

# DISCOVERY

The Magazine of  
the College of Charleston  
Friends of the Library



*Summer 2022*



# Contents

## Summer

## 2022



Discovery magazine is published by the College of Charleston Friends of the Library and edited by Vincent Fraley.

Words and images by Vincent Fraley, Darcie Goodwin, Katherine Jordan, Amanda Kerr, Reese Moore, Heather Moran and Catherine Stiers.

We'd love to hear your stories. Write to [fraleyv@cofc.edu](mailto:fraleyv@cofc.edu).

- 1 Letter from the Dean**
- 2 Cougars at the Helm**  
*Students Find Leadership Opportunities as Library Ambassadors*
- 3 Welcoming New Faculty**  
*Professors Make Their Mark with Book Fund*
- 4 We Now Bring Light**  
*CofC Unveils New Solar Pavilion*
- 6 Tied in a Single Garment of Destiny**  
*Rare Martin Luther King Jr. Recording Finds New Home*
- 9 Documenting the Arc**  
*New Oral History Program Spotlights Black Experience of the Lowcountry*
- 11 Readying for the World Stage**  
*Mroz Institute Inaugural Convening Honors EastWest Institute Legacy*
- 14 A New Guardian Angel**  
*Libraries Welcome New Director of Special Collections*
- 16 CofC's Raid Parade**  
*Looking Back at "Charleston's Oldest Residents"*
- 17 Wheels of Time Keep on Turning**  
*CofC, New TV Series Share Close Connection*
- 20 Build Your House on Rejection**  
*Acclaimed Author, English Professor Donates Manuscripts*
- 23 Building Bridges**  
*Sandra Lee Rosenblum and the Power of Listening*
- 29 Roundtable Recap**  
*Snapshots from the Friends' Signature Gala*
- 31 Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things**  
*2022 Roundtable Keynote Speaker Discusses Ukraine's Civil Society*
- 33 A Step in the Right Direction**  
*John Winthrop Reflects on a Lifetime of Giving*
- 37 Pardon Our Dust**  
*Addlestone Library Gets a Fresh New Look*

# Letter from the Dean



## Join the Friends

At once a keeper of history and advocate of new technology, the College Libraries are the region's premier research institution. Your support of the Friends of the Library impacts every student and faculty member, providing access to resources and services across campus and our community.

Renew your Friends membership, secure your VIP tickets to next year's Winthrop Roundtable and learn more about the Libraries' multi-disciplinary initiatives—including the South Carolina LGBTQ Archives, the Avery Research Center's Director's Excellence Fund and the Jewish Heritage Collection—at [give.cofc.edu/library](https://give.cofc.edu/library).

If you've visited Addlestone Library this summer, you might have noticed a few changes on the first floor.

Tarpaulin dust guards and the whine of electric saws have replaced the former front desk and sounds of students chatting. For our patrons, the second and third floors remain silent study spaces—we've requisitioned a cache of complimentary earplugs, just in case.

These are necessary growing pains as we begin the transformation of Addlestone, but our mission to serve students, faculty and Friends of the Library has not wavered, nor will it; Addlestone's doors will remain open during all renovation stages, which we hope to conclude by the end of summer 2023.

In the meantime, we are excited to share with you the happenings of the College Libraries and the Friends, from the relaunch of the Winthrop Roundtable and volunteer achievements to our latest digital history initiatives and new materials in Special Collections.

The Friends have been instrumental in securing funding not only for our first-floor renovation, but all the great work our faculty, staff and students do year-round. Thank you for your support as we begin an exciting new chapter here at the corner of Coming and Calhoun.

In gratitude,

John W. White, Ph.D.  
Dean of Libraries

# Cougars at the Helm

BY KATHERINE JORDAN



Walking into the College of Charleston Addlestone Library, students are studying away at tables, printing worksheets or finding a book. Their enjoyable and productive library experience is thanks in large part to their fellow classmate working behind the scenes.

In 2018, Amanda Kraft was hired as the user experience coordinator for Addlestone Library. She assumed responsibility for the Student Lab Advisory Board (SLAB), comprised of a group of students who met to provide feedback on the student library experience, but she could see it was fizzling out. Trying to re-ignite the club, students approached Kraft with the idea of SLAB becoming an official student organization on campus.

"I was thrilled that the students wanted to take ownership of the organization," says Kraft. "The College Libraries don't want to make assumptions about how students feel. We want to be informed and negotiate within our abilities and financial capabilities."

In 2020, SLAB was renamed to the Library Student Ambassadors (LSA). Among the LSA students was Lauren Holt, an economics and Jewish Studies major who served as president of the student-run club. "We took the initiative to look for what we could do to benefit students," explains Holt.

The re-invigorated club went to work right away by conducting participatory active research of the library services user experience,

providing feedback on services and consulting on Addlestone's website to help find ways to improve usability and design.

Each school year, the library sends out a Qualtrics survey to learn more about students' experiences and what they would like to see change. In 2019, only 65 students responded to the survey. LSA was determined to have a higher response for 2021. They took part in writing and came up with ideas on how to promote it.

They posted the survey on their social media, sent a mass email and set up a table in the library with incentives to advertise the questionnaire. Because of their efforts, 531 students filled out the survey--approximately a 717% increase in participation compared to 2019.

"When we finally got the results back, we were all blown away," says Holt. "It showed us how student input can make a difference and matters in student engagement."

As the faculty advisor, Kraft acknowledges how LSA has made an impact and plays a key role for the library staff. "LSA is essential as our window into how students see the library," notes Kraft. "So many factors affect your experience in the library even if you only come to study--clean bathrooms, sanitation, Wi-Fi--everyday stuff. We want students to come here and accomplish what they need to accomplish, feel comfortable, safe and supported."

Currently, LSA has 14 members who meet every other week to discuss library needs. They always welcome new members who want to serve the student body for the betterment of the library.

"Students really want to be heard in the library but don't know how," says Holt. "LSA is that voice for them to be heard."

---

**Interested in joining the Library Student Ambassadors, or know a student who might benefit from the leadership experience?**

**Learn more at [libguides.library.cofc.edu/lisa](https://libguides.library.cofc.edu/lisa) and follow their Instagram @cofc.lsa.**

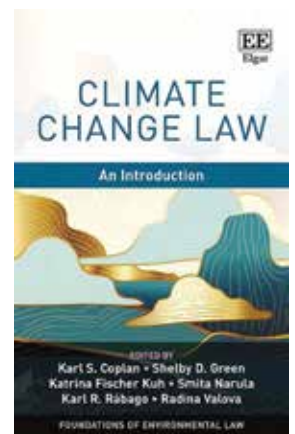
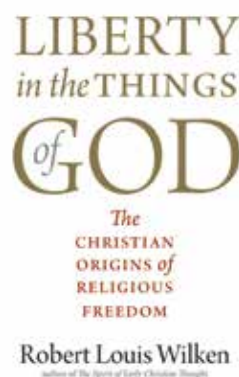
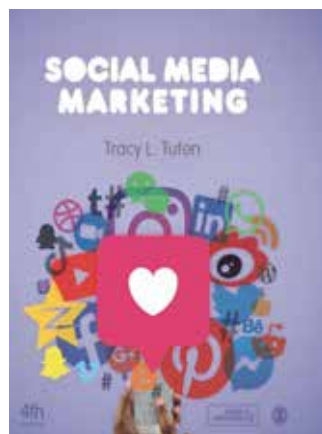
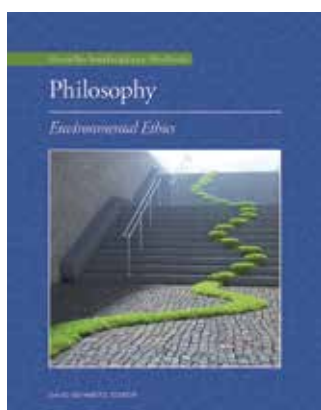
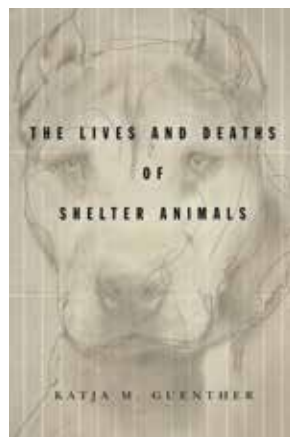
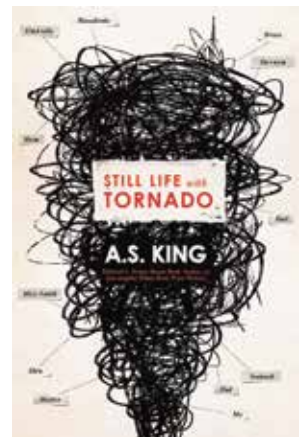
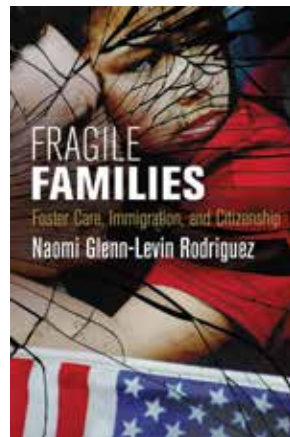
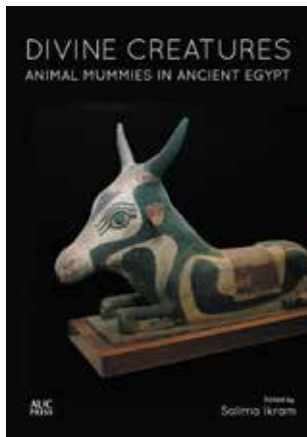
# Welcoming New Faculty

The College Libraries' faculty and staff are committed to expanding the resources available to our community and ensuring our collections reflect all those we serve.

