional tables, create a study zone designed to take advantage of the nearly panoramic skyline view.

New wayfinding elements, such as super-size numbers and letters and color-coded signage, guide visitors through unfamiliar territory and well-loved corners alike in the 268,000-square-foot building.

At an open house celebrating the new spaces on September 8, McCombs joined SMU President R. Gerald Turner, Mrs. Prothro and SMU Student Body President Blake Rainey in praising the contributions of everyone involved, from the generous donors to the talented design and

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Construction crews. Also earning applause from the appreciative audience were the indefatigable library staff members who provided seamless service despite months of relocating, rerouting and reconfiguring as the project progressed.

Literally years in the making, the renovation required project leaders to “keep an open mind” and remain agile throughout the planning cycle as outlined by McCombs and Anita Picozzi Moran, FAIA, principal and director of collegiate recreation architecture at Dewberry, in “The Die is not yet Cast.” The chapter was published in *Space and Collections Earning Their Keep: Transformation, Technologies, Retooling* (Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston, 2016) after being presented by the authors at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions satellite conference in Paris in 2014.

In an addendum to the original piece, the authors noted “CUL believes the most radical changes are still to come as libraries prepare to transform their services from transactional to teaching mode. ... One thing can be certain is that student needs and preferences will continue to change rapidly and so the need to create flexible spaces is paramount.”

The new and improved Fondren Library is a hit with students. “Overall, the renovation is really great,” Williamson said. “My sister graduated last spring, and she regrets that she missed all this.”

As McCombs observed, “The buzz on campus about Fondren Library is not just from the caffeine.”

**MINI GOLF MIXES LEARNING AND FUN**

Students learned about Fondren Library, past and present, while demonstrating their athletic prowess during an evening of mini golf on August 30. Jonathan McMichael, user experience librarian, spearheaded the enjoyable interactive tour that encouraged participants to get know each other and the new spaces. Becoming acquainted with the library is important for early undergraduates, in particular, because studies have shown that increased library usage helps students develop a host of positive study habits that improve GPA, notes McMichael. Participants got the message. Engineering student Quentin Morris liked playing through and said he thinks it encouraged students to spend more time in the library. See highlights of the event in a video produced by SMU Public Affairs at http://blog.smu.edu/mustangminute/2016/09/07/mustang-minute-fondren-library-mini-golf/.
DONORS TOUR NEW OFFICES

Several of the generous supporters whose contributions created essential offices for front-line librarians had an opportunity to see the new spaces on September 8 and receive a heartfelt “thank you” from the librarians who occupy them.

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CUL’S CYBER SUPERHEROES

Central University Libraries’ LaGail Davis and Sam Ratcliffe were honored as “Top Spam Defenders” at the first Security Showdown sponsored by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) during National Cyber Security Awareness Month in October. Playing off the theme of “I Work with Superheroes,” OIT recognized staff across campus for their vigilance in spotting potentially harmful phishing emails. Davis is general operations manager for Hamon Arts Library, and Ratcliffe serves as head of the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon.

A THUMBS-UP FROM THE CRITICS

Need a gift for a discerning film buff?

Among the DVDs suggested for holiday giving by The New York Times is “Pioneers of African-American Cinema.” The five-disc boxed set of rare films includes Spencer Williams’s 1941 underground classic, “The Blood of Jesus,” from the G. William Jones Film and Video Collection housed in Hamon Arts Library.

Issued by Kino Classics, the collection “surveys America’s original independent cinema,” wrote the Times’ critics, who described it as “a superb collection of historical significance, curated by scholars Charles Musser and Jacqueline Najuma Stewart.”

Read more about CUL’s Jones Collection online at http://www.smu.edu/CUL/Hamon/Jones.
From stunning black-and-white images of Big Tex to colorful souvenir postcards, DeGolyer Library celebrates a milestone anniversary of a beloved Lone Star State tradition in its current exhibition.

“The State Fair of Texas, 1886-2016: Celebrating 130 Years of a Texas Institution” continues through December 16 in the Hillcrest Foundation Exhibit Hall in Fondren Library. Featured are Lynn Lennon’s slice-of-life photographs that illustrate the beauty, diversity and iconography of the State Fair. There also are several cases of related ephemera – including tokens, badges, pamphlets and other items from the 19th and 20th centuries – drawn from various DeGolyer collections.

