

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

A place in KU's history for generations of Jayhawk sisters



Flora Richardson Colman, 1873



Linda Wulfkuhle Cecchini, 1968



Virginia Wulfkuhle 1969

All KU alumni form a connection to the university during their time on the Hill, but not every Jayhawk can say that their connection spans four generations, going back to the beginning of KU's history.

Linda Cecchini and Virginia Wulfkuhle are descendants of Flora Richardson Colman, the first-ever graduate of the University of Kansas. Flora was the first to receive a diploma in her graduating class in 1873, and the first in a long line of KU graduates. Flora's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, including Linda and Virginia, followed in her footsteps when they received their diplomas atop Mount Oread.

"It was just not debatable that we would go to college, and of course everybody was hoping it would be KU," Linda said. "It was like home. KU was part of our upbringing."

Flora's diploma was kept in the family for well over 100 years, and eventually ended up in the hands of Virginia. With the historic diploma in her possession, Virginia wanted to make sure this important document was kept safe and preserved for generations to come. She knew exactly where to go — KU Libraries. Virginia donated the diploma to the Kenneth Spencer Research Library for safe keeping in the Richardson family's name.

"As soon as I could, I took the diploma down to Spencer because something like that just needs to be in an institution," Virginia said. "It wasn't just mine or Linda's to give. The whole Richardson family gave the diploma. These sorts of things don't belong to one individual."

Through their gift, Virginia and her family have shared an important

piece of KU history with the entire community, on campus and beyond. The diploma is now housed in the University Archives, a historical collection of all things related to KU.

Most recently, Linda and Virginia have contributed to the newly renovated study carrels in Watson Library's fourth floor stacks in honor of three generations of sisters in their family who graduated from KU, including their grandmother, Nellie Everett Colman, who was married to Flora's son. Nellie and her sister, Wilimina Everett Pitcher, were orphans from a young age and had the odds stacked against them. Even so, Nellie and Wilimina worked extremely hard to get an education at KU and graduated in 1909 and 1907 respectively.

"There was never a bigger fan of KU than Nellie," Virginia said. "Both Nellie and Wilimina met incredible challenges to get an education at KU."

Linda and Virginia remember their time in the Watson study carrels fondly, but both agree that in the 1960s the spaces were less than welcoming due to the lack of light and cold metal desks. Thanks to their donation, supporting the space renovation, the study carrels are now warm, inviting, colorful, and comfortable. The plaque that hangs above one of the carrels honors the three generations of sisters: Nellie

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Welcoming the Watkins Society

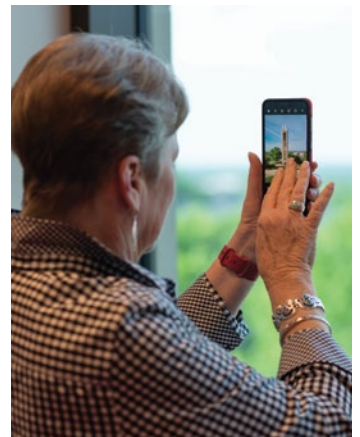
On May 19, the University of Kansas Libraries had the honor of welcoming the KU Endowment Association's Watkins Society at a special event in Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

The Watkins Society recognizes individuals who have developed an estate plan or other deferred gift arrangement with KU Endowment. Friends of KU toured the North Gallery and viewed an exhibit of photographs and items from University Archives. All gathered in the Marilyn Stokstad Reading Room to hear remarks about the libraries from Beth Whittaker, director of the Spencer Research Library, and Ken Stephens, a longtime friend of KU Libraries and a member of the KU Libraries Board of Advocates.

Stephens spoke about his connection to KU Libraries and introduced some of the unique pieces housed at Spencer Library, such as the Book of Hours, a page from a Gutenberg Bible, and a first edition copy of "Ulysses" signed by James Joyce, all of which were on display for the event.

“ I view KU Libraries as a surrogate for every library I have ever visited and felt a little smarter for having gone. ”
— Ken Stephens

The remarks were followed by a reception in the North Gallery overlooking the Campanile. KU Libraries are honored to have hosted this event with KU Endowment. We thank Watkins Society members for their continued friendship and support. ■



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING KU LIBRARIES ON ONE DAY. ONE KU.

