

Word from the stacks...

Libraries in the changing landscape of higher education

by P. Gavin Ferriby, Ph.D.
Interim University Librarian

The changing economy and outlook for higher education has brought numerous changes to Sacred Heart University Library in the past year.

Many of the effects of the economic downturn in fact hastened changes which were already in process by

September 2008, and careful management and stewardship of resources has contributed to a strengthening of the Library's collection and services despite a fiscally adverse climate.

Libraries everywhere have been faced both with needs to reduce services and to focus services upon those who most need help, especially those individuals who have become unemployed, or under-employed, and are struggling to make ends meet. The University Library assisted the efforts of Connecticut librarians to make a good case to the State Legislature for full funding of iConn databases and other essential library services, and fortunately those services have continued to be funded largely intact despite the State's very difficult budget process for the coming fiscal years.

Inside the library, we have all had to do more with less. Recognizing that



a new library building will be further in the future than once contemplated, the library staff has reorganized staff and collections spaces to maximize use of this facility. For the first time in a while, certain library subject collections have been modestly weeded to allow acquisition of more and newer print materials. Further digital collections have been acquired (such as R2, a collection of health-sciences monographs from Rittenhouse) and more will be announced to faculty, staff, and students soon. The library staff exhaustively reviewed print periodical subscriptions to eliminate duplicate purchases and print holdings found also in stable databases such as JSTOR. Paying only once for intellectual content has become a watch-word of collection development, spurred on by the global economic change.

The outlook? We will continue to live in a mixed "print + digital" era. While more and more particularly time-sensitive resources are moving towards a digital format, print continues to be a format of choice for several disciplines, including art, fashion, photography, and the more traditional humanities. In numerous universities, established print collections have turned out to be used more, not less, because digital indexing (Google books, for example) have made their contents easier to navi-



gate—but the digital presentation often lacks the immediacy, presence, and flexibility of print. (It's hard to consult a printed index of page numbers, and a page, both at once—so common with a printed book—just put in your fingers!). The challenge for librarians is to avoid paying duplicate charges for both ownership (of printed materials) and leasing (for digital materials). The challenge for publishers is to secure adequate cash flow to assure continued operations and development. Between those two challenges lies the way of the future.

Gavin Ferriby, Ph. D. joined the Library as Assistant University Librarian in June 2006. By training both a historian and a librarian, he lives in Hamden with his family, enjoys Korean food and rows on the Housatonic River with the New Haven Rowing Club. Dr. Ferriby became Interim University Librarian in February 2009.

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AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR GLORIA NAYLOR DONATES ARCHIVES TO SHU



Author Gloria Naylor, right, signed one of her books for Ruth Cerna, left, wife of SHU President Anthony J. Cerna, center, during her visit to campus.

"I wrote because I had no choice, but that was a long road from gathering the authority within myself to believing that I could actually be a writer." So said author Gloria Naylor to another celebrated

Gloria Naylor returned to campus on June 22 to sign papers – and copies of her books – and to formally present the texts and accompanying research materials to the library. "Returned," because she was here in 1994 when the University presented her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at the Commencement in May. Although she has since received two additional honorary degrees and numerous other awards, she retained an affection for Sacred Heart and determined that this living legacy would become a major University resource. Her later honors include a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a rare Guggenheim Fellowship. Naylor has led an extraordinary life full of surprising twists and turns – worthy of a novel, you might say. Her mother grew up as a sharecropper in Mississippi and saved every penny she could earn to buy books that black people were forbidden to borrow from the local library. She passed on this passion for the written word to her rather shy daughter and got her a New York City library card the moment her child could sign the application – about the age of four. Like her mother, Gloria joined the Jehovah's Witnesses, where she engaged in missionary work for seven years after high school.

woman of letters, Toni Morrison, concerning Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The presence of such a work, Naylor explained, "said to a young black woman, struggling to find a mirror of her worth in this society, not only is your story worth telling but it can be told in words so painfully eloquent that it becomes a song."