Thanks to the generosity of Librarian Emerita Katina Strauch and former Friends of the Library Board member James Breeden, a \$4,000 fund is reserved exclusively for new faculty to select books and DVDs.

We want new professors to feel right at home in the Libraries. With the New Faculty Fund, we invite professors within their first three years of service at the College to identify new titles to be added to our permanent circulating collection.

Highlighted here is a sample of newly accessioned books, demonstrating the breadth and depth of scholarship and curiosity our new faculty bring to campus.

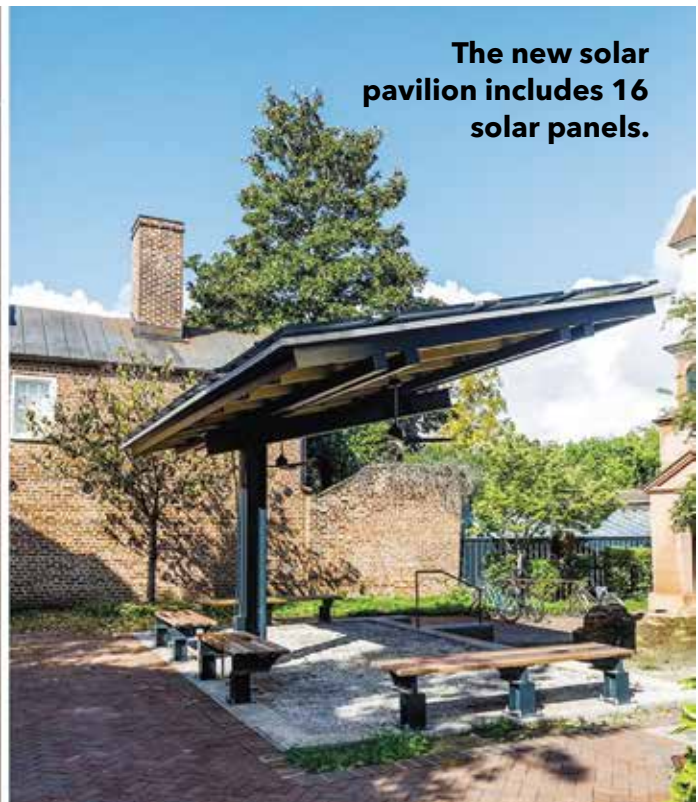


# We Now Bring Light

BY AMANDA KERR



**Students and faculty discovered a slave tag from 1853.**



**The new solar pavilion includes 16 solar panels.**

The unveiling of a new solar shade pavilion at the College of Charleston on Friday, Oct. 15, 2021, served as a platform to honor the Indigenous and enslaved people who labored and lived on and near the site throughout history. The event, titled “Uncovering History/Making History,” recognized both the history of the site where artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries, including a slave tag from 1853, were found, as well as the forward momentum of solar energy and sustainability at the College.

“In so many different ways, the solar pavilion embodies the spirit of our strategic plan, which is titled Tradition

and Transformation,” said CofC President Andrew T. Hsu. “It is connected to our past, to our present and to our future. We stand upon ground once trod by Indigenous tribes, enslaved and enslaver, and now we are here to reconcile with our past to transform our present and future.”

Hsu added, “Out of a dark chapter in Charleston’s history, I am proud to say that we now bring light, light and power that are sustainable—light and power that support our students, faculty, staff and visitors.”

The ceremony opened with a land and labor acknowledgement featuring CofC

student and Edisto/Natchez-Kusso Tribe member Sarah Creel, and Winne Mraz and Cathy Nelson, elders of the Edisto/Natchez-Kusso Tribe, who recognized the Indigenous people who first occupied the land near the site. CofC alumna Rev. Leondra Stoney ’02, pastor of Greater Howard Chapel AME Church, also gave remarks, honoring the enslaved people who labored at the location.

Ronald McKelvey, CofC Maintenance Shop supervisor and poet, read his poem, “Through the Eyes of a Needle,” which he wrote to commemorate the history and significance of the site. The poem read in part:

*Let our untold past be looked upon and told through the eye of a needle...*

*Opening doors  
and the hearts of others  
around us into a new horizon...*

*Our Families, Past, Present,  
and Future Impact...*

*Will change our future's  
outlook upon our history...*

*So... You must stand firm to thread the  
eye of this needle...*

Also as part of the event, members of the CofC Concert Choir and Gospel Choir sang the second verse from "Lift Every Voice."

John Morris, vice president of the College's Division of Facilities Management, said the pavilion's 16 solar panels will produce about 250 kilowatt hours of energy per year, enough to completely power the fans, charging stations and electrical outlets at the pavilion as well as provide about 15% of the energy needs for the College's Spanish-language house Casa Hispana, located nearby on Bull Street.

"This project is important for us in that it ties directly to our sustainability action plan, contributing to a carbon-neutral campus," said Morris.

The pavilion, located behind 65 Coming St. near the Pi Kappa Phi Bell Tower, was funded in part by a \$10,000 grant from

the U.S. Department of Energy through the S.C. Energy Office as well as \$5,000 from the College's Center for Sustainable Development.

Since the pavilion was partially funded with a federal grant, the College was required to conduct an archeological excavation of the site prior to construction. CofC archaeology students and faculty conducted the excavation last spring, where they discovered the slave tag as well as a hearth, animal bones and pottery, among other historical artifacts. More information about the history of the site and the people who occupied it is available at the Discovering Our Past website, which is dedicated to the history of the College of Charleston.

In conjunction with the event, the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and the College of Charleston Libraries Special Collections created an exhibit of slave tags titled, "Artifacts of Oppression." Other items in the exhibit included a free tag worn by a free person of color, plus a sculpture by artist Shirley McWhorter-Moss titled, "A Way Out." All of the items in the exhibit came from the Avery Research Center's collections.

In use from the 18th century to 1865, a slave tag is a small, metal object that served as a permit showing slaveholders had registered an enslaved person with the city to work for someone else.

Grant Gilmore, associate professor and Addlestone Chair in Historic

Preservation, along with Scott Harris, associate professor of geology and director of the College's Archaeology Program; Jim Newhard, professor of Classics and director of the College's Center for Historical Landscapes; and Jim Ward, senior instructor of historic preservation and community planning, led 36 students in excavating the site.

Gilmore, during the event on Oct. 15, reflected on the significant history of the site and how its story can help shape a better future.

"This is a kitchen, this is a dwelling, this is a gathering space," he said. "Black folks lived here, white folks lived here, enslaved people lived here, free people of color lived here, laborers lived here and owners of multinational companies had their offices in this building."

Grant noted that the objects found at the site not only shed light on the people who worked and lived there, but they open a dialogue for a new way forward.

"These objects inform us about that past, but they direct us toward a different future," he said. "The stories that these things tell us, the way we interpret them in the present, what we can do to modify our behavior today so that we have a different future, is so very important—and that's what the College is about."

# Tied In a Single Garment of Destiny

BY VINCENT FRALEY

The Eugene B. Sloan Civil Rights Collection will now call the Avery Research Center home.



The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture is pleased to announce receipt of materials that will offer new insights into pivotal moments in the fight for civil rights in the South Carolina Lowcountry, including a rare recording of a speech made by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during a visit to Charleston less than a year before his death.

The Eugene B. Sloan Civil Rights Collection constitutes an extraordinary archive of audiotapes, photographs, correspondence, ephemera and objects from award-winning South Carolina journalist and editor Eugene B. Sloan. Preserved by Sloan's immediate family over more than five decades, highlights of the collection include three exceedingly rare and historically significant audio recordings:

- Audio of King addressing an audience at County Hall in Charleston on July 30, 1967. King's address runs nearly 33 minutes, with an introduction of 20 minutes from South Carolina civil rights pioneer Esau Jenkins and his granddaughter Jakki Jefferson.
- Audio collected via Sloan's undercover tape recorder during a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan near Charleston on the evening before King's address at County Hall.



**The collection arrived at the Avery Research Center following this year's Juneteenth celebrations.**

- Audio of the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy's speech amid the Hospital Workers' Strike in Charleston recorded by Sloan on March 31, 1969.

Generously donated by Merrill C. Berman, review of the interviews and transcripts is currently underway. They will be accessible in the spring of 2023 to the CofC community and the public on Aviary, the audiovisual repository and platform for the Lowcountry Oral History Initiative. The collection also features artifacts and personal papers connected to Eugene Sloan and his family, including the Hasselblad camera he used to photograph King and other notable civil rights figures, as well as a personal recording Sloan made in the early morning hours after King's death in 1968.

"The gift from Merrill C. Berman of the Eugene B. Sloan Civil Rights Collection is a perfect match to the mission and focus of the Avery Research Center," says CofC President Andrew T. Hsu. "The Avery Research Center is a premier repository for Black history in the Lowcountry and having the 1967 recording of Martin Luther King Jr. in Charleston is an incredible addition to our world-class collections at the Avery Research Center."

The Eugene B. Sloan Civil Rights Collection will also serve as a



complementary element of Documenting the Arc, the Avery Research Center's oral history project documenting the ongoing fight for equality in the Lowcountry.

