

noteworthy

news from the university of toronto libraries

Spring 2023



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Cover: Students enjoy the newly renovated fourth floor reading room in Robarts Library in 2022. Photo by Matthew Volpe. Story on page 8. Above: Students use the main card catalogue in the original fourth floor reading room in Robarts Library in August 1973. University of Toronto Archives. A2012-0009/053(04). Story on page 26.

TAKING NOTE

As we share the latest issue of *Noteworthy* with you, I am reflecting on the words of a senior University leader who recently remarked that the University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) stands apart as one of this University's "most beloved institutions."

Libraries are of course essential to any university. They serve as a hub for learning and research, providing students, faculty, and researchers with access to a wide range of information, services, and resources. Libraries pump the lifeblood of information that circulates throughout the university community, fuelling learning and driving research and discovery.

But it's the way that UTL envisions and creates space for student life, for student flourishing, that is so central to what university libraries are about, and what prompts expressions of love from members of our community.

The kinds of spaces you will find at UTL are not just cozy places to curl up and read a book (though we have plenty of those); they are also inclusive spaces that bring together a dazzling diversity of people, beliefs, and fields of inquiry. These kinds of spaces can be rare but nevertheless necessary for deeply meaningful student experience as well as for open inquiry and research, democratic debate, civic engagement—matters critical more than ever to the future of our country and our world.

These impactful, dynamic library spaces that bring people together and form community across the tri-campus are the very heart of the University of Toronto.



This issue of *Noteworthy* takes its theme from these spaces, some of which are brand new and many of which have been renovated since the beginning of the pandemic. Many of these extraordinary projects were made feasible by the generosity of donors and friends of the Library, to whom we owe a great deal of thanks.

Robarts Common, the largest addition of space to the University of Toronto Libraries, formally opened its doors in September 2022. This magnificent space came to be through a transformational gift from the late Russell and Katherine Morrison and the generosity of hundreds of supporting donors. A bold architectural masterpiece, it is a space that embodies the spirit of our current University campaign, Defy Gravity, by showcasing how U of T Libraries is redefining the role of the academic library as an inclusive refuge in the digital age.

It is fitting that the formal opening of Robarts Common occurred during U of T's biggest back-to-school ever, on the heels of a global pandemic that reminded us that being together safely in person is something that we should never take for granted. The past few years have forced us to reflect on the notion of *space* and its importance to our lives as social beings. Providing space to our students—space that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, accessible—has always been essential to our mission.

While UTL has one of the largest and most comprehensive collections on earth (a fact I repeat proudly and often), at its heart, it has always been a place of connection, collaboration, and togetherness. The library is so much more than a resource—it is the heart of the University of Toronto.

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noteworthy news from the university of toronto libraries

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THE Heart OF THE University





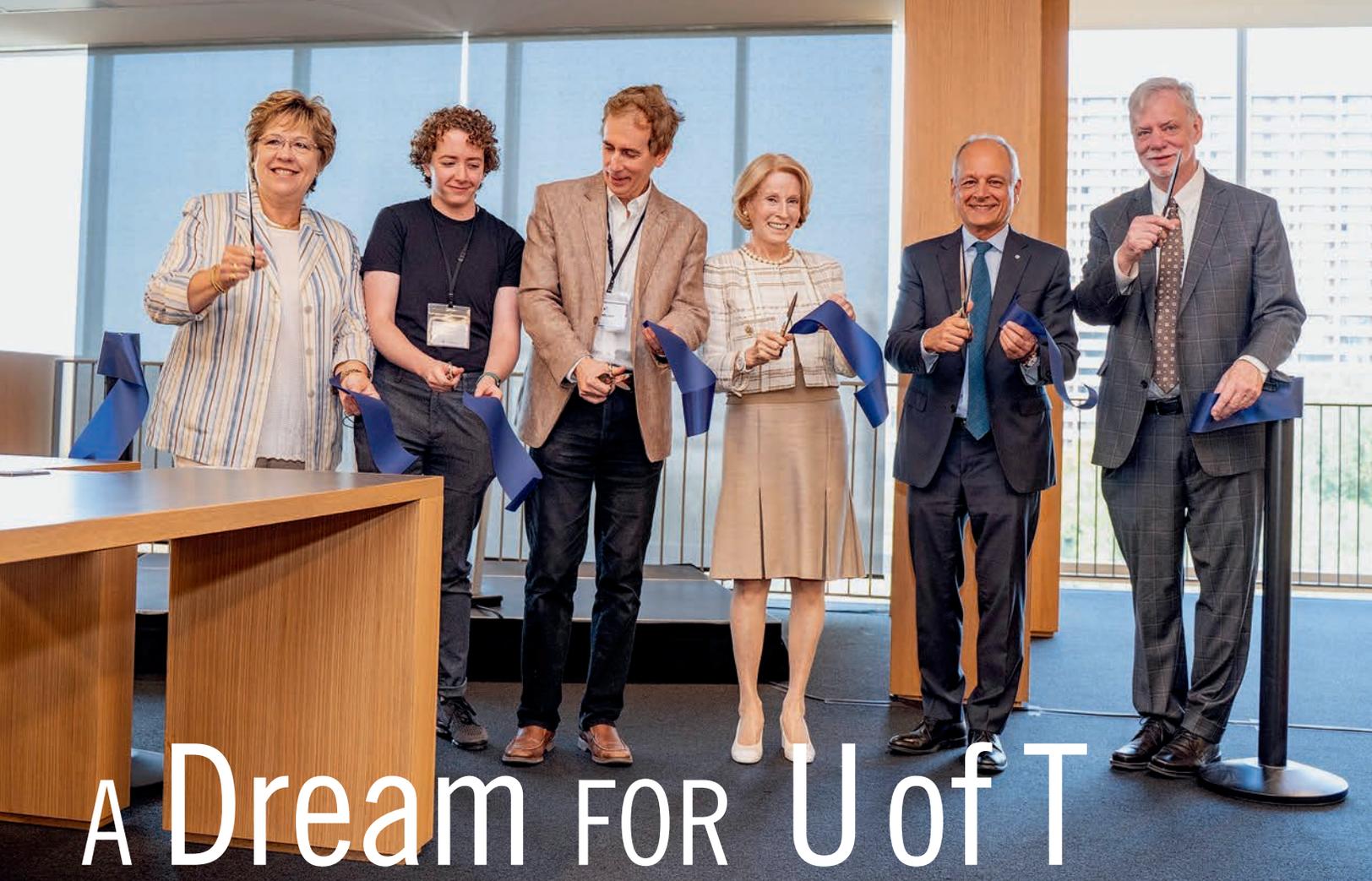
U of T Libraries play a central role in campus life. Often, we think of university libraries as critical to supporting the academic and research endeavours of a university, and while that remains as true now as ever, the role of libraries has also come to focus on supporting student life more holistically. Academic libraries provide access to a wide range of information resources, including books, archives, journals, databases, e-resources, and other materials essential for research and learning, but they also provide study spaces, internet access, and other critical resources that support students and researchers in their work. Additionally, our libraries serve as cultural and intellectual centres on campus, hosting events, exhibits, and other programming that engage the diverse University community and promote a culture of inclusion, learning, and discovery. They also support student mental health and wellness, providing SAD lamps, Unstudy Spaces, and offering space for Student Life's Peer Support Service to run its valued service.

In 2007, under the leadership of then-Chief Librarian Carole Moore, UTL began an ambitious revitalization project to transform existing library space at Robarts into student-centric places. At that point in time, the number of students using Robarts Library had doubled to 18,000 daily users in the 35 years since it had first opened to students in 1973.

An important part of this revitalization plan was the creation of a new student commons dedicated to study spaces and student life, as well as the revitalization of existing study spaces like Robarts Library's iconic fourth floor reading room. The goal was to create spaces that would nurture the student community at the centre of campus while providing safe and accessible space for study and research. After nearly a decade and a half, and through three years of a global pandemic, this ambitious vision has been realized under the leadership of University Chief Librarian Larry Alford.

Collectively, the libraries are a place where generations of students find fellowship with caring, globally minded peers from every imaginable background, working together to defy conventional thinking to break new ground in making lasting positive impact on the world. It's a place to absorb bold ideas in quiet reflection as well as to make the connections that will come to define their lives—and the lives of the many people they will touch into the future.

For all these reasons, we see our libraries as the heart of the University; we ignite and amplify our community's academic curiosity, encourage dialogue, and provide essential context for critical engagement.



A Dream FOR U of T Students Comes True



THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY

Cutting the Ribbon: U of T Celebrates Robarts Common

The University of Toronto community gathered on September 9, 2022, to formally open Robarts Common, the much-anticipated five-storey addition to Robarts Library that was designed as a dedicated space for student life by Diamond Schmitt.