On February 17, gifts from steadfast supporters as well as new friends propelled KU Libraries to our most successful *One. Day. One KU.* ever! This year's results outpaced 2021 by 25% thanks to impactful matching gifts and challenges from these generous donors, whose support of the libraries fuels academic achievement and research at KU and beyond:

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Generations of Jayhawk sisters

(continued from cover)

and Wilimina; Linda and Virginia's mother and aunt, Virginia Colman Sanderson Smith and Margaret Colman Wulfkuhle; and Linda and Virginia themselves.

"Since this carrel dedication was family related, it sounded like a great idea. Having studied in the old carrels when I was a student, it brought back memories," Linda said. "I don't know if people who study there ever read the little sign, but it really means a lot to me to know that it's there. I am very pleased that we were able to make the connection between three generations of sisters." ■

Dean Kevin L. Smith retires from KU Libraries

In July 2022, after six years of leading the University of Kansas Libraries, Kevin L. Smith, dean of libraries, retired from KU to become the director of libraries at Colby College in Waterville, Maine.



Smith began his tenure as dean of KU Libraries in May 2016. Prior to joining KU, Smith was the first director of copyright and scholarly communications at Duke University Libraries. In 2021, he was appointed director of the University Press of Kansas, a consortium represented by all six Kansas Board of Regents universities and based at the KU Lawrence campus.

Smith's new position at Colby College will allow him to spend more time with his family in the Northeast. He was also drawn to Colby's reputation as a top liberal arts institution.

"Colby is the gold standard," Smith said. "Colby is the kind of place that somebody who is interested in the liberal arts dreams about. It is an institution that is ambitious and exciting and open to new ideas, and Colby has an extraordinary student body."

Dean Smith leaves a legacy of supporting open access efforts and helping to advance initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at KU. He has championed innovation and offered stability, receptivity, and compassion as our organization evolved through ever-shifting complexities the last two years.

"I appreciate his international expertise on open source educational materials and its beneficial impact on the KU community. I believe it is important to recognize and to thank him for his leadership in the areas of diversity and inclusion, including serving as an objective leader in this area of our strategic plan, *Jayhawks Rising*," said Barbara Bichelmeyer, provost and executive vice chancellor.

KU Libraries thank Dean Smith for his years of leadership on the Hill and wish him all the best in his new chapter at Colby College. ■

Letha Johnson, a familiar face in a new role



Established in 1969, the University Archives are home to the history of the University of Kansas. While some early university records weren't collected, documents found across campus were eventually compiled and brought to the Kenneth Spencer Research Library for proper preservation. University archivists have the important task of overseeing the organization and preservation of these physical and digital materials.

In her new leadership role as university archivist, Letha Johnson is responsible for curating all items that help preserve the history of the university. Before stepping

into her new position, Johnson worked for KU Libraries as curator of the Kansas Collection and previously served as the associate archivist in the University Archives. Johnson assumed her new role after longtime University Archivist Becky Schulte began phased retirement last year.

"We are excited to have Letha in her new role as the university archivist," said Beth Whittaker, KU Libraries associate dean and director of the Kenneth Spencer Research Library, where the University Archives are housed. "She has decades of archival and records management experience and a personal passion for KU history that will help her tell the story of the university in new ways."

As university archivist, Johnson oversees university records that are transferred to archives, collects the history of the campus, raises the profile of the archives, and builds new relationships with colleagues and other units across campus

"I really enjoyed my time in the archives, and I like taking on the new challenges," Johnson said. "There are some untold stories of the university that I am hoping to dive into and bring to light while reconnecting with the people I worked with in archives before." ■

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The Snyder Book Collecting Contest returns for its 64th year



At the 64th annual Snyder Book Collecting Contest ceremony, held in Watson Library in April, Danny Caine, author and owner of the Raven Bookstore, gave a keynote speech titled “The Joys of Being Surrounded by Books.” Caine remarked that “not only is a book collection never finished, but it also has the potential to spark other collections as well.”

KU Libraries honors that joy and hopes to inspire others through the Snyder Book Collecting Contest, which awards undergraduate and graduate students for their collections of books, digital items, graphic novels, music, and film that are built around a particular topic or theme.

“This contest gives students an opportunity to showcase their collections to the public and talk about why they collect. They speak with such passion about their collections,” said Kristin Sederstrom, acquisitions and resource sharing library manager and chair of the Snyder Book Collecting Contest committee.

Before the winners were announced, Danny Caine offered a reflection on what it means to joyfully immerse oneself in a collection of books.

“The fact that I can never read my entire collection is not a problem but a feature. The minute I’ve read every book in my house is the minute I become educated, not learned. It would mark the end of something I hope never ends,” Caine said.