"The artifacts from the Sloan collection also demonstrate how intricately connected the Charleston peninsula and the Sea Island communities (especially Johns and Wadmalaw islands) were to one another and to the ongoing work toward justice," says Tamara T. Butler, executive director of the Avery Research Center and associate dean of strategic planning and community engagement. "We are honored to be the stewards of this collection as it is an important thread of the civil rights tapestry that we weave together at the Avery Research Center."

The Avery Research Center publicly announced the donation on Saturday, June 25, 2022, during the annual meeting of the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture, a separate nonprofit organization providing support to the Avery Research Center's programs, operations and efforts to acquire archival

collections. The meeting also inaugurated the Avery Institute's Curatorial Committee, which will collaborate with Avery Research Center faculty and staff to design upcoming exhibits for the center's historic building at 125 Bull St. in downtown Charleston.

"The Sloan collection would be a treasured and powerful addition to the holdings of even the largest academic library," says John W. White, dean of libraries. "The conviction shared by Merrill C. Berman and the Sloan family that the Avery Research Center is the best steward for these materials is a testament to the institution's ability to connect meaningfully with communities in the Lowcountry and around the world. We could not be happier to have the Sloan collection forever preserved and made available right here at the Avery Research Center."



# Documenting the Arc

BY AMANDA KERR

The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston has been awarded \$100,000 from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation's new "Broadening Narratives" grant. Broadening Narratives is a groundbreaking collections initiative that illuminates underrepresented stories. The foundation awarded a total of \$579,000 to 10 organizations in Chicago and the South Carolina Lowcountry, including Coastal Carolina University's Joyner Institute for Gullah Studies, Drayton Hall Preservation Trust, Harbor Historical Association/South Carolina Maritime Museum and the Penn Center.

"We are grateful to the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation for the opportunity to demonstrate how our stories should be told – through the words and lenses of local artists and activists," says Tamara Butler, co-principal investigator on the grant and executive director at the Avery Research Center. "Charleston's Black culture and history are complex, multifaceted and intergenerational. Therefore, these elements guide the research team's approach to documenting activism connected to Black lives in this city. I hope that this work will grow us as



historians, artists, educators, organizers and, most importantly, as community members.”

The Avery Research Center will use its grant to fund the Documenting the Arc Oral History Project to continue its mission of preserving and documenting the Black experience of the South Carolina Lowcountry. Avery’s staff recognizes the need to be actively engaged in collecting stories and records of the current civil rights movement, and Documenting the Arc is an attempt to do just that. The project has two parts: video oral histories and a community submission portal.

“What I’ve learned from the Documenting the Arc project is not necessarily the power of story, because as a student of history, I already knew stories were important to the human experience,” says Joshua Parks, former graduate assistant at the Avery and current director and producer for Cedar Wolf Media, who is pursuing a master’s in history from CofC. “I learned the power of Black-led institutions, organizations and media creating platforms and processes to take ownership of their historical narratives. The Documenting the Arc project serves as an example for all interested in doing this type of work.”

Avery contracted with Cedar Wolf Media along with historian and community advocate Millicent E. Brown

to conduct and make accessible video oral history interviews with individuals who spearheaded the call for justice between 2014 and 2020. The project begins by focusing on the formation of Black Lives Matter Charleston in late 2014 through the local George Floyd protests and civil unrest that marked the Summer of 2020, emphasizing the period between the killing of Walter Scott and the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church. Selection criteria includes millennial, Generation Z and veteran activists and organizers who advised and actively participated in grassroots demonstrations and organizing efforts during the specified time. The interviews will be accessible via the Lowcountry Digital Library.

Since interviews are limited, the Avery also partnered with Cedar Wolf Media to create a submission portal for extended community members. The portal will allow individuals and organizations to share their short stories, poetry, photographs, protest signs, unique songs or anything else they feel illustrates the movement, their stories or those of their loved ones, friends and community members. Individuals may submit an interest form to contribute to the community submissions portal.

The Documenting the Arc collection, including video interviews, transcripts and items collected via the submission

portal, will be publicly accessible once the archivists have processed the records.

“This project is important to telling the story of Black activism by those who actively participated in the work,” says Aaisha Haykal, co-principal investigator on the grant and manager of archival services at the Avery Research Center. “Through the interviews we have completed, we have been able to document the work of activists and obtained a better understanding of the workings of the organizations as well as the values and concerns of Black people in Charleston.”

The Avery Research Center’s Digital Classroom hosted a virtual event on Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022, entitled “Avery Archive Highlight: Documenting the Arc Oral History Project,” to highlight the project and provide information about how to participate in and support the effort. A recording of the event is accessible on the Avery Research Center’s YouTube Channel.

---

**For more information about the Documenting the Arc Oral History Project or the Digital Classroom event, visit [avery.cofc.edu](http://avery.cofc.edu).**

**“I learned the power of Black-led institutions, organizations and media creating platforms and processes to take ownership of their historical narratives.”**

# Readying for the World Stage

BY DARCIE GOODWIN



**International  
Studies major  
Andrea Kimpson.**

**B**y all accounts, this spring's Inaugural Convening of the John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute (Mroz Institute) was a success. The convening gave the opportunity for many alumni of the EastWest Institute (EWI), out of which the Mroz Institute was formed, to come together in person after two years of connecting remotely and learn more about the Mroz Institute and the College of Charleston, its faculty and students. For all guests, students and faculty, the convening presented a forum in which to discuss the past, present and future of the EWI legacy. It allowed for speakers to discuss important global challenges, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and to speak about the direction of leadership and diplomacy in our interconnected world.

For Karen Linehan Mroz, who played a pivotal role in the formation of the Mroz Institute at the College, the event validated the move.

“Thank you to all of the team at the College of Charleston, the School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs [LCWA] and the Mroz Global Leadership Institute for all of the hard work and deserving praise,” says Linehan Mroz. “We look forward to a bright and rewarding future, and I am honored to be serving on both the LCWA Advisory Board and Mroz Global Leadership Institute Steering Committee. A special thank you to President and first lady [Andrew T.] Hsu for hosting special events at the gathering; to [LCWA] Dean [Timothy] Johnson and Max Kovalov, Bennett Director of the Mroz Institute, for their hard work and to our many speakers for making this all a great success.”

Jonathan F. Fanton, president emeritus of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, presented on the business of nonprofit.

“The Mroz Institute convening at the College of Charleston was one of the most interesting meetings I have attended,” he says. “It established the legacy of EWI and John Mroz at the College. It was inspiring to meet so many talented students interested in Track II and diplomacy.”

The CofC students also had a positive experience, particularly the International Scholars and Mroz Institute Global Ambassadors. These students had the opportunity to spend time with the guests outside the conference and share their

perspectives about experiential learning programs at the College.

Liza Malcolm, an International Scholar and Global Ambassador, enjoyed being around impressive global leaders tackling existential challenges. “I believe that our generation has a steep slope to climb in terms of tackling these challenges, but—equipped with the mentorship and guidance of these international leaders—I have no doubt that we can help to mitigate the impact of these problems and restore stability in our geopolitical order,” says the international studies and public health double major.

The event helped Jack Watson, an International Scholar and Global Ambassador, further his understanding of the career trajectories he can take upon graduation.

“As a double major in the LCWA school, it was very helpful to talk with professionals in different sectors of the international workforce,” says the major of both international studies and French. “I am grateful to have had the chance to receive advice from so many impressive leaders. I am very excited to see CofC continue to expand the legacy of the EastWest Institute.”

The highlights for Jocelyn Bellomo, a Global Ambassador, were attending breakfast with the guests and speaking about the Global Ambassadors at the panel titled “EWI Legacy Renewed: John Edwin Mroz Global Leadership Institute and the Future.”

“I got to have close, personal interactions with numerous outstanding individuals,” says the political science and international studies double major with concentrations

in politics, philosophy and law, and Europe. “The opportunity to speak in front of everyone was truly fantastic. I am so glad students had a voice in the event and were important participants. It was so amazing to have numerous high-level professionals come up to me afterward and want to learn more about me. I had the opportunity to speak with amazing women such as Mrs. Catherine Smith and the keynote speaker Rose Gottenmoeller. I cannot express how grateful I am to the Mroz Institute and Dr. Kovalov for giving me this opportunity.”

Another International Scholar, Andrea Kimpson, had the opportunity to be part of the “COVID, Climate Change and Conflict” panel discussion in addition to representing the International Scholars at the “EWI Legacy Renewed” presentation, which she found rewarding because of the level of support from the audience.

“Participating in the panel with Mr. McConnell and Mr. Finlay was incredibly impactful,” says the international studies and economics double major with Spanish and political science minors. “Our conversation worked to meld together three areas shaping global affairs: politics, business and academia. We discussed the current pressing issues of COVID, climate change and conflict through our lenses, finding connection points and areas for opportunity along the way. The perspectives and experiences of Mr. McConnell and Mr. Finlay presented me with areas to develop and invest in my continued academic career and in my work with communities in the future.

“Our discussion left me with a few takeaways, the most important of which was to look for nontraditional means

of addressing global issues through relationships and partnerships,” adds Kimpson. “We have seen a slowdown in the effectiveness of different traditional conflict resolution, social and economic policies—this presents an opportunity for new, innovative ideas. In this theme, many individuals at the panel commented on the strong influence of younger generations in the design of these new, policy tactics, which left me inspired and more firmly committed to my future goals.”