With ample natural light and room for 1,200 students to study or socialize in soundproofed rooms, Robarts Common is a human-centred, collaborative area for the entire U of T community. Opened in advance of the 50th anniversary of Robarts Library in September 2023, Robarts Common is part of a wider revitalization of the iconic building in the heart of U of T's downtown campus.

"Robarts Common reflects U of T Libraries' global stature, and our special place at the heart of the U of T community," said University Chief Librarian Larry Alford. "It is a crown jewel for the University libraries, a much-needed element of the revitalization of the historic Robarts Library, and an extension of our work not just in supporting our community—but building it."

The stunning new space was made possible through the support of a generous gift from the late Russell and Katherine Morrison, along with support from more than one thousand other donors.

"Russell and Katherine Morrison understood well the library's central place in a student's intellectual development and educational experience," said U of T President Meric Gertler at the official Robarts Common opening ceremony. "They were profoundly dedicated to ensuring that U of T students would have access to the very best library and study

spaces—state-of-the-art, comfortable, and beautiful. And through their vision and generosity, they have done just that, together with the many other donors who have made these light-filled spaces possible."

A DREAM TO CREATE AN AMAZING SPACE FOR STUDENTS

"Dedicated spaces like the new Robarts Common are vital not just for the student experience but also as a way to encourage more open inquiry and research, more democratic debate and more civic engagement—all critical factors in the future success of our country and, indeed, our world," said Janet L. Ecker, Chair of U of T's Governing Council.

"Robarts Common is the realization of a dream shared by my late parents, along with so many others who gave generously to help create this amazing space," said Robert Morrison, the son of Russell and Katherine. "This glorious new building will highlight the importance of the library in student life, and will inspire discovery, daring creativity, and a life-long thirst for knowledge."

The Morrises, who donated \$40 million to U of T, were both ardent supporters of U of T Libraries and the student experience. Katherine Morrison was among the first generation of students to use Robarts, which opened in 1973, and she recalled spending most of her time there during her graduate studies—a key factor in the Morrises' inspiration to support Robarts Common. The University awarded Russell and Katherine Morrison honorary degrees in 2004 in recognition of their tremendous dedication to students and higher education.

Devoted entirely to student use, the new addition is a "campus living room" and is available to anyone from across U of T's three campuses. Robarts Common includes hundreds of spots for quiet reading, eight dedicated group study rooms on floors two through five, ample, comfortable seating, and full connectivity. The addition represents a significant enhancement for the nearly 18,000 daily visitors to Robarts Library.

A CAMPUS JEWEL, ROBARTS COMMON SOLIDIFIES THE LIBRARIES

"[Robarts Common] will only amplify Robarts Library's role as U of T's heart," said Rion Levy, who is a third year Faculty of Arts & Science student at Victoria College studying literature and critical theory and material culture and semiotics, as well as co-editor-in-chief of *The Strand* newspaper. "Its student-centred architecture and design has already drawn students in, and I'm sure it will quickly become a favourite spot for all kinds of scholars here."

The official opening of Robarts Common comes during the first year of U of T's Defy Gravity campaign, which aims to raise \$4 billion towards the University's highest priorities as well as inspire 225,000 alumni to get involved as volunteers, mentors, donors, participants and leaders, and contribute their time and talent to the University one million times collectively.

"Robarts Common embodies the spirit of Defy Gravity and how U of T and U of T Libraries continue to reimagine the role of the modern library as a symbol of free and open inquiry," said David Palmer, U of T vice-president, advancement. "This is a people-focused place for scholars at every level, who will forge bold new ideas and life-long connections—impacting not only their lives, but the wider world."

With files from U of T Advancement Staff

Top, left to right: Governing Council Chair Janet L. Ecker, Victoria University student Rion Levy, Robert Morrison, Chancellor Rose Patten, President Meric Gertler, University Chief Librarian Larry Alford. Bottom: Amphitheatre-style and casual study spaces in Robarts Common.

THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY



BY Students FOR

Students

Revitalizing the Iconic Fourth Floor Reading Room

The newly renovated fourth floor reading room of Robarts Library opened to students, staff, and researchers on September 6, 2022, just in time for back to school. The revitalization transformed a hallowed, double-storey space into a graceful and inclusive learning commons that was designed to meet contemporary student needs and learning styles thanks to feedback from the Innovation Hub and the meticulous design work of Superkül architects.

The new space is a linchpin for Robarts Library. It's perfectly placed to connect Robarts' rich historical past and brutalist architecture, with the modern present, Robarts Common, through deliberate design elements. But what's most special about the revitalization projects is that the project was influenced by direct community and student feedback.

Emily Ling, Architect and Manager of Capital Projects and Planning for University of Toronto Libraries, approached the University of Toronto Innovation Hub, a

division of Student Life that partners with University departments to collect, interview, research and provide insight to help improve the student experience. Designing an accessible space that supports all student needs was critical to UTL who recognize how important it is to build a space for all users in our diverse community.

"We wanted to find out what students and instructors wanted from this space and help them create a dialogue," says Ling. "What we found is that the Innovation Hub facilitated the process and created a picture that encapsulates perspectives outside of ourselves, taking into account both perspectives."

This resulted in a collaboration with Innovation Hub to gather student input on how UTL could make this space truly accessible and collaborative while maintaining its historic characteristics. Innovation Hub worked with current students to solicit feedback and provided UTL with a written report to help library administration understand the unique

values and features our students desire for our library spaces.

Deep inclusivity and high functionality were fundamental considerations and shaped every aspect of the project. Inclusive study spots are distributed and integrated seamlessly throughout the space, allowing users to customize table heights, chair positions, and lighting to accommodate individual requirements and modes of learning. All materials and finishes were selected to meet AODA standards, while stairs, entrances, and paths of circulation exceed minimum barrier-free requirements.

The end result is a robust and respectful design that honours the existing architecture and complements the library's other spaces. This student-forward design has become a favourite spot on campus, with students flocking to the new space within days of opening, once again showing that community is at the heart of our libraries.

With files from Katherine Zheng

THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY



Safe AND Sound

First Family Workstation in a Canadian Academic Library Installed at Gerstein

U of T Libraries is increasing family friendly study spaces through the piloting of a family workstation in an open study area (1-Below, just inside the accessible entrance) at Gerstein Science Information Centre. The family workstation is a desk or carrel that has a built-in toddler-friendly contained area, allowing library users accompanied by children to use the computer workstation while their children are in a safe and stimulating environment. The workstation is ideal for users with children who need a child-friendly space but are not able to go to the Robarts Library Family Study Space because they are on a different part of the campus. The family workstation at Gerstein is the first one to be located at a Canadian academic library.

Mikaela Mitchell, Liaison and Education Librarian at Gerstein, coordinated the selection and approval of the space at Gerstein. When asked about her interest in bringing a family workstation to Gerstein, Mikaela said, “The Family Study Space at Robarts

Library is such an important initiative, and I want to ensure that student parents know they are welcome and supported at Gerstein, as well. I hope that bringing a family workstation to Gerstein will encourage other libraries and units on campus to consider what they can do to support student parents, in big ways or small.”

Angelica Estoppey, Project Coordinator, procured and worked with the manufacturer on the design of the workstation, and with assistance from Edmund Shalhoub, Assistant Project Coordinator, and Jason Carmichael, Operations and Building Services Officer, assembled the workstation at Gerstein.

When asked about her intentions for choosing the design of the family workstation, Angelica said, “We wanted to create an inviting and safe space for both the parents and the children. A space that will be calm and inspiring. Following the principles of biophilic design, we used elements like natural wood, and a green play mat to promote well-being by facilitating a



connection between nature and the users. We added a biophilic interactive learning panel to stimulate young minds through play. The panel itself is nature inspired and features an interactive game with bees and flowers.”

Installing a family workstation in an open, accessible area is not only a practical support for a Gerstein user accompanied by children, but it communicates to student parents and the U of T community that one can be both a student and a parent and that users with children are welcome at the University of Toronto and the Libraries.

Since the opening of the Robarts Library Family Study Space in 2018, the first of its kind in Canada, and the piloting of temporary free child-minding in 2019, the U of T Libraries has been at the forefront of inclusive academic library services for users with children. Both initiatives have been extremely well received by student parents and the wider community.

Contributed by Jesse Carliner

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES



By Improving Catalogues and Collections, U of T Librarians Aim to Be Respectful of Indigenous Voices

When Mikayla Redden was studying library and information sciences in university, she was often shocked when she saw how Indigenous materials were catalogued.

In a standard system used by many academic libraries, many novels, plays and other works by Indigenous authors fall under the heading: “History.”

