



Beginnings and Endings

By Kathy Irwin, Dean of University Libraries



The past year has been filled with new beginnings and bittersweet endings. As we reflect on a most unusual year, we have much to celebrate and to anticipate.

In academic libraries, analog collections and services have been complemented by digital versions for more than two decades. During the pandemic, the CMU Libraries pivoted from analog first to digital first. Our existing digital collections and virtual services enabled us to seamlessly support students studying at a distance and faculty teaching online. We only made a few small changes to our pre-pandemic operations such as shifting course reserves entirely online, scanning and shipping more books to people's homes, and creating a contactless book pick-up service.

According to a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, library spaces became even more important during the pandemic. Whether during a pandemic or not, students who take online courses need access to quiet spaces and support services to be successful. In addition to offering quiet study spaces, modern academic library buildings are also social hubs. In the Park Library, we've intentionally recreated study spaces to provide enhanced quiet study areas and active collaboration spaces. These new study areas supplement existing social spaces such as our event and meeting spaces, exhibit spaces, academic support centers, and the café.

This summer as the pandemic and emergency orders evolve, we continue to adapt. In late June, we eliminated physical distancing in our public areas, but continue to require face coverings in accordance with CMU policy. In early July, we re-opened our book collections for browsing and in-person checkout. We will continue to offer the contactless book pickup service. The Clarke Historical Library's doors are once again open during their normal business hours, and all library employees are working fully onsite. During the upcoming fall semester, we anticipate library operations will be much more normal than the past year. Physical course reserves will resume, and we're curious to see how many materials return to physical formats or remain available digitally.

The University Libraries are revamping existing services and introducing new services during the upcoming academic year. This fall, we will merge two service desks on the second floor into one combined service point. We anticipate this new single service point will better serve library users. Also new this fall is the Adobe Digital Lounge. This dynamic space is designed to foster creativity and help students and faculty connect with others and get support using Adobe tools. In Spring 2022, we will launch a pilot program,



» Adobe Digital Lounge Design Rendering

the Textbook Affordability Project. This project is funded by the President's and Provost's Innovation fund and will enable students to borrow textbooks at no cost from the library's course reserves service for several hours at a time. We're targeting the university's largest enrolled courses and hope that this new service eases students' costs for attending college so they can accomplish their academic goals. We're excited to offer this new service to support student success!

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In addition to changes to our services, collections, and building, we've also experienced personnel changes during the past year. Several employees retired between December 2020 and February 2021: Tanya Fox, Clarke cataloging specialist; Janet Danek, art and exhibits coordinator; and Jane Morey, access services specialist. This summer, the following folks are retiring: John Fierst, Clarke reference librarian; Rob Faleer, Library Research and Instruction Services librarian; and Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library. Combined, these six individuals have given 126 years of service to the University Libraries. We celebrate their accomplishments and wish them well in retirement!

Despite the changes of the past year, one thing has stayed the same: The Libraries' commitment to supporting student learning and scholarly activity. Through your gifts to the Friends of the Libraries, we can go the extra mile to fulfill CMU's mission. During the past year, your gifts to the Friends enabled us to enhance student study spaces and expand our collections. Specifically, we used Friends of the Libraries' funds to assist with the construction of the Adobe Creative Lounge; to purchase artworks that depict iconic places around the world including the Taj Mahal and Hagia Sofia; to sponsor WCMU's Hemingway in Michigan virtual event; to purchase Native American items for the Clarke; and to expand our collections on social justice topics. We are grateful for your ongoing support.

Reference Librarian Rob Faleer to Retire

By Tim Peters, Associate Dean of University Libraries



» Rob Faleer, Reference Librarian

Reference librarian Rob Faleer will retire on July 30, 2021. Rob joined the University Libraries in February 1979 as a Non-Print Media Librarian in the library unit then known as the Division of Instructional Resources. His responsibilities included purchasing and cataloging media as well as coordinating the rental of 16mm films and VHS videotapes for CMU courses. As Non-Print Media Librarian, Rob also coordinated annual public screenings of films and videos from such prestigious organizations such as the American Film and Video Festival and the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Rob joined the library's Reference department in 1996 where he served as a subject librarian and liaison with several academic departments, including Broadcast and Cinematic Arts, Journalism, Religion, History, and World Languages & Cultures. He worked closely with faculty and graduate and undergraduate students to answer their questions, support their research, and provide the necessary library support to courses. A veteran instructor for the library's LIB 197 course, Rob taught the course more than 60 times.

In addition to supporting the research of others, Rob is a scholar himself, having published scholarly articles and presented many scholarly papers at state, regional, and international conferences. Rob is most proud of his reference book, *Church Woodwork in the British Isles, 1100-1535: An Annotated Bibliography*, published in 2009 by Scarecrow Press, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield. The book is highly regarded by scholars who study late Romanesque, Gothic, and early Renaissance structural and decorative church woodwork, and it has been added to the collections of many academic, national, and special libraries around the world.