“The event far exceeded our expectations,” says Linehan Mroz. “Outstanding speakers and the many EastWest Institute alumni in attendance were very satisfied that both EWT’s legacy and that of its founder, John Edwin Mroz, have a secure ‘home’ at LCWA. The intention to carry on the legacies for future generations is being fulfilled. We were all very impressed with the many students who attended and those who spoke during the program.”

---

**The Mroz Global Leadership Institute is collaborating with the College Libraries to preserve and make available manuscripts, images, ephemera and more documenting EWI’s activity throughout its 40-year existence. Learn more at [mrozinstitute.cofc.edu](http://mrozinstitute.cofc.edu).**



**International Scholar and Global Ambassador Jack Watson (right).**



**Karen Linehan Mroz serves on the Mroz Global Leadership Institute’s Steering Committee.**



**Global Ambassador Jocelyn Bellomo.**

# A New Guardian Angel

BY VINCENT FRALEY

Climb to the third floor of Addlestone Library, stroll to the rotunda's eastern curve and you'll find it: "Special Collections" reads the door decal.

ZEEET ZEEET go the electric locks as they disengage. And you're in.

You've unlocked the repository of timeless treasures—a 1613 King James Bible, a complete set of John James Audubon's *Birds of America*—that is Special Collections.

But the value of the manuscripts, diaries, artwork and ephemera herein transcends any dollar amount. Here, visitors come to find their family histories, not to gape at priceless curios. This is no impersonal museum.

We are not talking simply about paper, about books, about *things*. These are the memories that many today seek to discover and connect with. For the patrimony of our city and our communities, these are materials we are dutybound to protect and to share.

And—as the new director of Special Collections—Kelly Kerbow Hudson takes this charge seriously.

An award-winning librarian and member of the Academy of Certified Archivists, Kerbow Hudson brings 17 years of experience with manuscript materials and rare books to the position. She received her B.S. and M.L.I.S. from the University of Texas at Austin, where she worked previously at the Harry Ransom Center.

"In addition to her background in the more technical aspects of archival description, preservation and stewardship, Kelly brings extensive instruction and public experience to her role," says Heather Gilbert, associate dean of collections and content services.

"In my archival work I have consistently prioritized access and inclusion, and I plan to make them the focus of my directorship," says Kerbow Hudson. "Balancing access with other priorities like collecting and conservation can be tricky in special collections, so a leader really has to be an advocate."

And, while scholars may visit from across the country and around the world to research the one-of-a-kind materials in Special Collections, Kerbow Hudson and her team's service to CofC students and faculty is paramount.

An integral partner for the Lowcountry Digital Library and History Initiative, Special Collections' impact ranges far beyond its four walls—something that Kerbow Hudson recognizes and respects. As she assumes her new mantle, she will expand efforts to deepen relationships with communities on campus and across Charleston, including via collaborations with the Avery Research Center, the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World Program and academic departments.

"Special Collections is an invaluable resource for our students, faculty, visiting scholars and the larger community," says John White, dean of College Libraries. "It was imperative that we hire a candidate with a deep understanding of contemporary archival practices capable of building and leading a 21st-century archive. We've certainly found that in Kelly."

---

**Special Collections was founded to support the teaching and learning mission of the College of Charleston and to promote scholarship on the South Carolina Lowcountry and the broader Atlantic World. Learn more at [speccoll.cofc.edu](http://speccoll.cofc.edu).**



**Kelly Kerbow Hudson,**  
Special Collections' new director.



# CofC's Raid Parade

BY CATHERINE STIERS

If you've lived in Charleston for long, you have almost certainly become acquainted with our unofficial mascot, the American cockroach. More politely known as the palmetto bug, this prolific pest is common in subtropical climates like our own, preferring hot, humid summers and mild winters.

From 1980 through the early '90s, the College's chapter of Alpha Phi Omega capitalized on the abundance of these critters by hosting an annual Roach-a-Thon charity fundraiser, with a roach race as the main event. In the nights leading up to the cutthroat competition, students clad in camo and face paint embarked on a "roach safari" around campus, using

flashlights and their hands to capture the bugs as they scattered. Participants purchased the roach representative they hoped would be the fastest, and the profits were donated to organizations like the March of Dimes and the Carolina Youth Development Center.

The specimens were then tagged with colored paint and sent scurrying across a makeshift racecourse in the Stern Center Garden. Students with the fastest racer won prizes like slices of pizza, movie tickets or albums.

The roaches themselves, however, were not so lucky. After the race, cadets from The Citadel were known to execute their own

tradition by eating the runners. What did they taste like? As reported in the College's 1990 yearbook, *The Comet*, one cadet who reportedly ate nine of the squirming creatures described them as "bitter."

The humble race quickly grew into a weeklong extravaganza, with events like a beauty pageant to crown the Roach Queen, a concert, a "roach stomp" party and a parade. Parade floats included a pest control truck sponsored by Orkin, a car-sized rollerskate driven by students in roach costumes and a student dressed as a giant silver can of Raid insecticide spray.

Although the Roach-a-Thon was exterminated in 1993, "Charleston's oldest residents" can still be seen scurrying around downtown after dark.



Photographs taken during the 1990 Roach Race Parade.



# Wheels of Time Keep on Turning

BY CATHERINE STIERS

Amazon Prime's TV series, *Wheel of Time*, has been greenlit for a second season. Based on the best-selling fantasy books, the series shares an intimate connection with the College and Charleston.

The exhibit features *Wheel of Time* books published in different languages as well as a costume tunic based on the character Rand al'Thor.

An old, beige Apple III computer sits unassumingly on a shelf of the College of Charleston's Special Collections. The monitor, which is in good condition for its age, has two stickers clinging to the frame, one of which proclaims, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," while the other, partially worn away by time, offers the remnants of the quote, "When in charge, ponder; when in doubt, mumble; when in trouble, delegate."

These are apt words that James Rigney, the Charleston author who created the popular *Wheel of Time* book series under the pen name Robert Jordan, undoubtedly rolled through his mind as he worked on one of his drafts during the early part of his writing career. Rigney, who has a devoted following of fans, reached an entirely new audience with the Nov. 19 debut of Amazon Prime Video's *Wheel of Time* television series.

Rigney's wife, Harriet McDougal, donated the computer, Rigney's papers and some memorabilia to Special Collections following his death in 2007 from a rare blood disease. The collection holds both the expected and the fantastical—there are boxes and boxes of Rigney's unpublished notes on the expansive "World of the Wheel," promotional sketches from future card and roleplaying

games and correspondence between Jordan and other authors. But it's the assortment of 3D reproductions inspired by the books—everything from shields, daggers, swords and an axe to costumes worn by the main characters, including Rand al'Thor's long red coat—that really brings the series to life.

"The College has been a wonderful steward, taking care of Jim's voluminous drafts and notes," says McDougal.

In 1990, Rigney, who was born in Charleston in 1948 and worked as a nuclear engineer prior to his career as a writer, published *The Eye of the World*, the first of 15 books in the *Wheel of Time* series. The expansive story chronicles an eternal battle between good and evil, set in an unnamed world existing both in the past and the future. With the hope of leaving his dedicated fans with the ending they had waited so long to read, Rigney recorded as much of the remaining *Wheel of Time* story as he could by hand and through voice recordings before he died. Then, McDougal gave those notes and recordings to young fantasy author Brandon Sanderson, whom she selected to write the final pieces of her late husband's epic tale. What was intended to be one final book turned into three—with the last installment, *A Memory of Light*, published in 2013.

Since the first *Wheel of Time* book's debut more than 30 years ago, the series, which is considered one of the bestselling epic fantasy series since *The Lord of the Rings*, has exploded in popularity, inspiring video games, trading cards, a soundtrack and now a television series. Rosamund Pike plays Moiraine, an Aes Sedai, a member of the group of women who can practice magic. Joshua Stradowski plays Rand al'Thor, the protagonist prophesied to either save or destroy their world.

And with the TV series sure to reach a brand-new audience, McDougal is hopeful the show will capture the essence of Rigney's elaborate world.

"It is very exciting! I hope it's wonderful and I have every reason to believe it will be," says McDougal of the TV series. "Rafe Judkins, the showrunner, grew up with the books and he loves them—and that bodes well. And the actress Rosamund Pike is a Golden Globe winner ... and the rest of the cast is stellar."

Next to the main staircase on the third floor of the Addlestone Library, Special Collections created an exhibit dedicated to the Rigney collection, which ran from Nov. 19, 2021, through the spring 2022 semester. *The Wheel of Time* exhibit was made possible by gifts to the College Libraries. Visitors saw costumes and prop weapons as well as an early draft of *The Eye of the World*.

"It's always exciting when Special Collections exhibits anything from the Rigney collection, even more so now that the Amazon series is premiering," says Joshua Minor, manager of archival processing who helped process the Rigney collection. "This exhibit will give our campus community the ability to

**"I could probably spend years just poring over the drafts with Harriet's line edits."**

experience some of the amazing artifacts from the world of the *Wheel of Time*. I'm sure we'll have a lot of students, faculty and staff who are longtime *Wheel of Time* fans coming to view the exhibit, but I'm hoping we'll also have a lot of new fans as well."