“That makes me feel completely invalidated,” says Redden, who is of Anishinaabe and Scottish heritage. “That makes the experiences of my Indigenous friends, who are creators, writers, playwrights [invalidated].

“These things are very much here and now—alive—but they are being classified as ‘history.’”

Now an Information Services and Instruction Librarian at the Donald G. Ivey

Library at University of Toronto’s New College, Redden is part of a tri-campus movement within U of T Libraries, as well as internationally, to change harmful language and practices that are still used in libraries and archives worldwide to describe items related to Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized communities.

At U of T, the efforts extend to the realm of metadata, where librarians and staff have changed subject headings used to find and organize books in the catalogue. In the summer of 2022 U of T Libraries completed a project to replace hurtful and outdated headings, such as “Indians of North America,” and the racial slur, “Eskimo,” with more appropriate language that’s used in common speech.

Jordan Pedersen, a Metadata Librarian at U of T, says that U of T Libraries has removed ten offensive terms from its catalogue so far, but notes that further changes will be needed.

“In libraries, we make our records so people can find stuff. We adhere to international standards, and one of them is the U.S. Library of Congress—which is where these terms are coming from,” she says. “[But] in order to be respectful, we have to break some of those standards.”

A group of librarians, staff and students has been working for more than a year to change the subject headings and other metadata. An internal library survey showed that librarians and staff who interact with patrons were made to feel embarrassed and uncomfortable by the old terminology.

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES

“There are a lot of messy feelings around how to explain this to users,” Pedersen says.

The outdated system also threatens to impact research. That’s because some library users may not be able to find resources if they are organized using language that is no longer commonly used in Canada.

This is why the U of T working group plans to look at ways it can further improve the catalogue, including by adding more specific descriptions like “Mississaugas of the Credit River.”

In making these changes, U of T librarians and staff took inspirations from American libraries that altered the way they catalogue items related to undocumented migrants, Pedersen explains.

Now, U of T Libraries is prepared to share information with other libraries looking to follow suit.

“I hope this will be helpful to other people as well,” Pedersen says.

Redden is leading a tri-campus working group in the early stages of adding to the libraries’ collection to improve the

representation of under-represented and racialized authors.

Over the longer term, her “dream project” is to ensure that all contemporary Indigenous materials in U of T Libraries’ vast collection are not mischaracterized as “history.”

“Indigenous People are not history,” she says. “Today, Indigenous Peoples make up cultures that are reclaiming, thriving and very proud.”

With files from Geoff Vendeville, U of T News



Voices of Survivors: The Indian Residential School Survivors’ Stories Database

September 30, 2022 marked the second annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, honouring the survivors of the Residential School System, as well as their families and their communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful histories and ongoing impacts of

Residential Schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process, and so is hearing Stories from Survivors and reflecting on their truths.

Colleagues from across the U of T Libraries have collaborated on an important project: the Indian Residential School

Survivors’ Stories Database. This project seeks to bring together the multitude of Stories from Residential School Survivors available online in one searchable format. These items are created by organizations external to the University of Toronto Libraries, and this collection brings them together and places them in conversation.

The collection emphasizes audio and video recordings to connect directly to the individual storytelling styles, personalities, emotions, and experiences of Survivors.

The hope is that students, educators, and community members will be able to find these Stories more easily and listen to them, in order to reflect on and gain a deeper understanding of both the personal and societal impacts of the Indian Residential School System.

“UTL understands the importance of building relationships with Indigenous communities, and we are making small but important progress to learn and understand our obligations. I am grateful to be part of an organization that is committed to advancing reconciliation and truths with Indigenous Peoples,” said Larry P. Alford, University Chief Librarian.

To browse the database or to learn more about the project, visit: irsssurvivors.library.utoronto.ca.

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES

Вітаємо! U of T Community Welcomes Ukrainian Exchange Students



Over the 2022 summer and fall terms, 170 students from Ukraine have taken courses at the University of Toronto thanks to the generous financial support of the Temerty Foundation and members of the community.

Rebecca Gimmi, the International Projects Officer at the Office of the Dean in the Faculty of Arts and Science, reached out to Ksenya Kiebusinski, Head of the Petro Jacyk Central & East European Resource Centre in early May 2022. She asked her about ways the University could connect with students taking part in the Special Exchange Program between the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (KMA) and the University of Toronto. The University wanted to organize co-curricular and social activities for them.

Ksenya proposed organizing a library orientation program for the students which would include a show-and-tell display of Ukrainian material held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

More than 30 students from various disciplines, ranging from computer science and business to philosophy and political science, took part in the library orientation program. The orientation was preceded by a display of selected rare books. Items that generated the most curiosity among the students was a first edition of Taras Shevchenko's *Кобзар* (*The Bard*) published in St. Petersburg in 1840, a practical cookbook in Ukrainian describing how to prepare foods in the English or Canadian style, and the Ukrainian-language newspaper *Студент* (*Student = Étudiant*) issued by the Ukrainian Canadian University Students' Union from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Students were welcomed by Edward Schatz, Director of the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, and by Ksenya and Lucan Way, co-directors of the Petro Jacyk Program for the Study of Ukraine. Heather Buchansky, Student Engagement Librarian, and Julia Martyniuk, Liaison and Education Librarian

at Gerstein Science Information Centre, presented on library resources, services, and supports.

Students were introduced to the wealth of resources available at the libraries to support them both in their courses—from research consultations and access to databases—and beyond the classroom—like streaming films and technology loans. The event concluded with a chance for all attendees to socialize over traditional Ukrainian cuisine consisting of cabbage rolls and perogies catered by local restaurant, Heavenly Perogy.

“The best part of the orientation program was the enthusiasm and curiosity shown by the students about library staff, faculty, and Fisher Library. They wanted to know everything possible about us. Ukraine has a great future based on the confidence and intelligence this young generation demonstrates,” shared Ksenya.

Contributed by Ksenya Kiebusinski

Above: Edward Schatz, Director, Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, welcomes the Ukrainian exchange students.

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES

1000+ Titles Added Ukrainian Cataloguing Project

The Metadata Services Department at UTL continues to give priority to Ukrainian cataloguing. Much patience and a collective effort has led to the addition of more than 1,000 titles to the library catalogue since February 2022, shortly after the war in Ukraine broke out. New Ukrainian materials, as well as older publications received as gifts, have seen a herculean effort from library staff to catalogue and make available all materials to library users. The publications featured here were catalogued by UTL Metadata Creation Specialists, including Roman Tashlitskyy, Polina Vendrova, and Natalia Mykhaylychenko, with Serials Cataloguer Juliya Borie.

ПІДСОВЕТСЬКІ АНЕКДОТИ

A gift from the Toronto Ukrainian Library Association, *Підсоветські анекдоти* (*Anti-Soviet Jokes*) is book by Hryhoriï Sen'ko that satirizes life in Soviet Ukraine via a collection of jokes. As the author notes in his introduction, the jokes in this publi-



cation were strictly forbidden in Soviet Ukraine, and anyone who was in possession of or repeated them was severely punished. It's no surprise, then, that the collection was published outside of Ukraine in Buenos Aires (1956). This book features cartoons by the Ukrainian artist Viktor Tsybmal.

ХТО ТАКИЙ ХОХОЛ? (WHO'S A KOHL?)

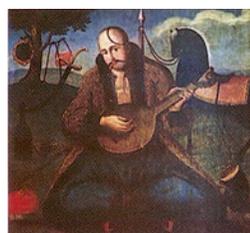
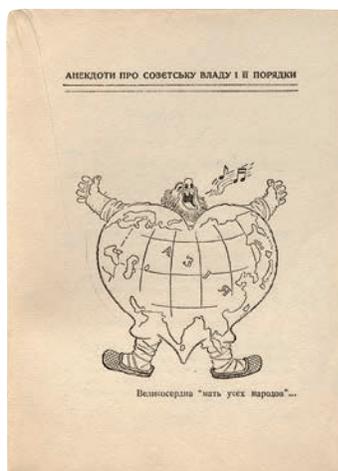
This deeply researched volume is a fascinating study of the old Ukrainian custom of shaving men's heads. Through numerous colour illustrations, the book provides a view of European and Asian history through the unique lens of hairstyles.

УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ СКИТАЛЕЦЬ

Український скиталець (*The Homeless Ukrainian*) is an illustrated bi-weekly jour-

nal that was published from 1920 to 1923 in Czechoslovakia and Austria by the immigrant military community of the short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic. Edited by the distinguished political activist Petro Budz, it became very popular among readers for uplifting the national spirit of the Ukrainian diaspora. The journal mostly published memoirs and chronicles of military experiences, which today makes it a valuable primary source for researchers. Prominent illustrators who contributed to the journal include Ivan Ivanets' and Vasyl' Petruk. Donated to UTL by John Luckiw, the journals are held at the Robarts Library and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

Contributed by Lana Soglasnova



Top: The Petro Jacyk Central & East European Resource Centre. Above, left to right: Illustration from *Anti-Soviet Jokes*; images from *Who's a Kohl?*; cover of a 1922 issue of *The Homeless Ukrainian*.