Lennon, a native Dallasite, launched her State Fair passion project in 1984, when she decided to document the annual event over 10 years. For the first few years, she attended every day, capturing images of livestock, Midway attractions, traditional and novelty foods, entertainment and all the quirky elements that make the fair so endearing. She also photographed the people from all walks of life who come together at Fair Park.

Since first picking up a camera as a child, Lennon has photographed wide-ranging subjects around the globe. Her work has been shown at galleries in Dallas, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Paris and other cities. It also has been exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art, Contemporary Art Museum in Houston, and other museums. She has published two books of photographs: Categorically Speaking focuses on cats while Dogmatically Speaking is devoted to man’s best friend.

Find more information about the exhibit online on the DeGolyer Library blog at smu.edu/degolyer.
STIPENDS SUPPORT FACULTY-LIBRARIAN INFORMATION LITERACY COLLABORATIONS

SMU Professors Kathleen Gallagher and Beth Newman are the inaugural recipients of the Central University Libraries (CUL) Faculty Information Literacy Stipend.

“We received excellent submissions this past spring, which were so strong that we decided to award two stipends,” says Elizabeth Killingsworth, head of research services for CUL and director of Fondren Library.

Each faculty member received a $1,000 award for proposals to join forces with their respective subject librarians to implement assignments that address information literacy concepts and skills.

Gallagher, assistant professor in the Division of Arts Management and Entrepreneurship in Meadows School of the Arts, teamed up with librarian Megan Heuer.

To address the challenges of searching effectively, avoiding plagiarism, recognizing formats and evaluating sources, Gallagher’s graduate class on cultural policy will complete a series of assignments leading up to researching and writing a policy brief.

The course started with smaller, “low-stakes opportunities for students to demonstrate that they understand essential information concepts and skills, prior to building on them for middle-weight requirements and the heavy-weight policy brief at the end,” she explains.

“The stipend prompted me to think about the best way to deliver knowledge to our students and help them to build research skills,” she adds. “While I hope that my students will develop a love for cultural policy and use it in their daily lives, I know that they will all benefit from strong skills in information literacy and use those skills daily in any academic or professional setting.”

Newman, assistant professor of English in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, collaborates with librarian Rebecca Graff.

Newman’s undergraduate English students will complete a two-part annotated bibliography assignment that emphasizes finding library resources relevant to a literary topic and recognizing scholarly discourse.

“I want to be certain that students understand scholarship as active and dynamic, rather than seeing it as the finding of information that lies in wait, ready-made, almost naturally occurring. However, I am also aware that they need to know the basic principles of finding what is out there, and the best strategies for searching electronic databases are so much more complex than the processes I learned in college and graduate school that I really need the help of someone with real expertise,” she says. “Applying for the stipend encouraged me to think through these issues more completely than I had, and design assignments accordingly.”

At the end of the semester, each professor will submit a report that describes the assignment, the method of assessment and the impact on student learning.

“Librarians and faculty each have a different perspective on student research, and by coming together, we can address the problems students have more holistically,” Killingsworth says.
MAPPING A NEW RESEARCH ROUTE

Geographic information system (GIS) technologies are powerful research tools that can be applied to almost any discipline to tease out new information and groundbreaking discoveries as faculty and students discussed at the GIS@SMU research cluster kick off on September 29.

The event attracted researchers in archaeology, economics, engineering, history, marketing and religious studies interested in connecting with the GIS community on campus and learning about potential collaborations.

GIS@SMU is the popular moniker for Central University Libraries’ Initiative for Spatial Literacy. Jessie Zarazaga, adjunct professor in the Lyle School’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, serves as program director with assistance from Sylvia George-Williams, CUL science and engineering research librarian. The initiative brings together the interdisciplinary potential of GIS mapping and spatial analysis, with the current academic interest in big data, digital visualization and design innovation.

In newly renovated Fondren Library, the JoAnn Pettus Group Projects Room 106 in the Prothro Learning Commons is home base for GIS@SMU. Each Friday from 1-3 p.m. is reserved for a collaborative session where anyone working in GIS is welcome to ask questions and share solutions.