Gloria Naylor has been working on that song for 35 years now. She has called New York City home all her life – in fact, she has lived in every borough but Staten Island – but now she hopes to sell her Brooklyn brownstone and move to Paris. As part of making a new life for herself, she recently completed the donation of her personal and professional archives to Sacred Heart University. They will reside in a specially designated room in the [Ryan-Matura Library](#) and will be available for student use and scholarly research.



Naylor laughed during an interview on campus.

Upon returning north, she worked as a telephone operator for six years while attending college classes, eventually earning her BA from Brooklyn College, in English. It was there, she recalls, that she came to an understanding of herself as a woman of color and a writer. She admired many writers, but came to realize that all of them were either men or white – and often, both – so reading Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* was a genuine eye-opener. In 1981, the former missionary and switchboard operator entered a master's program at Yale where she pursued Afro-American studies, graduating in 1983.



Naylor, facing, talked with Dr. Michelle Loris during a recent trip to pick up her archives at her home in Brooklyn.

Most clearly associated with her first novel, *The Women of Brewster Place*, Naylor has scarcely given up writing and has a number of works in progress. She's maybe a third of the way along with a historical novel she calls *Saphira Wade*, which joins the lives of a woman from Africa and a man from Norway in the early decades of this country. Another project is tentatively called *Myisha Speaks*, poems by a 17-year-old girl with AIDS, and another she is hoping to write is called *Sorry, No Answer* – a refrain she heard often during her years as a switchboard

Word from the Stacks...

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operator.

Although she figures that 95 percent of her readers are women – they prefer fiction, she asserts, and her writing explores strongly feminist themes – she objects to being labeled a “woman writer” or even a “black author,” arguing that Amy Tan is not an ‘Asian woman writer’ or Norman Mailer a ‘Jewish male writer.’ Rather, they are American writers telling American stories. And so am I,” she explains.

Naylor’s writing habits were developed at a very early age. She was a shy and bookish child, and her mother gave her a diary to record her thoughts. When writing her first novel, which won the American Book Award for best first novel, she was also working as a telephone operator in New York City hotels, so she never had the leisure to spend hours every day at her writing desk. Initially, she wrote in longhand because the clatter of an electric typewriter was too distracting. *Mama Day* was her first major work composed at least partially on a computer, though she finds herself back to writing longhand these days, since the historical novel she is working on, set in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, seems to demand that approach.

The author has taught in a number of prestigious academic institutions, including her alma mater, Yale, as well as such schools as the University of Pennsylvania, NYU and Princeton. And she will return to the classroom next year at St. Lawrence University. Naylor was attracted to Paris because of the vibrant intellectual life there, and the rich tradition of “salons,” where writers and other creative people gather to share their thoughts and plans. And it will give her a chance to continue the volunteer work she took up at a Catholic-sponsored soup kitchen in New York; she has already scouted the options in Paris.

A poet, a missionary, a short-story writer, a telephone operator, a columnist, an essayist, a playwright and screenplay writer, an Ivy League student and sought-after educator: the book of Gloria Naylor’s life has had many chapters, and she hopes to write the latest one in the fabled city of Paris. But like a character in one of her novels, she must depend on some outside forces before she can make her move. And that chain of events begins with the New York City real estate market.

Article previously appeared on the Sacred Heart University website http://www.sacredheart.edu/pages/29119_award_winning_author_gloria_naylor_dates_archives_to_shu.cfm

New Library Look; New Library facilities

Over the summer, the University Library received a major exterior face-lift and new entry-way. Not only was the Schine Auditorium completely renovated, but Ryan-Matura Library received new exterior windows and lighting, a new entry-way, a new exterior library plaza with a water wall, and restorative and preventative building work such as exterior cleaning, new roofing or major roofing repairs, and new exterior landscaping.

Inside the library new additions can also be found: a new digital temperature and ventilation control system will not only provide a more comfortable working environment, but will save the University energy costs and improve campus “greening.” In addition, the reference librarians’ offices have been renovated both to improve the use of limited space and to ensure privacy and a collegial working environment.