CARING FOR COMMUNITIES



Enriching Black Histories

Through the month of February, UTL staff, students, and local community groups were joined by the Toronto Public Library, Toronto Metropolitan University Library, and York University Library for the fourth Black Histories Wikipedia and Wikidata Edit-a-thon.

This annual month-long editing campaign seeks to centre care toward Black experiences in public history, and to empower local participants to share in enriching Black histories in Wikipedia, Wikidata, and Wikimedia Commons.

The first panel took place on Wednesday, February 8 and was moderated by Dr. Funké Aladejebi, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Toronto. Dr. Aladejebi's research and teaching focus on oral history, the history of education in Canada, Black Canadian women's history, and transnationalism. She was joined by Debbie Ebanks Schlums, a multidisciplinary artist and Vanier scholar at York University who explores themes of migration, culture, and persistent colonial-post-colonial structures; and Jonsaba Jabbi, a Toronto-based

writer, storyteller, and archivist of Building a Black Archive (BABA), a grassroots community archive dedicated to unearthing and restoring Black histories and archives.

The Black Histories Edit-a-thon initiative began in 2020 as a one-day edit-a-thon at UTSC Library. Since then, the organizers have adapted the event to a virtual, asynchronous setup with weekly edit-together sessions. Collaboration has grown steadily each year, with support from colleagues, instructors, and students across U of T's campuses along with participants from the Toronto Public Library. In 2022, the campaign became a multi-institutional effort, with contributions from York University Library and Toronto Metropolitan University Library. This year, the team at UTL is especially grateful to have graduate students Mariba Douglas, a doctoral candidate in Geography and Planning, and Storm Jeffers, a doctoral candidate in Sociology, as campus community activators for the event. Countless others at local cultural institutions have also contributed edits, editing suggestions, and resources.

Editors from previous events have told stories of The Ward of Toronto, Marie Marcelle Buteau Racine, rapper Devon, Winifred Burks-Houck Professional Leadership Awards, the Bohee Brothers, Roy Perry, Sylvia Sweeney, d'bi Young, Emma Stark, First Baptist Church of Toronto, Black Theatre Canada, Congress of Black Women of Canada—and so much more. All may now be read about in Wikipedia.

Past years' efforts have trained 150 community editors to contribute to Wikipedia and Wikidata. Together they have added 2,675 new references and 218,700 words. In Wikipedia, 208 articles were improved and 33 articles created. In Wikidata, 270 items were improved and 126 items created. Nineteen images have also been uploaded to Wikimedia Commons, despite this not being an explicit focus for the edit-a-thons.

We are excited to be continuing this work in 2023 and in future years.

Contributed by Alex Jiyun Jung

COLLABORATIONS



Mellon Foundation Grant Helps U of T Researchers Uncover ‘Hidden Stories’ in Centuries-old Books

At first glance, the dusty and worn pages of an old book from centuries ago might not reveal more than their written contents. But a closer look unlocks a treasure trove of knowledge.

It’s those obscured treasures—hidden stories—that U of T researchers want to uncover.

U of T is launching a collaborative and interdisciplinary project entitled *Hidden Stories: New Approaches to the Local and Global History of the Book*. It’s the latest in a series of projects in global book history by the research team at the Old Books New Science Lab, led by U of T Vice President and UTM principal Alexandra Gillespie.

This project involves a collaboration with 130 researchers—librarians, humanists, scientists, curators, conservators and others—from U of T and 60 institutions around the world. It will explore all the

systems, peoples, and cultures that make a book, including its physical and biological properties as sources of new knowledge. Everything from fungal growth on a book’s pages to the trade routes involved in the materials used to make the book will be studied.

The Mellon Foundation is supporting the project with a \$2.0 million (USD) grant for the next four years.

“On behalf of the entire U of T community, I would like to thank the Mellon Foundation for their visionary support,” said U of T Vice President of Advancement David Palmer. “This grant will enable cutting-edge historical research that will transform our understanding of communities and cultures.”

The project is named after a public exhibition displayed at the Aga Khan Museum from October 2021 to February 2022. That

exhibit, which included contributions from U of T, the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and other collaborators, showcased the vibrance of global book collections, including a seventeenth-century manuscript of the *Bhagavad Gita* from Kashmir.

The larger *Hidden Stories* project will now examine manuscripts in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library and across the world including in China, Ethiopia, East Africa, North America, Tunisia and Nepal.

Some of these books are so fragile that opening them would destroy them. To get past this hurdle, researchers conduct micro-CT scans of the book, layer by layer—not page by page. Because the pages are wavy, reconstructing a 3D model of the scanned layers needs to involve the use of AI.

“*Hidden Stories* will be the team’s most ambitious endeavour yet in terms of the scale, number, and complexity of our

COLLABORATIONS



collaborations,” says Alexandra Gillespie. “The Mellon Foundation continues to be an incredible partner in this work. Their support sets us on a path to discovery that will change our understanding of global history and reshape the stories we tell today.”

U of T Libraries—a long-time collaborator with the Old Books New Science Lab—will play a major role in the project, supporting work ranging from book conservation practices to research data management and knowledge translation. “By partnering with the communities and researchers behind the *Hidden Stories* project, U of T is challenging conceptions about what libraries should be,” says Larry P. Alford, University Chief Librarian of the University of Toronto.

“Researchers and librarians are working together with knowledge keepers to

Opening page: A manuscript from *The Book and Silk Roads* project. UTM Old Books New Science Lab is co-ordinating a follow-up project, *Hidden Stories*, which has received funding from the Mellon Foundation. This page: Alexandra Gillespie, vice president and principal of the University of Toronto Mississauga, and principal investigator for the project, joins researchers working on *The Book and the Silk Roads* project.

preserve and re-examine the past while exploring new ways to showcase hidden stories in our present moment. We hope that this kind of collaboration will set a global example for how research libraries can participate in bringing together bright minds and innovative technologies to spark wonder and new connections.” U of T Libraries Associate Chief Librarian for Digital Strategies and Technology Sian Meikle will help make many of these collaborations possible as one of the project’s co-primary investigators.

Alongside Meikle and Gillespie, Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) Professor Suzanne Conklin Akbari will help drive the project’s goals and outcomes. Akbari was a professor at U of T for nearly 25 years, including serving as Director for the Centre for Medieval Studies between 2013 and 2018 before moving to IAS in Princeton, New Jersey. She was the co-curator for the Aga Khan Museum exhibition from which the project sprang.

The results of this team’s research will be made available through open-source code,

the Old Books New Science Lab. “We don’t really have a good conservation solution for that yet, so that’s part of the work.”

Other conservation issues include what’s known as the carbon black problem. CT scans of books reveal that the ink and the page are both made of carbon, which makes it difficult to distinguish in a scan, as is the case with some sixteenth-century Kashmiri birchbark manuscripts. Researchers turned to machine learning, imaging scientists, Sanskrit scholars, librarians and conservators to figure out how to conserve the book and read it.

But the project is much more than scanning old books. In addition to imaging and machine learning, it includes DNA analysis, ecosystem analysis, data management, and cataloguing. It also involves dedicated funding toward communities of origins—the communities where the manuscripts were initially found.

Gillespie is interested in “disrupting the traditional narrative about the arrival of printing in Western Europe” which, she explains, is “inconsistent with pre-modern

open data repositories, academic publications, media posts, podcasts, videos and exhibits.

A component of the project is to find better ways to conserve precious manuscripts. While some are too fragile to open, other manuscripts made of parchment degrade through a process of gelatinizing.

“It’s where the page starts to physically break down on the molecular level,” says Jessica Lockhart, head of research for

COLLABORATIONS

textual culture.” That narrative, which she refers to as the “Gutenberg myth,” is that the arrival of printing in Western Europe in the fifteenth century is what produced modernity.

Hidden Stories will change this narrative by studying diverse ways of knowledge-sharing that existed millennia before the development of the printing press in Europe. Those stories range from the squashed bug flattened between the pages of an old book to textual traditions in non-Western societies that were suppressed by colonialism or Western scholarship.

“The stories we tell about the past shape the way we live in the present,” Gillespie says.

“Recovering knowledge people have ignored, neglected, stolen or excluded, recovering knowledge, sharing it, doing it truthfully, openly, is necessary for our world to thrive,” she adds. “It’s also a tool for cultural resilience—a way of giving hope for the future by affirming the vitality of the past.”