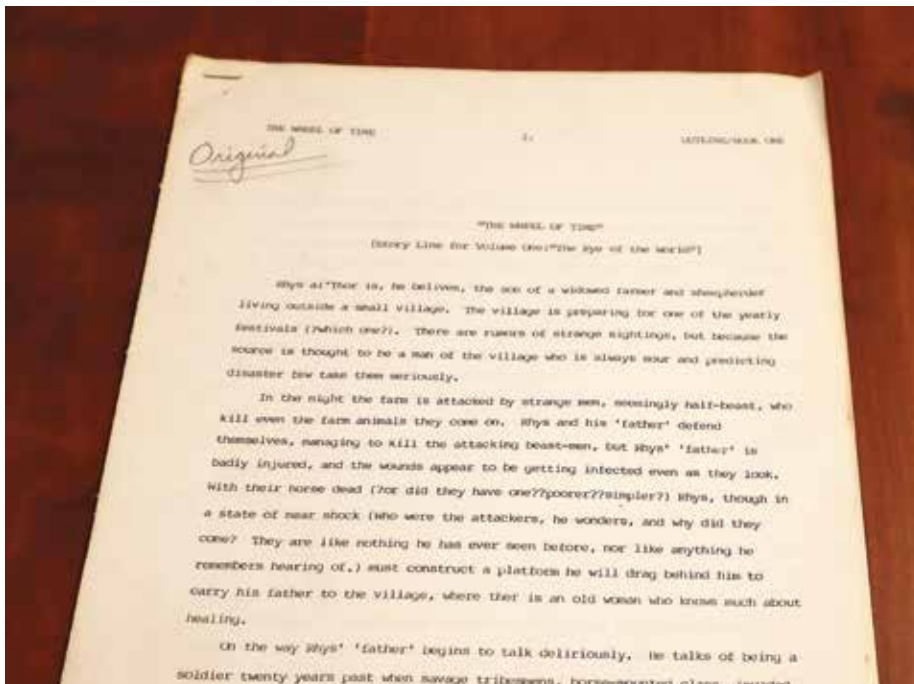
And, although most of the collection is heavily restricted and can't be photographed, that hasn't stopped dedicated *Wheel of Time* fans from sharing information while remaining respectfully within the confines of the rules.

Theresa Gray is one of the many *Wheel of Time* super fans who visited Addlestone Library to see the Rigney collection in person. In fact, she made the journey to the Addlestone twice, once in 2014 when she lived on the coast of Mississippi and a second time in 2017 after moving to Illinois. During her second visit, she brought a friend and *Wheel of Time* fan from Australia to see some of Rigney's items up close. With each opportunity to explore Rigney's notes, correspondence and keepsakes associated with the series, Gray was transfixed by the chance to delve more intimately into the creation of the fantastical World of the Wheel.

"The experience was honestly overwhelming, both times," says Gray, who shared some of the tidbits of what she discovered through online forums and panels at JordanCon, an annual convention founded in honor of the *Wheel of Time* author. "I could probably spend years just poring over the drafts with Harriet's line edits."



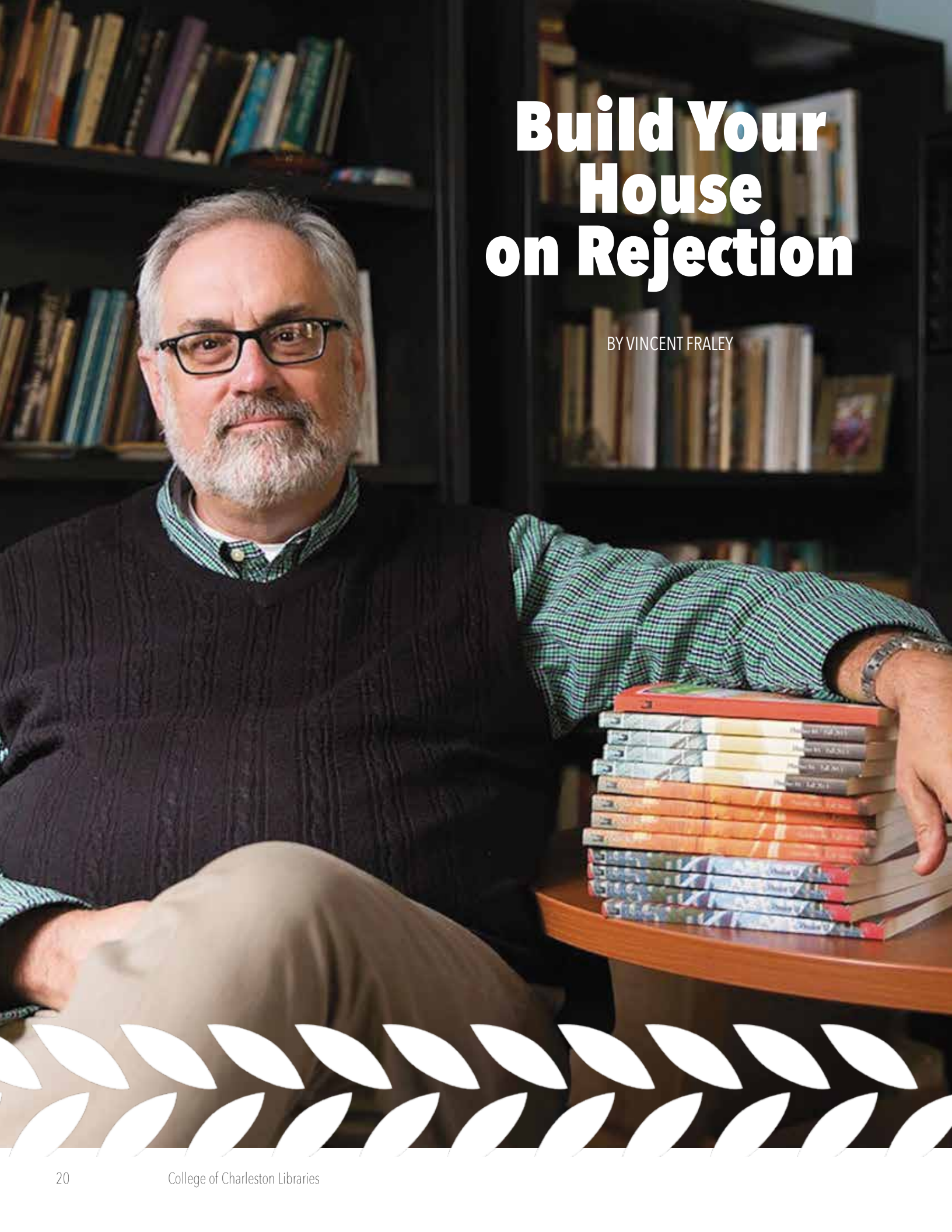
**Writer James Rigney, known under the pen name Robert Jordan, worked on drafts and outlines of various books and projects on this Apple III computer.**



**An original printed version of an outline of the first book of the *Wheel of Time* series.**

**The exhibit is currently on display in front of Special Collections in Addlestone Library.**

**To research the Rigney collection, visit [speccoll.cofc.edu](http://speccoll.cofc.edu).**



# Build Your House on Rejection

BY VINCENT FRALEY



Before his debut novel found a publisher, before he joined the College of Charleston's English department and long before his work appeared in Oprah's Book Club, Bret Lott found himself in a predicament familiar to all writers: being surrounded by rejection slips.

The writer's life is "filled with rejection," says the beloved professor of English, who has published 14 books. "You have to build your house on rejection."

The award-winning author kept every "thanks, but no thanks" slip, filling a shoebox to the brim. Along with his personal papers spanning a nearly 40-year career, these slips have found a permanent home in the College Libraries' Special Collections.

Lott's manuscripts, early drafts and other materials "filled the back of my F-150. The cab, too, plus a few boxes in the passenger seat."

Looking at Lott's prolific output over his 36 years at CofC, one would be forgiven for thinking a caravan of trucks would have been required. That it didn't is a testament to Lott's wife, Melanie, who neatly organized every piece of paper in plastic file boxes.

"My wife is my hero," Lott says, who is celebrating his 42<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary this year. For Special Collections' archivists—who typically receive donations of personal papers in various states of chaos—Melanie might be theirs as well.

While rejection may be the foundation for every author, Lott has built atop this

a career marked by publishing success and, for the thousands of students in his classroom over the years, an indelible impact on how they approach writing.

Born in Los Angeles, Lott studied at Cal State Long Beach and UMass Amherst. He joined CofC's English Department in 1986, after a stint at The Ohio State University. It was during this time in Columbus that he worked on his first novel. With a newborn baby and a full-time job, Lott headed to the basement and wrote each morning from 4:30 to 6:30 a.m.

"I wrote everything longhand in miniscule handwriting on trash paper," says Lott, referring to the scratch paper his wife brought home. "Everything I wrote was on the back of paper that was going to be thrown out anyway. It was low stakes. They were already going to be trashed, so if the book doesn't work out, there's been no loss."

After a year of work, the novel—the first of eight; he also published three story collections and three works of nonfiction—was complete. "I remember very vividly coming upstairs telling my wife I finished it. Not triumphantly, I was quiet. Every writer remembers those moments."

For people with Lott's career, their personal papers often end up at their alma mater. But for him, the choice was easy. "I received a great education in California and studying with James Baldwin in Massachusetts, but I was a 27-year-old kid when I first arrived in Charleston. For 36 years, I've been walking these bricks, teaching in Maybank. This is home."

Lott recalls when he arrived at CofC in 1986. "There was one restaurant that stayed open past 9 p.m., but there was already a community of writers." He remembers fondly the monthly meetings in Simmons Auditorium of every CofC faculty member. "I'd meet people from philosophy and math and physical education; we really got to know the whole faculty."