In retirement, Rob plans to spend more time with his family, working in his garden and continuing to research British historic architecture. All of us in the University Libraries thank him for his many contributions over the years and wish him a very happy retirement!

Clarke Librarian John Fierst Retires July 31

By Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library

John Fierst will retire as the reference librarian of the Clarke Historical Library on July 31. Over a fifteen-year career as reference librarian, John has interacted with literally thousands of researchers, from the unfortunate undergraduate who suddenly realized that their term paper was due the next morning to scholars who have spent months in the library, and whose work resulted in significant historical publications.

What John truly excelled at was relationships that developed over years and blossomed in unexpected and glorious ways. One of many stories is his relationship with now-retired federal Judge Avern Cohn, and their mutual interest in Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville was the famed author of *Democracy in America*. In addition to his most famous work, Tocqueville also wrote *Two Weeks in the Wilderness*, which described his visit to Michigan and the journey on horseback he and a friend took from Detroit to Saginaw from July 23 to July 31, 1831. Judge Cohn was fascinated by the visit and repeatedly turned to John for help documenting the trip. Eventually, the Judge asked who might be able to make maps of the journey for him, and John suggested Larry Wycoff, a skilled mapmaker of John's acquaintance. The maps were eventually made and displayed at a plenary session of the Historical Society of Michigan, where Judge Cohn announced that he and John planned a major exhibit on the subject.

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» John Fierst, Clarke Librarian

Celebrating Frank Boles' 30 Years of Service as Director of the Clarke Historical Library



» Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library

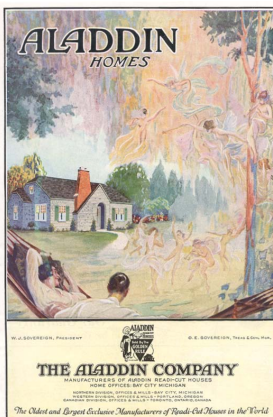
Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library, loves telling stories. And many of his stories arise from his work collecting and preserving other people's stories. During his 30 years as director, Frank has tremendously shaped the Clarke's collections and outreach efforts and has developed meaningful professional and personal relationships. When he recently announced his plans to retire on August 31, 2021, many colleagues said they will especially miss his stories and his sense of humor.

Some of Frank's memorable accomplishments include building the Hemingway in Michigan collection, obtaining the Aladdin papers, and securing the Blass family papers. Frank enjoyed getting to know members of the Michigan Hemingway Society and talking with Jim Sanford about his Uncle Hemingway. The Hemingway collection has grown through external financial support that enabled the Clarke to collect one-of-a-kind family memorabilia.



» Hemingway with fish

Frank is proud that the Hemingway in Michigan collection started from nothing 20 years ago and has become a collection of national significance with the assistance of dedicated donors. Recently, photographs and documents from the Clarke's collection were used in the Ken Burns and Lynn Novick documentary film, *Hemingway*.



» The Aladdin Company 1934 Catalog

According to Frank, the Aladdin collection came about suddenly and unexpectedly. Retired CMU professors who purchased the Aladdin company warehouse in Bay City did not know what to do with the corporate papers. They called Frank late on a Friday afternoon, and soon six truckloads of corporate records arrived at the Clarke including company catalogs, sales records, and architectural drawings. This collection is one of the library's most popular, especially to individuals who own Aladdin kit homes.

The Blass family papers include letters written between 1922 and 1927 by Kenneth Blass and Marie Kleiner. Kleiner was a CMU alum who was teaching in Harrison. When she and Blass became engaged, Blass moved to Detroit to work at the post office to earn money so they could get married. Their letters tell the stories of their everyday lives as they anticipated their future together. Frank enjoyed talking with Blass and Kleiner's children about their parents' experiences. When working with individuals who wish to donate personal or family papers and memorabilia, Frank reflected that he "gives them the opportunity to make their thoughts last. Sharing their collections with a broader community is an endorsement that their life matters and that their ideas should be preserved. In collecting and preserving Michigan history, the Clarke creates a snapshot of American life and culture."

Frank noted that the Clarke provides both educational value and social value. Frank views the Clarke Historical Library as a humanities laboratory.

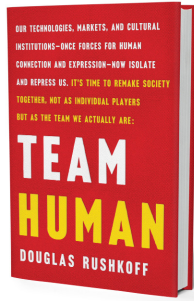
"When students come to the Clarke, they learn how to create information and make order out of chaos. Historical evidence is messy, facts don't agree, and people have different opinions about the same situation. Students learn how to think through a problem, discuss history, and reconcile the conflicting information. Doing so is a fundamental life skill."

The Clarke's social value comes from helping people learn the context and background of historic events. "The lack of knowledge can be dangerous. When we understand the background, we can come to a different conclusion and understand the reasons for what's happening today. Understanding the present means understanding the past." As an example, Frank explained the importance of the *Native Treaties, Shared Rights* traveling exhibit which is one of the most popular traveling exhibits created by the Clarke. "The exhibit explains that these treaties included shared rights. White settlers received the right to live on native lands in exchange for Native American rights. White people may have forgotten their part of the deal." The content of this exhibit is also available on the Clarke's website.