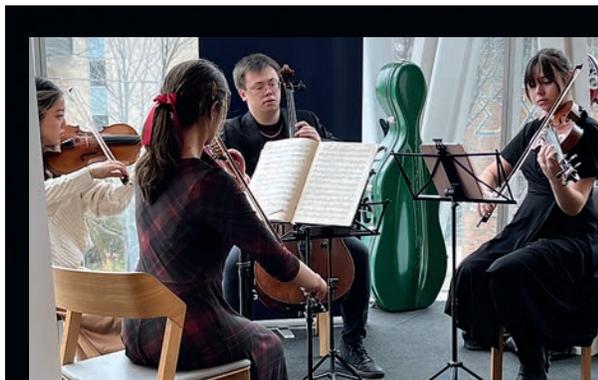
Among the project’s most important collaborators are members from Indigenous communities, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Munsee Delaware Nation, both located in what is now Ontario. Since the Munsee homeland is in what is now New York and New Jersey, that collaboration is carried on through IAS.

Akbari says the project developed organically and soon spread into a web of connections of interested researchers.

“It started very early on with conversations among medievalists at Toronto,” she says. She hopes *Hidden Stories* will generate research, speak to a wider public, create exhibitions and effect change in curricula.

“The book is a conduit that lets us find ourselves in the past,” she says. “It’s about the different ways of accessing the past, telling those stories in a good way, respecting the evidence and respecting how people have told the story over time.”

From files by Ali Raza



Student Musicians Captivate Listeners in Robarts Common

On November 29, 2022, Robarts Common was enlivened by the sounds of chamber music for strings, composed by Robert Schumann and Joseph Haydn, and performed by students from U of T’s Faculty of Music.

This well-attended lunchtime concert was part of the Faculty of Music’s new Music Oasis Series, an initiative that brings concerts to non-traditional performing spaces across the University of Toronto’s three campuses. The series was created to enhance outreach within the University, provide valuable opportunities for students to perform outside the Faculty of Music, and bring music into unexpected spaces. UTL was pleased to work with the Faculty of Music to bring the sounds of strings to library users.

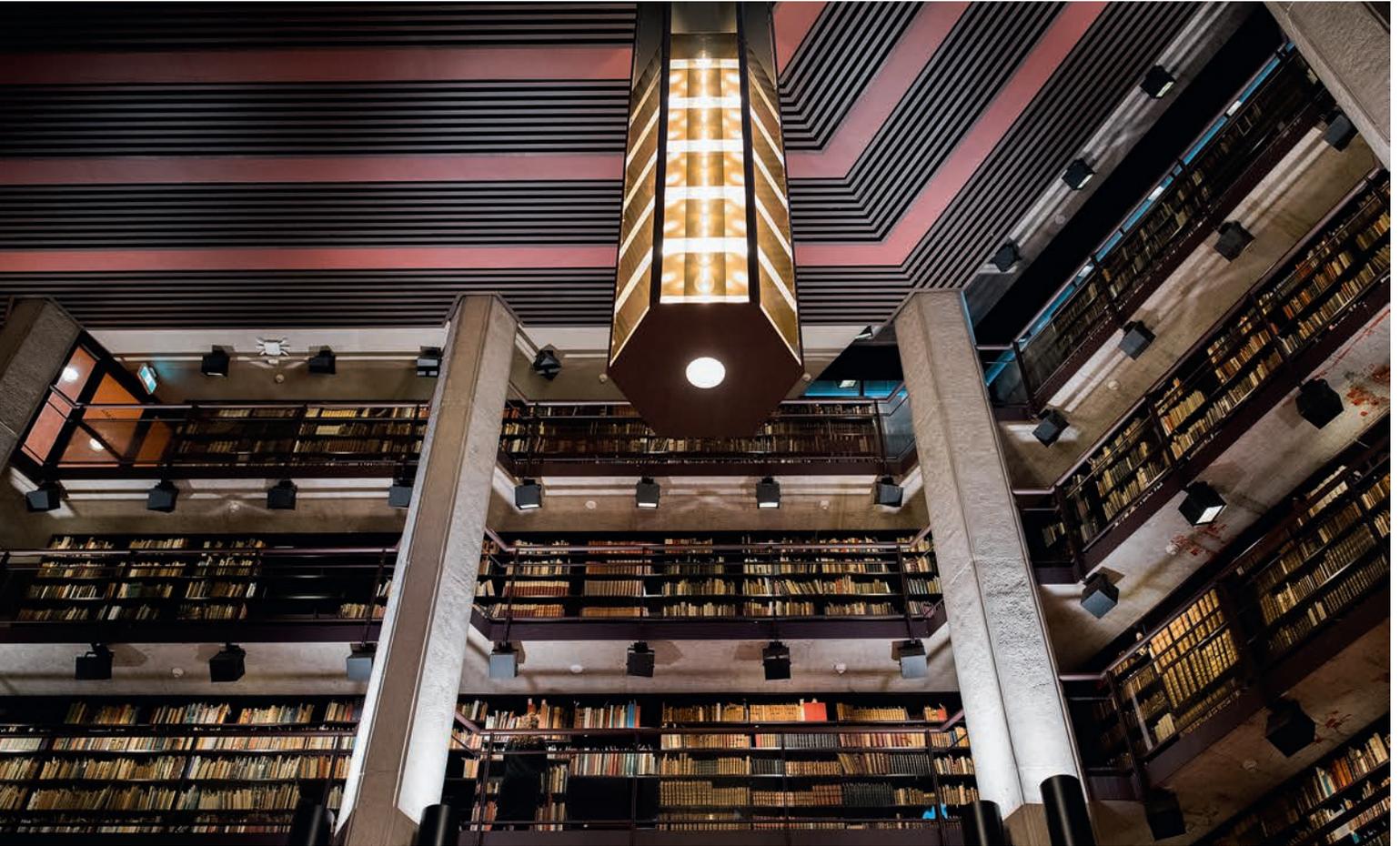
In 2022, the Music Oasis Series presented concerts on the St. George campus at Faculty of Law’s Jackman Law Building and UTL’s Robarts Common, and at U of T Mississauga’s William G. Davis Building and Colman Commons in Oscar Peterson Hall. With eight concerts scheduled for the current academic year, the Faculty of Music looks forward to expanding the series to all three campuses and more performance spaces in 2023–24.

The next Music Oasis Series concert at Robarts Common will take place on Tuesday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, email concert-office.music@utoronto.ca.

Contributed by Eric Chow

BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY HENRY DICK VIA UNSPLASH. CONCERT PHOTO BY ERIC CHOW.



Friends Flock Back to the Fisher

INDIGENOUS OPEN HOUSE—CURATED BY LIBRARIAN DANIELLE VAN WAGNER

In recognition of National Indigenous History Month, Fisher Library staff assembled a showcase of books, periodicals, archives, and art created by First Nations, Inuit and Métis authors, creators, and presses.

Visitors to the June 21, 2022 exhibition saw important works in the Library's Indigenous collection, including a signed and annotated draft of Tomson Highway's

1989 play, *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*; Anne Anderson's collection of instruction manuals on the Cree language; a cookbook produced by the Ojibwe Culture Foundation compiled from individuals on Manitoulin Island; and journals of Reverend Peter Jones, an Ojibwa minister, translator, and chief from Burlington Bay. His journals account for his childhood in which he remembers hunting, fishing, and the War of 1812.

PRIDE OPEN HOUSE—CURATED BY RARE BOOK LIBRARIAN DAVID FERNÁNDEZ

On June 29, 2022 staff at the Fisher Library hosted an open house to celebrate stories of resistance and activism as told in a selection of books, magazines, documents, and art on LGBTQ+ culture and history for PRIDE Month.

Attendees learned about censorship of queer materials in Canada, trans and drag culture in Toronto, and gay and lesbian literature and culture. Materials included the first issue of *The Body Politic*, a queer, activism based Canadian monthly magazine

Facing page: some of the publications that were on display in the open houses. Recipes from *Nishnabe Delights*. Cutler, Ontario: Woodland Studios. Illustrations by Martin Panamick. *Life and journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by (Rev. Peter Jones), Wesleyan missionary*. Toronto: Anson Green, 1860. *Sapphus poetriae lesbiae: fragmenta et elogia*. London: Abraham Vandenhoeck, 1733. Title page and frontispiece for this edition of Sapphic literature by Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739), who was a German Hebrew scholar and collector of books. *The Body Politic*. Toronto: Pink Triangle Press, 1971–1987. Cover of the first issue, published in Toronto by the Body Politic Collective on 1 November 1971. Christopher North. *But can she cook?* Toronto: Bittersweet Press, 1993. Photograph of drag performer, Dawn Valley, by George Leet, along with recipe for “Bloody Mary Soup”. Julius Fučík (1903–1943). *Reportaje al pie de la horca*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1952. Cover design by Diego Rivera; translation of *Reportáž psaná na oprátce* into Spanish by Libuse Prokopova.