In the undergraduate division, Christian Due from Gardner, Kansas, received first place for his collection, “Rosello: An Exploration of Identity and Heritage.” Robert Ward from Lawrence won second place for his collection of Greco-Roman literature, “A Herculean Labor of Love.” An honorable mention was awarded to Joan Downey of Shawnee, Kansas, for her collection, “Discworld: A Fantastical Social Commentary.”

First place in the graduate division was awarded to Eleni Leventopoulos of Chicago for their collection, “The Little Grey Cells of Hercule Poirot.”

“It’s impossible to pick a favorite collection,” Sederstrom said. “They were all fantastic and each finalist highlighted a very personal experience of learning about themselves and developing their knowledge and interests through collecting books.” ■



A NOTE FROM LAURA MEYER, KU ENDOWMENT

Making a charitable contribution from a retirement account is one of the easiest ways to make a planned gift to KU Libraries. Although many people think of a will as an easy way to transfer assets to a charitable organization after their lifetime, it does not cover everything. In fact, retirement accounts are not controlled by the terms of your will, but instead use separate beneficiary forms to determine who receives these assets. These beneficiary designations will trump your will when it comes to passing along assets at the time of your death.

Another benefit of using retirement assets to make a gift to KU Libraries is that it does not cost the donor anything to change beneficiary forms, whereas updating a will or trust can be costly. There are also tax advantages to leaving tax-sheltered money to KU Libraries through retirement accounts. When a non-spousal individual beneficiary receives assets through a retirement account, they pay taxes on these distributions, whereas KU Endowment and KU Libraries do not. For example, if a child receives funds from your IRA upon your death, they will have to pay income taxes on these distributions. A charitable gift to KU Libraries bypasses this. When a donor considers which assets to leave to KU and which assets to individuals or family members, there are certain advantages of charitable giving through retirement accounts, versus other assets.

Additionally, other gift planning information and planned giving vehicles such as bequests, charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities, and gifts of securities can be found at kuendowment.giftlegacy.com

Sincerely,

Laura Meyer
Director of Development, KU Endowment

Please consult with your advisors for more information. Tax ID information and language can be obtained from Kristin Shore, kshore@kuendowment.org, in the gift planning department at KU Endowment.

To learn more about how your gifts support KU Libraries and the success of all Jayhawk students, contact Christy McWard, Executive Director of Communications & Advancement, cmcward@ku.edu or 785-864-0092.

Textbook Heroes honored for their work and advocacy



Textbook Heroes Jonathan Perkins, Keah Cunningham, Katie Ashley, and Axel Heinichen

The University of Kansas Libraries have been longtime supporters of open access and education initiatives. One of the ways we support and celebrate open educational resources (OER) is through Textbook Heroes, an honor awarded to KU community members who have taken extraordinary initiative to increase access to and affordability of required course materials by implementing and advocating for OER.

The 2022 Textbook Heroes cohort are KU Libraries student employee Axel Heinichen and staff of the Open Language Resource Center (OLRC), including Jonathan Perkins, director of the OLRC; Keah Cunningham, assistant director of the OLRC; and Katie Ashley, education program coordinator.

Heinichen worked on projects that included transitioning OER created through the libraries' OER grants to Pressbooks, a digital publishing platform specifically designed to support the adoption, adaptation, and creation of open textbooks. Migrating OER to this platform will make them more usable and accessible for students.

"I nominated Axel because the ongoing conversations with him about OER have been enlightening for me," said Carmen Orth-Alfie, assistant librarian and Heinichen's supervisor. "When he was first starting work we had a discussion about open textbooks and how it differs from having a licensed online textbook, where the license might restrict access just for that semester or maybe beyond the semester."

The University of Kansas' Open Language Resource Center is one of 16 federally funded National Foreign Language Resource Centers working to increase the nation's capacity to teach and learn foreign languages. Perkins, Cunningham, and Ashley were recognized for their direct support of language OER at KU and their advocacy and impact beyond KU as national leaders of languages OER.

"Work on language OER is important not only as a means to save students money, but as a way to provide access to materials for less commonly taught languages (LCTL) that commercial publishers would simply dismiss as unprofitable," said Perkins. ■

LIBRARIES THROWBACK



KU Libraries Throwback: Who doesn't love a parade? On April 4, 1988, the Jayhawks upset Oklahoma to win the NCAA National Championship. Days after the win, a parade traveled down Massachusetts Street to celebrate "Danny and the Miracles."

Photo credit: KU University Archives, 1988.

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