Relationships are at the heart of Frank's experience as director. "I have worked with many talented, generous, and interesting people. My colleagues do a wonderful job, and the Clarke board members' reflections and feedback contributed to the success of the Clarke." Frank always invited speakers to dinner before their presentation. "I did so selfishly to make sure they arrived on time. These dinner conversations were also an incredible opportunity to learn from interesting people."

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SAVE THE DATE: Friends of the Libraries Virtual Appreciation Event



**Thursday, September 30, 2021
7:00 – 8:00 pm via Webex**

**Guest Speaker:
Douglas Rushkoff, Author of *Team Human***

Douglas Rushkoff is an author, documentarian, podcast host, and Professor of Media Theory and Digital Economics at CUNY/Queens. His works focus on human autonomy in a digital age and the ways people, cultures, and institutions create, share, and influence each other's values. Rushkoff has received three awards from the Media Ecology Association including the Neil Postman award for Career Achievement in Public Intellectual Activity, the Marshall McLuhan Award for Outstanding Book in the Field of Media Ecology, and the John Cullin Award for Outstanding Praxis in the Field of Media Ecology.

In *Team Human*, Rushkoff explores how modern communication technologies created to connect people may instead divide and isolate people. He advocates for physical connection and cooperation and encourages us to slow down and communicate patiently with each other. Rushkoff believes that "we cannot be fully human alone...we use our social connections to orient ourselves, to derive meaning and purpose. This is not a mere quaint notion but a biological imperative."

**Formal invitation and registration information forthcoming.
If you have any questions, contact**

**Office of the Dean, Central Michigan University Libraries
989-774-3500
ditte1j@cmich.edu**

- » Book cover image: WW Norton
- » Rushkoff image: Madeline Maher

Clarke Librarian John Fierst Retires July 31 (Continued from page 2)

John's memory was slightly different – they had discussed an exhibit, not exactly planned it. Be that as it may, the Clarke Historical Library happily embraced the possibility of an exhibit built about Tocqueville's visit to our state. With Judge Cohn's generous financial support, John curated the exhibit, *Aristocracy on the Saginaw Trail: Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey to Michigan*. The marvelous exhibit catalog, that John authored can be seen at clarke.cmich.edu/saginawtrail

It was this kind of relationship, begun with a simple reference question, that John excelled at developing over an extended period of time. It is a gift that the library will greatly miss.

His own research made him an expert in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century relations between the Indigenous communities of the Great Lakes region and the European and American governments which claimed sovereignty over Native land. A superb editor of historical documents, John has spent many years working with the journal of John Tanner. Shaw-shaw-wa-ne-ba-se (Zhaashaawanibiisi) (c. 1780 – c. 1846), as he was named in

the Ojibwe community, was a boy captured in Kentucky by Ojibwe men. He grew up in the Ojibwe nation, married an Ojibwe woman, and eventually served as a guide and interpreter for people who only spoke English. His story, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner...*, was published in 1830 and remains an important historical record.

Because of his research, John has visited many special collections libraries and archives like the Clarke. From his personal experience, he knows what researchers expect from a place like the Clarke—he has walked many miles in their researcher shoes. Informed by this, he has worked to make reference in the Clarke an enjoyable and fruitful endeavor for every researcher who has reached out to the library. There is no doubt that savvy and experienced researchers recognize this as a major asset for not only the Clarke Historical Library, but for the field of historical and cultural research in Michigan and the Great Lakes region.

We will miss John's knowledge, wisdom, and his good advice. We wish him well in retirement.

Celebrating Frank Boles' 30 Years of Service (Continued from page 3)

Franks' most memorable experiences included conversations with David McCullough, Jim Sanford, U.S. Senator Robert Griffin, the Blass family, and Grandma Marijuana.

The Clarke Historical Library has changed a lot from the library it was in 1991 when Frank became its director. In 1991, the library was located on the Park Library's fourth floor and was difficult to find. In the early 2000s, during the Park Library renovation, the Clarke moved to the first floor where its exhibit space is highly visible. This dramatic change required a more aggressive outreach program, something at which Frank excels. Under his leadership, the Clarke exhibits, speaker's series, and fundraising efforts have flourished. The collections have grown considerably during the past 30 years, building upon the original gift from CMU alumnus

Dr. Norman E. Clarke, Sr., of historic books, manuscripts, maps and images and the initial endowment to a collection containing over 80,000 items. Frank's fundraising abilities increased the library's endowments to more than 20 with a combined principle exceeding \$2 million.

"My hope is that people will continue to support the Clarke Historical Library. The person and the institution can blend together. The Clarke has wonderful collections and excellent staff and outreach programs. Those will endure after my retirement."

Please join us in celebrating Frank's 30 years of service to CMU and the Clarke Historical Library! We wish Frank much joy in retirement!