GOOD COMPANY

that published from 1971 to 1987; *Bombay Dost*, India's first registered magazine for the LGBTQ+ community; and *But Can She Cook?*, a collection of recipes by local drag queens published in 1988. Proceeds of the sales went to Casey House, a specialty hospital in Toronto that cares for people living with and at risk of HIV.

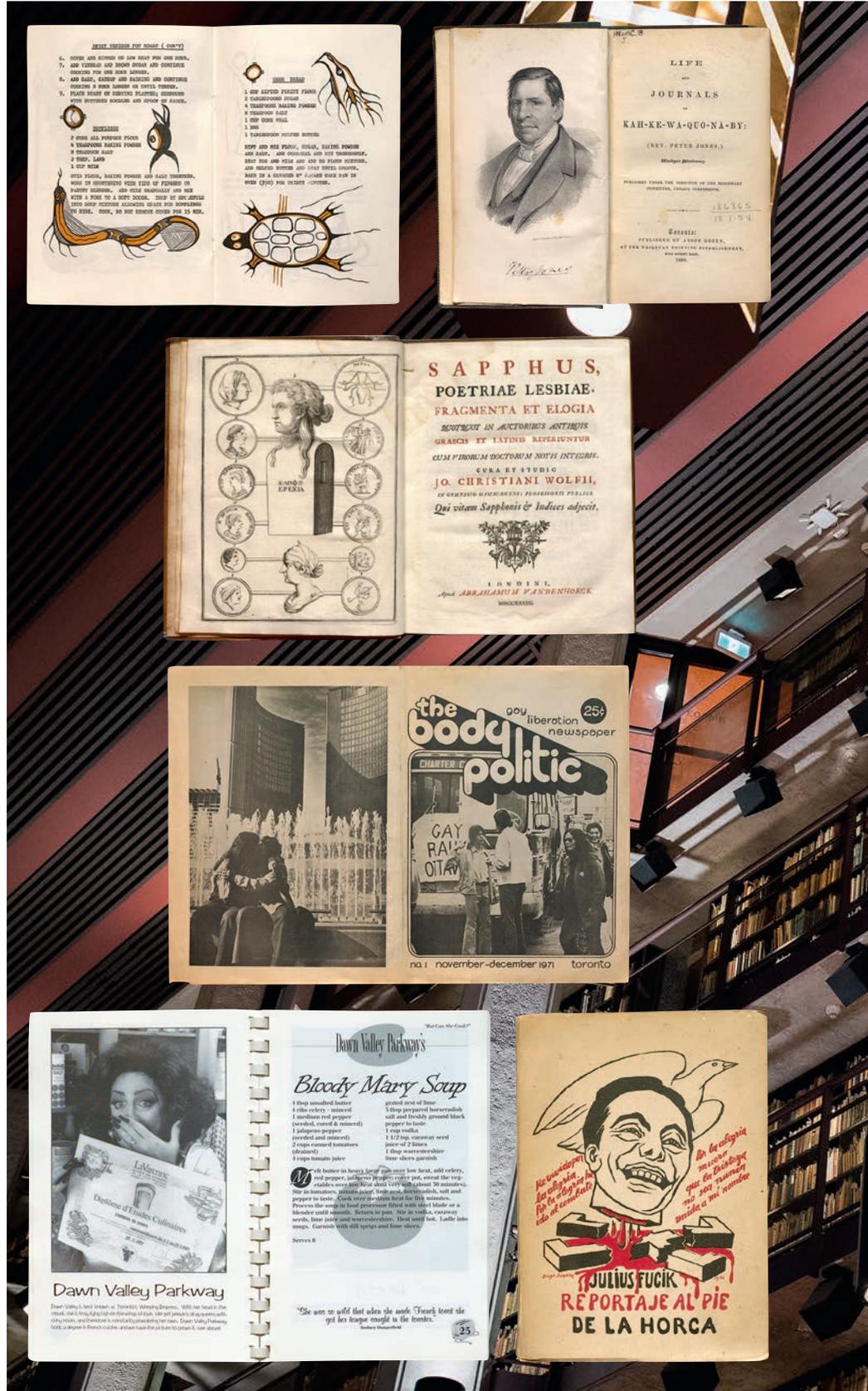
The oldest item on display, printed in London in 1773, was *Sapphus, poetriae lesbiae: fragmenta et elogia*. This book of poetry was written by Sappho (ca. 630–ca. 570 BC), an Archaic Greek poet from the Island of Lesbos. The words 'sapphic' and 'lesbian' are derived from her name and her home island.

LATIN AMERICAN OPEN HOUSE—CURATED BY RARE BOOK LIBRARIAN DAVID FERNÁNDEZ

On October 21, 2022, Fisher Library staff curated a Latin American Heritage Month Open House entitled 'Libros con historia/ Livros com história/Books with history', consisting of a selection of primary sources dating from 1571 to 2022. The exhibition showcased a variety of stories tied to material in the Latin American collections at the Fisher Library in recognition of Latin American Heritage Month. Some stories relate to the introduction of the printing press in the Americas and its consequences on the language, cultures, and societies.

Other stories revealed aspects of colonial life in the Americas with a focus on Indigenous Peoples, including the newly acquired manuscript, *Axoloapan Xoloctlan* (Tecámac, Mexico, 1690–1720), an Indigenous manuscript book which functions as a legal record of land claims made by Indigenous Peoples in central Mexico.

In addition to these stories of cultural encounters and survival during the colonial period, the selection of modern material focused on visual stories on the cultures and societies in the Americas, such as depictions of street markets (stereoviews), industries (photo albums), and depictions of the rich diversity of peoples and landscapes in this region (travel books).



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TREASURES UNBURIED

The medieval bishop and bibliophile Richard de Bury describes books as an “infinite treasure”, for they, more than any other human contrivance, can preserve the knowledge and the wisdom, as well as the follies and the failures, of previous generations—“in books I find the dead as if they were alive.”

The exciting return to in-person events at the Fisher Library took place on October 6, 2022 with the opening reception for a new exhibition that brought the medieval world to life by drawing on the Library’s many treasures from the period. *Certaine Worthy Manuscripts: Medieval Books in the Fisher Library* celebrated the medieval book, and the medieval written word more generally, in all its variety in terms of both subject matter and physical form.

The exhibition was curated by Pearce J. Carefoote, former Head of Rare Books and Special Collections, Timothy Perry, Medieval Manuscript and Early Book Librarian, and Nadav Sharon, Jewish Studies Librarian at the Fisher Library, and included books on topics from religion to

science and history to the law, in formats from the codex to the charter to the tally stick. Though the focus of the exhibition was on medieval manuscripts—that is, books written by hand—it also explored the transition from handwritten to printed books that began at the very end of the medieval period.

WHEN WORDS ARE AT WAR

It is sobering to remember that two of the greatest supporters of the public library in the twentieth century were Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Books gave comfort during air raids, to troops on the front line, especially to prisoners of war. But they also sowed the seeds of the ideologies that provoked conflict and helped sustain totalitarian regimes.

Andrew Pettegree, professor of Modern History at the University of St Andrews in Scotland captivated listeners at the twenty-third *Alexander C. Pathy Lecture on the Book Arts* on October 18, 2022. In his talk, *The Book at War: Libraries and Reading in a Time of Conflict*, Pettegree traced the relationship between print and warfare, from the rush of military handbooks in the first age of print

and the foundation of military academies to the beginnings of scientific warfare. He shared the ideologies found in boys’ magazines that saw young men flock to the recruiting offices in 1914.

Professor Pettegree brought the audience to the scientists’ laboratories. He showed how academics turned spymasters, and illustrated how academic libraries contributed to the war machines. From the ageless strategies of Clausewitz to the exchange of abusive leaflets between troops caught in the ruins of Monte Cassino, print played a vital role both in sustaining conflict and in soothing its terrors.

This annual lecture is generously endowed by Alexander Pathy.