Simple GIS is surprisingly easy to navigate as participants learned at the annual Mapathon on November 3 in the new Collaborative Commons. The Mapathon is a crowd-sourced event that contributes to the global Missing Maps project, a joint effort between the American and British Red Cross, the humanitarian OpenStreetMap team and Doctors Without Borders, to map the most vulnerable places in the world so that aid organizations and communities can use the maps and data to better respond to crises.

First-year student Aisha Ahmed ’20 heard about the project in her Discernment and Discourse class and decided to stop in at the come-and-go event between classes. “I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn about mapping while giving back,” she says. “Now that I know how to do it, I’m going to contribute to the Missing Maps platform whenever I have free time.”

Learn more about GIS@SMU online at https://www.smu.edu/CUL/Services/GIS.
PRESERVING AN ARTIST’S LEGACY

Sam Ratcliffe, head of the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections at Hamon Arts Library, discussed the “Legacy of Octavio: His Life and Work” at City Performance Hall in the Dallas Arts District on October 9 during the finale of the 50th anniversary celebration of Dallas’ Creative Arts Center (CAC).

In 1966 renowned artist and educator Octavio Medellin opened his namesake school of sculpture, which eventually became the CAC. Last year more than 1,800 students took more than 500 CAC visual arts classes and workshops.

An extensive trove of the prolific artist’s work, photographs and documents are part of the Bywaters Special Collections. The Medellin collection was established in 1989 and continued to grow with additional gifts from family and friends through 2015.

Drawing from those materials, curator Ellen Buie Niewyk and archivist Emily Grubbs created Central University Libraries’ first Google Cultural Institute digital exhibition. Octavio Medellin: Maya-Toltec Temples and Carvings, 1938 provides visual and narrative context for Medellin’s famous hummingbird color block print and other works inspired by his six-month study of the ruins at Chichén Itzá in Mexico. The exhibition includes audio excerpts from an oral history recorded by Medellin in 1998, a year before his death in 1999 at age 91.


RATCLIFFE NAMED TO HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

Sam Ratcliffe ’74 was installed as a member of the board of trustees of the Dallas Historical Society (DHS) on May 31.

Ratcliffe brings to the board expertise in Texas art and history as well as more than 20 years of experience overseeing the Jerry Bywaters Special Collections in Hamon Arts Library.

His scholarship has aided in the rescue of essential pieces of Dallas history during several recent high-profile preservation efforts. In 2013, he helped save spectacular fused-glass windows created by the renowned Octavio Medellin from demolition. Three soaring windows are now ensconced in the Dallas City Performance Hall.

In September 2015, he addressed the Dallas Landmark Commission during a hearing that prevented the interior gutting of the iconic Lakewood Theater in East Dallas. Lost in the remodeling would have been rare murals by Dallas artist Perry Nichols. In September 2016, the council granted the theater official landmark status, preserving the artwork.

“As a native Dallasite, I recall school field trips to the Hall of State (headquarters of the DHS), poring over historical dioramas in the display cases and, of course, being awe-struck by the murals depicting Texas history on the walls of the Great Hall and the G.B. Dealey Library,” Ratcliffe says. “Little did I suspect that, many years later, I would do research on and meet some of the artists involved in the execution of those murals and work on projects with curators of DHS collections. And, of course, I never imagined that I actually would be part of the governing body of the Society.”
Before he won the 2016 National Book Award for fiction, author Colson Whitehead (above) discussed his lauded novel, *The Underground Railroad,* at the inaugural Friends Forum on September 19. The new series presented by Friends of the SMU Libraries brings celebrated authors to campus for question-and-answer sessions in the intimate setting of Fondren Library’s Texana Room. Friends of the SMU Libraries also co-sponsors the Authors LIVE! series in partnership with Highland Park United Methodist Church and Friends of the Highland Park Library. Among other writers featured this fall in Friends-sponsored programs were Jon Meacham (top right), author of *Destiny and Power: The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush* and Lawrence Wright, whose newest book, *The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to the Islamic State,* explores the path of terrorism in the Middle East. Find a complete listing of Friends’ events online at http://www.smu.edu/libraries/friends