Charleston and CofC have changed a lot but some things remained constant: Lott's view of the power of literature. "Writers Change the World" is one of his favorite First Year Experience courses to teach.

His advice to student writers is also the same: "Take who you are, where you've been and ask yourself, what if? Every sentence you write hasn't been written before. And don't give up."

**Lott has built atop this a career marked by publishing success and, for the thousands of students in his classroom over the years, an indelible impact on how they approach writing.**

**Opposite: English professor and acclaimed author Bret Lott.**



**Sandra Lee Rosenblum  
and Dale Rosengarten.**



# Building Bridges

BY VINCENT FRALEY

**Criss-crossing South Carolina, Sandra Lee Rosenblum and the Oral History Archive work to save the stories of three generations of Southern Jewish Americans.**

“Can you tell me about your life?”

For nearly three decades, Sandra Lee Kahn Rosenblum has travelled across South Carolina asking, gently, that very question. Memories of b'nai mitzvahs and Seders, first dates and nuptials, and everything in-between—Sandra Lee has listened to three generations of Southern Jewish Americans share their stories.

These are not ephemeral, inconsequential conversations. Each has been recorded and transcribed for posterity as part of the Jewish Heritage Collection's (JHC) Oral History Archive, a program documenting and making available these stories. Sandra Lee's voice can be heard conducting more than a third of the nearly 500 oral history interviews, making an indelible imprint on an intimate and significant historical resource.

“I am blessed because I like listening to stories, it's part of my personality,” Sandra Lee says during a visit to Addlestone Library's Special Collections in November 2021.

Sandra Lee's efforts—and of those working behind-the-scenes transcribing, cataloging and publishing the recordings—have made JHC's Oral History Archive a treasured resource for all seeking to discover Jewish life in the Palmetto State.

It is thrilling, to be sure, to discover a photograph or letter of a since-passed loved one. But JHC's oral histories offer a chance to connect in a unique medium: the human voice.

Many of us weren't blessed to meet our great-grandparents. More often than is pleasant to ponder, many haven't had the chance to meet even their grandparents.

For a sense of the power of oral histories, consider never knowing your extended family, only to stumble upon a recording in which your relatives discuss their lives, creating a bridge between generations you didn't know was possible. What would that experience be like?

Thanks to the work of Sandra Lee and JHC, we need not guess. Countless individuals have discovered their forebears in JHC's collections, listening to their family members' voices for the very first time and becoming overwhelmed with emotion.

Sandra Lee puts it plainly: “Can you imagine listening to your great-grandfather and great-grandmother talking together about their lives?”

Perhaps more than any other individual in South Carolina, she has worked to create these opportunities for connection uniquely afforded by oral histories.

What is an oral history, exactly? Take a broad definition of the term and one can argue swapping stories of the past is the oldest form of historical inquiry—oral transmission of knowledge long predates the advent of writing.

Speak with a historian, librarian or archivist and “oral history” refers to something specific: structured dialogs recorded in audio and/or video, designed to elicit the memories of people, communities and participants in past events.

Oral history distinguishes itself from content that seems similar—political speeches, voice diaries—by the presence and importance of the interviewer. JHC interviewers follow a flexible set of guidelines that ensure consistency but allow conversations to flow in unanticipated directions.

Much has changed over Sandra Lee's tenure as JHC's first and longest-serving volunteer.

The most noticeable evolution has been in the recording technology itself. Sharing stories may be as old as humanity, but the mechanism for capturing these stories has changed repeatedly and dramatically over the past three decades, as analog cassettes gave way to DATs and then digital recorders and mobile phones.

**For a sense of the power of oral histories,  
consider never knowing your extended family,  
only to stumble upon a recording...**

# Recorded interviews in the Oral History Archive touch upon momentous events here in South Carolina and around the world.

“We started with a Morantz, a heavy, briefcase-sized device with two external microphones,” remembers Dale Rosengarten, JHC’s founding curator. “The machines cost around \$5,000 at the time. Sometimes Sandra Lee and I each had one, in case either failed during the recording.”

Adjusting for inflation, that’s \$10,000+ in today’s dollars—no small investment for a new academic program, and no small load to ferry from one town to the next. After schlepping their equipment across the Palmetto State for several years, JHC’s oral historians were happy to see recording devices shrink in size and expense. “Now, the recorders fit in your pocket,” Rosengarten says, pulling out her iPhone.

It’s not only the recording device that’s changed, but what’s in it. In the early years, hundreds of JHC interviews were committed to audio cassette tape. Transferring these analog recordings to a digital format is laborious, but the result is a boon to researchers—the interviews are now accessible to anyone with an internet connection.

Today, JHC’s oral histories are sought by researchers around the world—it is no exaggeration to say JHC has put the state, and more broadly, the South, on the map of Jewish America. This was not the case at JHC’s outset nearly three decades ago. How does one even begin such an effort?

Dale’s and Sandra Lee’s contacts in and around Charleston were easy enough to scout, but with a state-wide ambition for the program, they needed to sound a louder call for Southern Jewish American stories.

The pair didn’t want for takers, it turned out.

“Back in 1995, we worked with the then-new Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina (JHSSC) to set up community liaisons across the state to identify folks we should speak with,” Rosengarten says. The response was immediate and deeply touching.

“I’ll never forget Harry Price in Spartanburg. We arrive, and he says, ‘We have 12 people lined up to talk to you. Don’t worry, they’ll come to you, we’re setting you up in the synagogue.’ Price had organized it on his own initiative. Recording these interviews felt like gathering fruit ready for picking. People really wanted to tell their stories; they were simply waiting to be asked.”

Interview questions steer people through a life review, starting with their family story. Along the way, the conversation addresses topics such as immigration, acculturation, antisemitism and Jewish-African American relations. How did newcomers make a living? How did they navigate between Southern and Jewish identities? How did they adapt their religious practices to the winds of time?

The initiative began with a focus on the eldest generation, striving to capture the earliest history possible, including interviews with Second World War soldiers and liberators, as well as survivors of the Holocaust who settled in South Carolina. “Immigrants and refugees, after the war, like my parents,” Sandra Lee says. “These people had great stories, many of them had come with nothing and built a life...it was fascinating.”

The program’s interviewees are now often third-generation Americans; these conversations tend toward contemporary issues and events. Despite the upheavals of COVID-19, Sandra Lee continued documenting the origins and evolution of Charleston’s newest congregation, Dor Tikvah.

As intrepid and dedicated today as ever, Sandra Lee “is not only an essential contributor to JHC,” Dale says, she “is also its best possible ambassador to communities large and small across the state.”

Recorded interviews in the Oral History Archive touch upon momentous events here in South Carolina and around the world; it is not surprising that, today, some potential

interviewees are hesitant to add their stories, believing them to be insufficiently interesting.

Sandra Lee counsels against believing one's history to be "important" only if you've lived through a tumultuous event. "I hear it all the time, 'I have nothing to say!'" she laughs. "But there's always a story. Realize that you are living history. It's going to be important; everyone needs to keep this in mind."

When students and researchers click on an oral history available in the Lowcountry Digital Library, it is tempting to believe the process is simple and straightforward—someone records a conversation with another, and then uploads it to the internet, right?

While that may be true for social media, oral histories require far more than a few clicks to become useful as historical resources.

The post-interview process aims to prepare an oral history for release to the public. The recording is transcribed and then carefully edited to ensure the transcript matches the audio. Proofing follows, often with input from the narrator or a family member. A digital file is created from the archival master for use by researchers. In this way, each publicly accessible recording is not only the work of interviewers like Sandra Lee, but a legion of fellow volunteers and JHC staffers.

Although technology and times have changed, one aspect remains the same: the power of oral histories.

Special Collections, home to JHC, is one of the premier repositories in the Southeast, chronicling more than 300 years of the Lowcountry's history via manuscripts, ephemera, visual materials and more. Among these treasures from the past, oral histories stand out; they offer an intimate connection fundamentally different from other historical materials.

"I have lost count of how many great-granddaughters and great-grandsons have come [to JHC] to listen to the stories of their family members. Many times, they never met in person."

**B**efore volunteering, Sandra Lee had no training in oral history theory or methodology. She learned, quite literally, on the job. But back in 1995, how did Sandra Lee first get involved?

It began, fittingly, with a conversation.

Following JHSSC's successful launch in 1994, founding president Isadore Lourie and former College of Charleston president Alex Sanders spoke with Dale about implementing a project headquartered in Special Collections to document the lives of Jews living in cities, towns and rural outposts across the state. With the Society focused on hosting events, producing newsletters and fostering community among South Carolina Jews, Dale seized the opportunity to collect and preserve the archival materials and stories of these individuals and communities.

Sandra Lee recounts: "I said, 'I want to be involved in this, I believe this is important.' So, Isadore introduced me to Dale, and I said to Dale, 'Just tell me where you need me.' And she replied, 'Why don't you come do oral histories?'"

Now, after recording hundreds of hours of oral histories, travelling several thousand miles back and forth across the state, and spending countless days with strangers and friends, Sandra Lee sums it up: "Twenty seven years, it's mind boggling, but I've enjoyed every minute of it."

"Sandra Lee and I have made a great team," Dale says. The long road trips, the frequent overnight stays in liaisons' houses, the schedule of up to three multi-hour oral histories a day—this was a labor of love. "We had such a blast taking those trips together, and with Alyssa Neely now as JHC's editor and producer, the Oral History Archive is preparing to enter a new, energetic phase."