New shelving can also be found in the library on the lower level (periodicals shelving area) and upper level (additional stacks). The collection will be shifted into new shelving during the coming months in an effort to reduce congestion in an already very crowded collection. New over-sized shelving for large art books has also been installed, and will be very helpful in making this important collection far more user-friendly.

In addition, the Library’s former conference room has been refurbished and will become the University Archives, hosting first of all the new Gloria Naylor Archives (see adjoining article).

Editorial Policy

Submission of articles or opinion letters:

All submissions of articles or opinion letters must be sent to the editor via e-mail at francof@sacredheart.edu for publishing consideration. Submissions must be received by deadline date to be considered for upcoming publication. Space availability will be considered when deciding whether to incorporate an article. Byline of the author submitting article or opinion letter will be published. Submissions without bylines will not be published. Any submissions by a group or a committee must have all the members’ names on the piece.

Content:

Submitted articles can deal with any number of issues either controversial or not. The editor reserves the right to deem an article inappropriate for publication, if it is used for personal attacks or complaints. The editor also reserves the right to edit either the style or length of any submitted article.

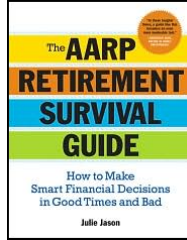
Coming Soon to Ryan-Matura Library



www.juliejason.co

Julie Jason

The Ryan-Matura Library and The Center for Financial Education will be hosting Julie Jason for a discussion/book signing event on October 7, 2009 at 2:00pm in the Library.



About Julie Jason:

Julie Jason is a personal money manager and principal of Jackson, Grant Investment Advisers, Inc. of Stamford.

You may know her from her weekly column in the *Stamford Advocate*, which is in its 10th year of publication. Her column has been recognized by the IRS for providing "accurate, timely, informative and helpful tax information."



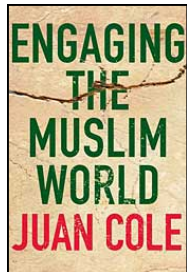
www.juancole.com

Juan Cole

The Ryan-Matura Library and the College of Arts and Sciences will be hosting Juan Cole author of *Engaging the Muslim World*. The book signing/discussion will take place on October 19, 2009 at 3:30pm in the University Commons.

About Juan Cole:

Juan Cole, internationally respected historian, celebrated blogger, and Middle East expert, teaches history at the University of Michigan and is the former president of MjESA. His blog, Informed Comment, receives 250,000 unique hits every day. He has written numerous books including *Sacred Space and Holy War* and *Napoleon's Egypt*. He lives in Ann Arbor, MI.



Please contact Renata Cioffi at 203-371-7700 or via email at cioffim@sacredheart.edu to reserve a space or for further information on either event. Also books are available for purchase at the SHU Bookstore.

Information

Fall Hours & Numbers

Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - Midnight
Friday 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sunday 12:30 PM - Midnight

For more information, please call:
Reference desk: x7726 (203-371-7726)
Circulation desk: x7702 (203-371-7702)

For a list of special hours please visit our website at
http://www.sacredheart.edu/pages/232_ryan_matura_library.cfm

Cambridge Branch Hours & Numbers

Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday Noon - 4:00 PM
Sunday Closed

For more information, please call:
Cambridge desk: x4872 (203-365-4872)



New Faces Around the Library

The Library is pleased to have Joe Fox, an intern, working with the staff this semester. Joe received a BA in Political Science, with a minor in History, from Western Connecticut State University. He is currently a candidate for Masters in Library and Information Science at San Jose State University. Joe expects to graduate in May of 2010. He is currently



Joe Fox

employed at Greenwood Publishing in Westport, CT. At Greenwood, Joe works in the Management Information Systems Department where he is responsible for PC support. Joe has been with the Library only a few short weeks, but has already gained experience in Reference and in Circulation. Joe is working on a couple of projects, including an online resource guide on Martin Luther that will enhance