ROMANCING THE TOMES

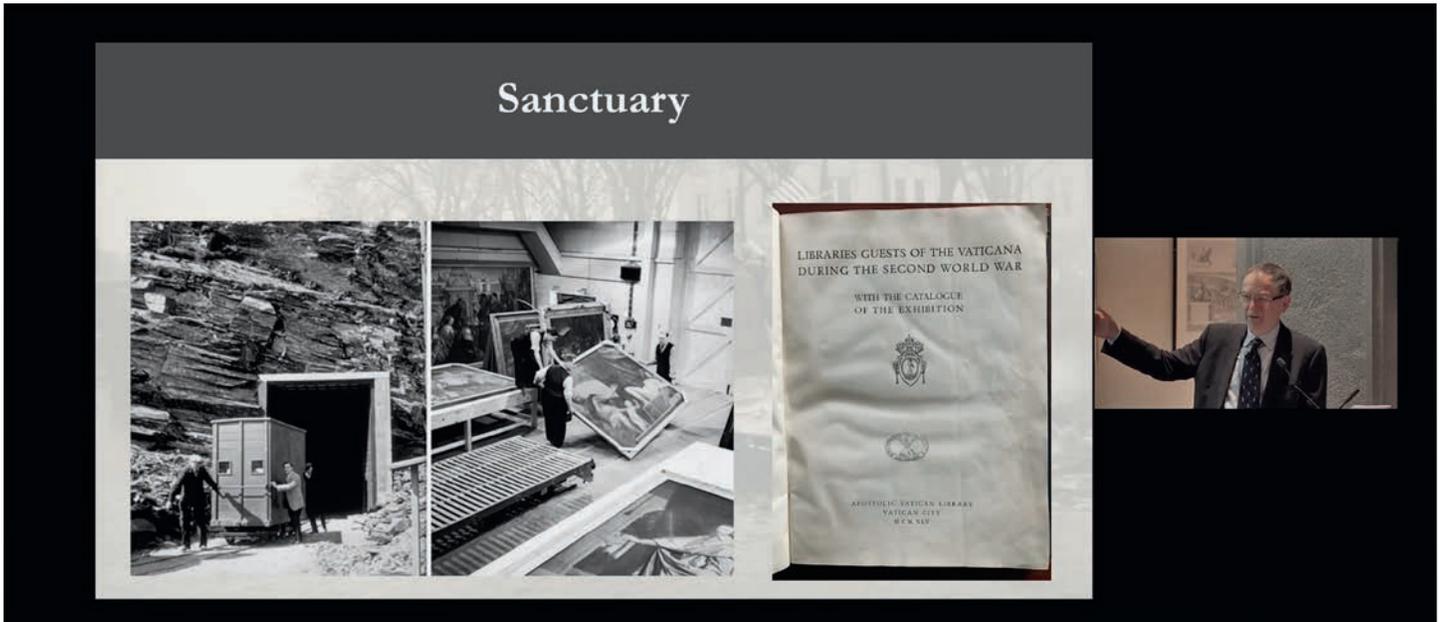
The popular romance genre is by far the biggest market force in anglophone publishing today, generating more than \$1.4 billion in revenue—nearly twice that of the next most popular variety, crime and mystery. Although its commercial success is beyond question, popular romance remains minimally represented in bibliographical scholarship, institutional special collections, and dealer catalogues.

Rebecca Romney is co-founder of the rare book company Type Punch Matrix and co-founder of the Honey & Wax Book Collecting Prize. At the twenty-fourth *John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture* on November 29, 2022, she delivered a fascinating talk entitled *Bibliography in the Wild: The Obstacles and Opportunities of Collecting Rare Romance Books*.

When Romney began collecting the popular romance novel to examine its literary heritage, she found that it was much deeper than typically assumed. She told of her experiences practising bibliography in this untapped area: working out ambiguous edition statements from indie presses, interpreting clues in cover codes, and chasing

Above: The opening of *Certaine Worthy Manuscripts: Medieval Books in the Fisher Library*. Facing page, top to bottom: Andrew Pettegree speaks about the power and influence of books during times of war; Rebecca Romney shares her experiences of collecting rare romance novels.

GOOD COMPANY



down elusive publisher records. Over time, she adapted the strategies employed in traditional bibliographical and book historical fields for a secondhand marketplace that did not consider the popular romance genre worthy of scholarly attention. In addition to describing the obstacles she experienced, Rebecca acknowledged the many opportunities that come with collecting in a genre that contains so much potential for book historical scholarship.

A Q&A with guests attending in person and online rounded out a very enjoyable evening.

This annual lecture is generously endowed by Mrs. R. Dorene Seltzer.

Become a Friend of the Fisher!

If you enjoyed reading about these lectures, consider joining The Friends of the Fisher Rare Book Library! Your membership supports acquisitions and special programs at the Fisher Library, including the publication of exhibition catalogues.



In addition to invitations to the four members-only lectures hosted by the Friends, you will receive invitations to special events like exhibition openings, catalogues and *The Halcyon*, a newsletter published twice a year that shares short articles on recent noteworthy gifts and

acquisitions, events and other articles about the Library's collections.

To become a member you can visit online <https://fisher.library.utoronto.ca/donations/friends> or contact Anna Maria Romano at 416-978-3600 or annamaria.romano@utoronto.ca.

GOOD COMPANY

MEDIEVAL MUSICAL TREASURES

On November 21, 2022 the Jackman Humanities Institute sponsored ‘Medieval Musical Treasures’, two concerts at the Fisher Library featuring members of the Toronto Consort, a group that has become internationally recognized for its excellence in the performance of medieval, renaissance, and early baroque music. A lecture by John Haines, professor of music and medieval studies at the University of Toronto, preceded the musical programme.

This event was the perfect complement to the Fisher’s fall exhibition, *Certaine Worthye*

Manuscripts: Medieval Books in the Fisher Library, which ran until December 20, 2022.

Both concerts were sold out, with more than 100 guests attending each performance. The audience was a diverse mix of academics, students, Toronto Consort fans, and the general public.

‘Medieval Musical Treasures’ was the 2022–23 Jackman Humanities Institute Marquee Event and the Fisher Library was thrilled to host and support.

For information about other Jackman Humanities Institute events, visit <https://www.humanities.utoronto.ca/events>.



On November 22, 2022, the Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library hosted a special event featuring the Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy, and Dr. Neville Poy, to discuss *Precious Moments*—a visually stunning book that captures the precious moments the Poys have created at their Toronto home and Muskoka retreat.

During the event titled *Optimism & Affinity—the Precious Moments of Vivienne & Neville Poy*, the Poys sat down for a lively and intimate conversation with Henry Shiu, Shi Wu De Professor in

Chinese Buddhist Studies at Emmanuel College of Victoria University. The discussion ranged from the Poys’ love of nature and gardening to insights about photography and capturing rare moments. Larry P. Alford, University Chief Librarian, gave welcome remarks, followed by comments by Professor Markus Stock, Principal of University College.

The event was well attended by more than 40 guests, including community members, students and faculty from the University of Toronto and peer institu-

tions, as well as Ms Barbara Hall, former Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and former Mayor of Toronto.

The Poys generously donated ten signed copies of *Precious Moments* and selected photographs to the Library to sell during the reception, and all ten books sold immediately. Proceeds from the event helped raise funds in support of the University of Toronto Libraries.

Contributed by Mitchell Ma, GSLA at the Richard Charles Lee-Canada Hong Kong Library, PhD candidate in Archaeology

Top right: Toronto Consort musicians perform in the Fisher Library. Above: Drs. Vivienne and Neville Poy enjoy a spirited Q&A after their talk.

GOOD COMPANY

From Math to MSS: Science Literacy Week



GERSTEIN WELCOMES SECRET AGENTS

Science Literacy Week showcases the diversity of Canadian science and the culture in which it is embedded. Libraries, museums, science centres, schools and not-for-profits come together annually to highlight the books, movies, podcasts and events that share the exciting stories of the science, discoveries and ingenuity shaping our lives.

From September 16–30, 2022, ‘Mum’ was the word at the Gerstein Science Information Centre, where librarians hosted events and activities for an enthusiastic student body. The theme, ‘M for Mathematics’, was interpreted through a ‘Secret Agent’ experience. Librarians and students prepared a series of interactive games and tasks, as well as a display, to engage students and bring mathematical joy to their library experience. Activities included a perception guessing game, secret messages that coordinated with a decoder wheel, a movie poster, print-out math games and activities, a chess board, and a library-wide scavenger hunt.

The event was a great success: each activity station needed to be restocked



multiple times throughout the weeks and the librarians loved seeing students enjoying themselves. We are looking forward to another exciting Science Literacy Week in 2023.

Contributed by Katie Merriman

FISHER LIBRARY SHARES HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE COLLECTIONS

On September 23, 2022, the Fisher provided a unique opportunity for visitors

to view some of the most important scientific books ever printed, from a fourteenth-century Latin manuscript of Euclid’s *Elements*, through to Copernicus’ revolutionary sixteenth-century work on planetary motion, to the original 1916 publication of Einstein’s paper that contains the general theory of relativity.

Also on display were examples of X-rays from when the technology was new, and some of the earliest works of chemistry, physics, medicine, and engineering.