Sandra Lee is a non-traditional alumna of the College. She enrolled in her first class after marrying and raising a family. Diploma in hand, she made her career working as a special education teacher in local Charleston schools.

"You have to have a lot of patience and see each child as an individual," Sandra Lee says. "I didn't have to think about that, it's just the way I am."

Sandra Lee's visit to Special Collections in November 2021 was a long overdue table-turning—this time it was she who would be interviewed.

Many of us struggle to tell the truth to ourselves about our own lives, let alone divulge memories—pleasant or painful—to someone we don't know from Adam. But then you meet Sandra Lee, and it's plain to see why she's been so effective conversing with strangers, asking poignant questions and receiving candid responses. There's something about her that is immediately and undeniably warm and welcoming.

This quality of Sandra Lee's character, which cannot be taught in oral history programs, is impossible to overstate. Remember, most of JHC's oral histories are conducted in the interviewees' homes—there is much trust implicit in a situation with a stranger sitting on your couch, asking questions about your life and the lives of your loved ones.

Chatting with Sandra Lee, it is no surprise nearly 200 folks opened up to her. Perhaps it's her emerald green eyes, the gentle lilt of her voice; she looks and sounds like your favorite primary school teacher, the one who made you love to learn.

"If you sit down with someone for an hour and they tell you about their life," Sandra Lee says, "you've got a new friend."

Across South Carolina, these recording sessions have created a network of friends and relations, building bridges between and across generations. In some ways, these conversations offer interviewees a type of immortality and the satisfaction of having passed on their stories and those of their family.

"In the 30 years we've worked together, I have never met anyone who doesn't love Sandra Lee," Dale says without exaggeration.

But the work's not over. In many ways, it has only now begun. Just ask Sandra Lee: As she readies to leave her interview in Special Collections this past November, she mentions an oral history slated for the following week.

---

**The Jewish History and Heritage Campaign, a joint effort of the Jewish Heritage Collection and the Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, supports the efforts of volunteers like Sandra Lee Rosenblum to preserve and share the stories of Southern Jewish Americans. Learn more at [give.cofc.edu/JHHC](http://give.cofc.edu/JHHC).**



**Rosenblum has travelled across South Carolina, interviewing nearly 200 individuals about their family histories.**





## Roundtable Recap

The Friends of the Library's signature gala, the Winthrop Roundtable, returned in style on April 4, 2022, at the Francis Marion Hotel. Damon Wilson, president and CEO of the National Endowment for Democracy, delivered the evening's keynote address to nearly 200 guests united by their belief in the power of our College Libraries.

**Join the Friends of the Library at the \$500 level or above to receive two complimentary VIP tickets for the 2023 Winthrop Roundtable at [give.cofc.edu/library](https://give.cofc.edu/library).**





**National Endowment for Democracy President and CEO Damon Wilson delivered the Roundtable's keynote.**



# Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things

BY VINCENT FRALEY

**W**ith the world focused on Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, nearly 200 guests in Charleston learned about the conflict from an insider's perspective.

On April 4, the Friends of the Library welcomed Damon Wilson, president and CEO of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), as the featured speaker for the 2022 Winthrop Roundtable.

Wilson, whose career has been dedicated to promoting civil society in Ukraine and around the world, remarked on the bravery of everyday citizens against overwhelming odds.

Putin mistakenly believed, in Wilson's view, that the war would be quick and easy, a simple case of "might makes right." Instead, the Russian Federation's autocratic president is mired in a struggle not against Ukraine's army, but against the Ukrainian people.

"These are ordinary people doing extraordinary things," said Wilson, a Charleston native and James Island High School graduate, of the resistance mounted by Ukrainian civilians and armed forces personnel.

Wilson, who spoke at the Mroz Global Leadership Institute's Inaugural Convening, began in 1998 fostering professional and personal connections in Ukraine, affording him a unique perspective. His leadership of NED and previous positions put Wilson in contact with many individuals now on the front lines of the conflict. For him, this is not abstract foreign policy; three of his close friends have lost their lives after Ukraine's sovereignty was violated in late February.

But NATO members and non-members alike uniting to condemn Putin's actions and their pledges of support—financially, logistically, militarily—gives Wilson hope. Like his onetime colleague Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright, he remains an "optimist, but worries a lot."

President Andrew T. Hsu, Provost Suzanne Austin and Board of Trustees Chair David Hay joined CofC's deans and students to learn about Wilson's work and discuss his global outlook and Charleston's place in it.

"You can tell a lot about a College from visiting its library, and you can observe much about a College's community by the supporters of its libraries," Provost Austin said, surveying the assembled crowd. "As I look out at everyone gathered here tonight, I know the future of our College Libraries is bright."

Paused for two years during the pandemic, the Roundtable returned in style with a piano performance by CofC student Misha Pekar '22, a seated dinner and Wilson's keynote address at the Francis Marion Hotel's Colonial Ballroom.

**“You can tell a lot about a College from visiting its library, and you can observe much about a College’s community by the supporters of its libraries.”**



**David M. Hay, Chair of the College of Charleston’s Board of Trustees, led guests in a toast to John Winthrop.**

What began as an informal gathering of John and Libby Winthrop’s friends, the Roundtable now serves as the Friends of the Library’s signature event connecting the College Libraries’ supporters to luminaries near and far.

Past speakers of the Roundtable include journalists Dan Abrams and Cokie Roberts; diplomats John Kerry and Shashi Tharoor; business leaders Jeffrey Immelt, Martha Ingram and Darla Moore; as well as military experts Gen. William Westmoreland and Col. William Grimsley.

With Wilson as this year’s featured speaker, the Roundtable continues the gathering’s original vision of showcasing inspiring leaders and engaging audiences in invigorating discussions.

“The Roundtable has come a long way since its founding in 1996,” said Steve Osborne, former CofC interim president and current Friends of the Library Board chair. “What has not changed is the Winthrops’ original

vision for the Roundtable: creating a space for folks to gather, discuss and learn from one another.”

Reflecting on the insightful questions posed to Wilson by CofC students during the event’s Q&A, John Winthrop—a stalwart supporter of the College Libraries and initiatives across campus—shared Wilson’s optimism of the future.

After such a resounding success, what does he envision for the Roundtable going forward? With his recent planned gift to the Libraries, his answer was clear: “I want it to last forever.”

---

**Join the Friends of the Library at the \$500 level or above to receive two complimentary VIP tickets for the 2023 Winthrop Roundtable at [give.cofc.edu/library](https://give.cofc.edu/library).**



**Former Friends of the Library Board chair Debra Gammons and John Winthrop at the 2022 Roundtable.**

# **A Step in the Right Direction**

BY VINCENT FRALEY

**Trading Massachusetts's American Elm for the Palmetto of South Carolina, a Northeastern transplant has made his home—and left his mark—in the Holy City.**

Dapper in their white dresses and dinner jackets, the newest College of Charleston alumni gathered in Cistern Yard this past May for spring commencement, eager to take part in the centuries-old tradition of passing through Porter's Lodge. Amid the gaiety and pomp, President Andrew T. Hsu and members of the Board of Trustees welcomed to the podium a gentleman clad in a black cap and gown.

John Winthrop joined the cohort of newly minted graduates to receive an honorary degree in recognition of his stalwart support of the College. Winthrop—all smiles as President Hsu handed him the leather-bound doctorate—followed the parade of Cougars as they filed under the triumphal arch bearing the Greek inscription ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΨΤΟΝ: Know Thyself.

With most of his adult life spent here in Charleston, Winthrop's philanthropy touches not only the College, but several dozen non-profits and initiatives across the city and state. To turn the inscription around: How well do we know John Winthrop?

In his office overlooking Charleston Harbor, Winthrop sits at his desk and entertains chummily two CofC staffers dispatched to pick his brain. He discusses his collection of presidential autographs while tourists stream past the office's bay windows, plodding carefully along the uneven cobblestone lane.

One would be forgiven for confusing Winthrop for a Lowcountry native. He looks the part of an "Old Charlestonian" with his shock of silver hair atop a latte-colored tan and not-too-rumpled blazer and trousers. But the trace of an accent gives up the ghost—Winthrop hails from another part of the Atlantic coast.

"Boston Brahmin" by birth, Winthrop traces his ancestry to—and shares the name of—the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Life would have been easy for the young Winthrop to coast on the coattails of his pedigree and his family's network in America's "Cradle of Liberty."

He instead charted his own path.

"My father gave me three pieces of advice: To remember that I was named for my uncle, not some colonial governor; to not go to Harvard; and to get out of Boston. Two out of three isn't bad," the Harvard alumnus jokes.

Of his ancestry, "my father didn't place that burden on me, other than to say, 'Get out and do something, get a job. You must accomplish something.'"

"I didn't have as close of a relationship with him as I wanted, but I was very proud of him," Winthrop says of his father, a veteran who served in the U.S. Navy during the Second World War, taking part in invasions in Africa, France and the Pacific, including Okinawa.

The young Winthrop took his father's injunction to heart and, armed with a Harvard degree, joined the Navy. He eschewed the officer route open to college graduates, opting to enlist. He spent the next several years "swabbing decks in the Mediterranean and at Guantanamo."

During his service Winthrop discovered an interest in writing articles for the ship's newspaper and serving as an anchor for sailor-produced radio programs. This journalistic urge has accompanied him ever since. His travelogues from Vietnam in the runup to America's involvement ran in *The Boston Globe*, and he has penned—at conservative estimate—several hundred letters to the editors of local and national newspapers, including his now-hometown paper, *The Post and Courier*.

But Navy life ended soon enough and upon discharge, the advice of his father rang out once more: "Get out of Boston. Get a job. You must accomplish something."

Winthrop attended Columbia University and earned an MBA, which he put to use on Wall St. With his honorable service record, an Ivy League degree and now a career in finance, Winthrop had, by any standard, "made it." He had set out to accomplish something and did.

But after 12 years in New York, Winthrop felt footloose once again. Perhaps his father's advice to "get out of Boston" included the entirety of the Northeast, because that is what Winthrop did next.

He arrived in Charleston before the city's tenure atop "Best of..." lists and its 33-people-per-day population growth. What was then a quaint seaside town "seemed like the perfect spot to suffer the culture shock of a new place," he says. "Much like Boston, everyone here's related."

Charleston today is a far more welcoming place than it was upon Winthrop's arrival. The derisive jokes about carpetbagging northerners were made only partly in jest. "I was blackballed at the yacht club for being a Yankee, but I snuck past on the second try."

Referring to himself and the few other northeastern transplants in those days: "We called ourselves 'OEP': Overeducated Eastern Preppies," Winthrop says with a smile.

With his wife, Libby—"If she has any imperfections, I have yet to see them."—and young children, Winthrop continued in the field of finance from his new Charleston homebase. His interest in conservation—long before environmental issues were en vogue—led him to opening a local tree farm, a business now shared by his sons.

Family, a career and other business interests, and volunteering. That's more than a full plate for most of us. Winthrop nonetheless began exploring other avenues to make a difference, including service on the boards of the Fresh Air Fund and the Audubon Society, and mentoring children of incarcerated parents.

"None of this has ever been enough, but it's a step in the right direction."

What motivated him to assume these responsibilities beyond his family and career?

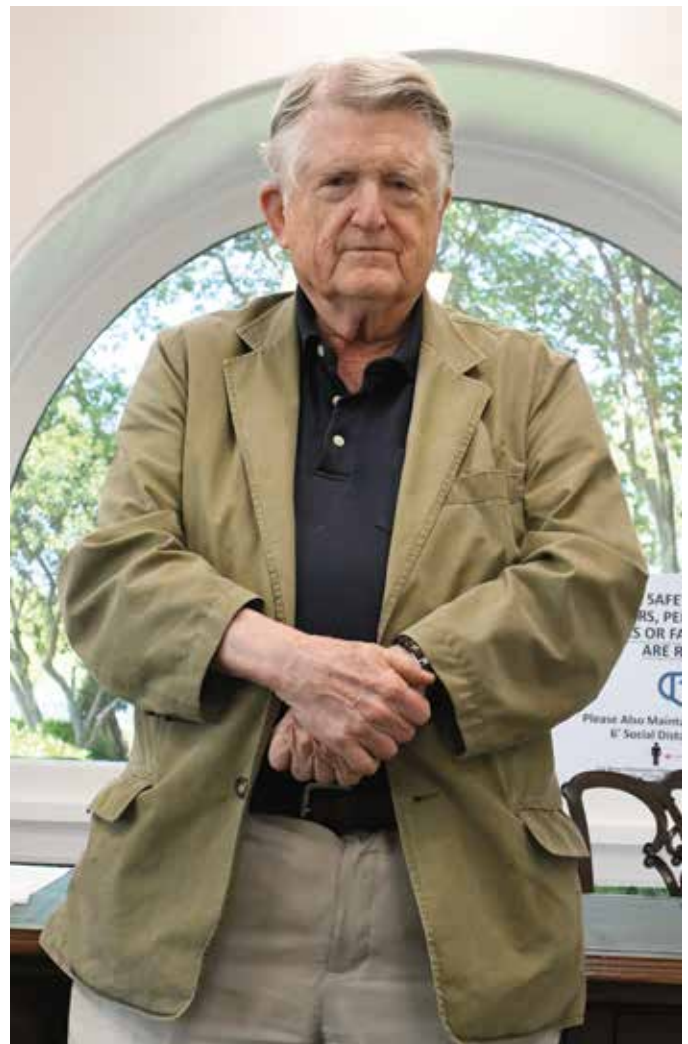
"I realized I was nothing more than a link in a chain of eleven generations. I want to make that chain strong—that made me carve up my life basically into caring most about my family, secondly, about making enough money so I could do a few things in my twilight years, and thirdly, about philanthropy."

His generosity towards CofC ranges beyond the College Libraries, with gifts to everything from the *Crazyhorse* literary journal and Cougar Pantry to the Parents Fund and Crew Club.

Given his ancestry and abiding interest in history today, it is surprising to learn Winthrop graduated without enrolling in a single history class. "I'm engaged in scholarship efforts at five institutions, including CofC, emphasizing colonial history and the environment," he says, with the College's Winthrop Endowed History Study Abroad Scholarship representing his effort to help Cougars avoid a similar history-free fate. But for nearly three decades, the Libraries have held a special place in Winthrop's heart.

**Winthrop nonetheless began exploring other avenues to make a difference...**

**"None of this has ever been enough, but it's a step in the right direction."**



**John Winthrop in his office in downtown Charleston.**

The occasion for the visit to Winthrop's office is to catch up on this spring's Friends of the Library signature gala, the Winthrop Roundtable. Accompanied by Libby and nearly 200 friends and guests, Winthrop was eager to hear from Damon Wilson, the evening's keynote speaker and president and CEO of the National Endowment for Democracy, about his work promoting civil society in Ukraine.

For the Friends, the Roundtable was a grand reopening of sorts, a chance to emerge from COVID's shuttering of in-person events. For Winthrop, it was an opportunity to connect with longtime pals, make new connections and work toward his original vision for the Roundtable—to bring people together to discuss, share and learn from one another.

Save for the lockdown hiatus, the Roundtable has been held annually at the College for almost 30 years, bringing to Charleston prominent speakers who might otherwise have little occasion to visit the Holy City. By itself, this would be a significant contribution to the public life of the Lowcountry, but Winthrop isn't one to rest on laurels. Or, considering his philanthropy and volunteering, he isn't one to rest, period.

The origin of the Roundtable is simple. In 1996, Winthrop had an idea: Why not host an event with friends invited to discuss, akin to the seminar roundtables he remembered fondly from his undergraduate days.

"The question of how the world can be made a better place, that appealed to me. Even with all our differences, we should be able to get together and communicate."

In those early years, it was an informal affair—Winthrop would invite he and Libby's friends to their home. Keynote speakers would present their topic briefly before engaging in roundtable discussion.

What started out small soon swelled in popularity and caught the attention of the College. "Remember that the College wished to name it after me, it was not at my suggestion," he reminds the CofC staffers in his office. This is not false modesty.

His strategy for the Roundtable remains the same as it did at the outset: "Give funds to make it work, then bring in people to make it interesting." Judging by the rapturous applause given to Damon Wilson at the 2022 Roundtable, the model continues to delight and inspire.

Asked what motivates his philanthropy, Winthrop returns to his father: "He left a favorable impression on me, stressing the importance of balance between your business life and your charitable life."

If approached by a young professional interested in making a difference today, what advice would he impart?

"Think of ways that you can help. Respect and understand people from different parts of the world." He pauses. "Focus on something that can be made permanent in a world of rapid change." Paraphrasing Theodore Roosevelt, Winthrop emphasizes that "being in the arena is terribly important."

Or, as his father might have said, "Get out and accomplish something."

---

**Join John Winthrop in making a legacy gift to the College of Charleston and learn about the best ways to make a planned gift at [coflegacy.org](https://www.cofclegacy.org).**

**With most of his adult life spent here in Charleston, Winthrop's philanthropy touches not only the College, but several dozen non-profits and initiatives across the city and state.**

# Please Pardon Our Dust

This summer, the College Libraries have begun to turn the page with the transformation of Addlestone's first floor.

From professional podcast studios and a video lounge to dedicated collaborative and exhibition spaces, the multi-phase renovation represents a pivot toward—and embrace of—the future of academic libraries. New facilities and resources will familiarize today's students with the technology and media that will play an increasing role in their professional and personal lives.

Our ambition ranges far beyond simply making these tools available. New instructional emphases will empower students and faculty to become confident and proficient in the production of new media, a legacy each will carry on long after they leave the College.

Addlestone Library will remain open all summer and return to normal operations for the fall 2022 semester. Subsequent renovations—including the installation of a permanent exhibit with materials drawn from the John M. Rivers Communication Museum—will take place over winter break and summer 2023 to minimize disruption to students and faculty.



---

## Inscribe Your Name

There's no more impactful way to honor a loved one's commitment to student and faculty excellence than inscribing their name in Addlestone Library, the intellectual heartbeat of CofC's campus.

Become an indelible part of Addlestone's transformation with a named gift and receive permanent recognition in our beloved library. One hundred percent of named gifts support the area of your choice and can be made over a multiple-year period.

Learn more by contacting Brian Sisco, Senior Development Officer, at [siscobr@cofc.edu](mailto:siscobr@cofc.edu) or **843.953.5530**.



COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON

LIBRARIES

[library.cofc.edu](http://library.cofc.edu) | 843.953.8000  
205 Calhoun St., Charleston, S.C. 29401