Top, left to right: Mikaela Mitchell, Glyneva Bradley-Ridou, Katie Merriman, Julia Martyniuk, and Maggie Nevison. Above: Visitors to the Fisher Library browse through the display.

WE CELEBRATE

University Chief Librarian Larry P. Alford Receives 2022 Ron MacDonald Distinguished Service Award



On November 1, 2022, University Chief Librarian at the University of Toronto, Larry P. Alford was presented the prestigious Ron MacDonald Distinguished Service Award from colleagues at the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN).

Mr. Alford's career in library leadership began at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he was the Deputy University Librarian. In 2005, he moved to Temple University, as their Vice Provost for Libraries and University Librarian, with the additional role of Dean of University Libraries added in 2007. He assumed the role of University Chief Librarian of the University of Toronto Libraries in 2011 and has been a vital leader in the Canadian research library community ever since. With an eye to the future, Mr. Alford has worked to build strong and resilient digital research and scholarly communications infrastructure to benefit not only the University of Toronto, but also research libraries across Canada.

"UofT is extremely fortunate to have Larry Alford at the helm of our world-class library system. He keenly recognizes the

vital role that libraries play in student success and research excellence," said vice-president and provost Cheryl Regehr. "Larry has been a key contributor to our University's research enterprise. He is constantly working to evolve our libraries, expanding access to research and building crucial partnerships throughout the University community."

As a member of the CRKN Board of Directors from 2016–2020, Mr. Alford brought his vision and dedication to CRKN, ensuring that the organization continues to meet the current and future needs of the Canadian knowledge ecosystem. As part of the Canadiana Executive Committee from 2011–2012 and later the Board of Directors from 2013–2018, Mr. Alford was instrumental in the merger between CRKN and Canadiana. His contributions in bringing together these two organizations has helped CRKN to ensure preservation of and access to Canadian digital cultural heritage through strong research infrastructure for the benefit of all.

In addition to his leadership with CRKN, Mr. Alford has served on the board of the Canadian Association of Research

Libraries (CARL), the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), and served as the President of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). He received the 2021 CARL Award for Distinguished Service to Research Librarianship and the 2018 American Library Association's Hugh Atkinson Memorial Award in recognition of his accomplishments.

Mr. Alford has been a leader in supporting access to knowledge, including pioneering work in establishing and growing Borealis, the Canadian Dataverse Repository, to support open data. He has generously used UTL resources to extend access to Borealis and Ontario Library Research Cloud services, ensuring that institutions across Canada can share their benefits, not just members of the U of T community.

"It is a tremendous honour to receive this award and be nominated by peers in the library community that I value and respect," remarked Mr. Alford. "Libraries are continually reinventing themselves as content becomes more accessible online. We play an essential role in enhancing access and preservation, building connections, and constructing knowledge, and reinforcing why research matters. It is a privilege to collaborate with colleagues at CRKN to lead change and evolve as society evolves."

Alongside all his career accomplishments, those who have worked with Mr. Alford describe him as generous, enthusiastic, and empathetic. He is committed to equity, passionate about inspiring students, supporting faculty, mentoring staff, and collaborating with colleagues. CRKN celebrates his vision, dedication, and service to the advancement of Canadian knowledge infrastructure with the Ron MacDonald Award.

Congratulations from your colleagues at the University of Toronto and beyond.

Larysa Woloszansky with files from CRKN

WE CELEBRATE



Evolution of THE Dentistry Library

If the visuals you associate with a library are rows of books, and the sound that comes to mind is silence, you haven't been in the Faculty of Dentistry's library in a while.

While the Dentistry Library may have turned 125 in October 2022, the space has gradually transformed to reflect the evolving needs of its users. There are still plenty of books, but many of them have been moved online. The tables are now much bigger and made from lighter-coloured wood, and the bright, sunny room where they sit is the opposite of aged and dreary.

"The Library has changed from a quiet, individual study type of environment to a space more open to socializing and group work, which has become so important for our program. The furniture changes as the needs of the students change," says Maria Zych, Acting Head Librarian.

The space is not the original library of 1897, which was founded when a few professors decided to gather core textbooks into a single room for students. When the

Faculty of Dentistry joined the University of Toronto in 1925, the collection grew significantly, aided by a bequest from alumnus Harry Randall Abbott—his portrait hangs in the reading room.

Today, this is the only free-standing academic dental library in Canada—the other dental schools have their library collections embedded within their science collections—plus it houses Canada's largest collection. The holdings include 30,000 print items.

The Library's services have changed considerably in recent decades, but a major shift happened during a 2018 renovation that included the addition of a multi-faith prayer room and lounge areas with couches and coffee tables.

The space encourages students to take breaks and replenish. The Library further supports wellness by having mental health resources on hand, such as seasonal affective disorder lamps, which are well used by students every winter.

Zych noted that these changes are all part of University of Toronto Libraries' commitment to evolving to accommodate changing student needs. "Today, libraries' values are not just to be accepting, but welcoming. And to support students not just in studying, but also their wellbeing. One hundred twenty-five years ago, the Library was a place to look up answers to questions. And you can still do that. But it's quite different."

As part of the 125th anniversary in October, the Dentistry Library curated an online exhibit to celebrate, including a display that focused on past dental school deans, and early meeting minutes that record how the school evolved its early collections. The Library also held a faculty appreciation event where custom-made buttons and treats were shared with users to help celebrate this milestone.

With files from Suzanne Bowness for *U of T Dentistry Magazine*

WE CELEBRATE



50 YEARS

Half a Century of Service – Robarts Library Turns 50!

This September marks an important milestone at UTL, the 50th anniversary of the John P. Robarts Research Library. The opening of Robarts Library in 1973 represented a significant expansion of the University's library system and greatly enhanced the University's capacity to support innovative research and scholarship.

The Library plays a vital role in supporting the academic and research endeavours of students, researchers and faculty, and the upcoming 50th anniversary is an opportunity for the University of Toronto to reflect on the Library's contributions to the University and to the wider academic community over the past half-century. This includes the many ways in which the Library has supported research and academic pursuits, as well as its role as a cultural and intellectual hub for the University and the broader community. The anniversary also gives the opportunity to showcase the Library's continued relevance and importance in the digital age and its ability to adapt to the changing research needs of the students and faculty.

The fall issue of *Noteworthy* will celebrate the Library's rich history, reflect on its current place as the heart of the University, and look ahead to its ongoing role in supporting the University's academic mission with new technologies and innovative solutions. We look forward to sharing this special anniversary issue with you.

In 2015, the Staff Team Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) Awards were established to formally recognize the teamwork, breadth, and quality of work produced in the University of Toronto Libraries. Following two years of online gatherings, staff came together on November 24, 2022 in the Fisher Library's Maclean Hunter Room to celebrate in person their colleagues' achievements at the eighth annual STAR Awards ceremony.

Two awards recognizing Innovation and Ongoing Excellence were presented to the winning teams by University Chief Librarian Larry Alford.

The submissions were unique and creative in their approaches to solving local and system-wide challenges and engaging users in virtual and physical spaces.

The Innovation Award went to the Entrepreneurship Open Learning Series team from UTSC, the BRIDGE, and colleagues across the tri-campus. The Entrepreneurship Open Learning Series are

open-access online learning modules that cover the basics of entrepreneurship and market research. The team members are: Sarah Shujah, Dave Fenton, Al Hearn, Mariana Jardim, Carey Toane, Danielle Moed, and Bill McConkey.

The Ongoing Excellence Award went to the Scholars Portal Journals Team: Jacqueline Whyte Appleby, Agnes Bai, Jayanthi Chengan, Jessica Hymers, Bart Kawula, Qinqin Lin, Bikramjit Singh Channa, Harpinder Singh, and Wei Zhao. The team was recognized for their continuous excellence in service to the University, national and international library communities as Canada's trusted digital repository.

The nominated teams that received certificates are: the Engineering & Computer Science Post-Renovation Reopening Crew, the Technical Skills Outreach Project Team, and the Windows 10 Deployment Team.

Contributed by Erin Calhoun

Above: Members of the Scholars Portal Journals Team. Front row, left to right: Agnes Bai, Qinqin Lin, Wei Zhao, and Jacqueline Whyte Appleby. Back row, left to right: Harpinder Singh, Bikramjit Singh Channa, and Jessica Hymers.

YOUR IMPACT

University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) is the heart of the University, the driving force behind why U of T remains one of the world's great research institutions with lasting impact in nearly every field. Drawing on one of the largest repositories of knowledge on earth, UTL provides the lifeblood of U of T's groundbreaking research, teaching, and innovation.

At UTL, students are on the leading edge of life-changing innovations, exciting partnerships and opportunities, research breakthroughs and journeys of self-discovery. Your support makes it all possible.



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