“In its library more than in any other place the story of a college is recorded: its small beginnings, its slow progress, its ultimate success.”

- Sr. Agnes Somers

Over the past several months I’ve enjoyed watching several of the academics in my particular faith tradition examine the notion of embracing a usable past. At least one of these academics is an historian who, as many historians do, warns of creating a past that is usable in the present, but doesn’t really reflect an accurate history. This is a concern to be taken seriously. Creating a history to make a political or theological point is dangerous, and fraught with all sorts of unintended consequences. Interpreting history, however, is more than just stitching together facts from the past. Some historians will argue that creating a usable past is necessary for groups and communities trying to understand their identities. In his book The Past is a Foreign Country David Lowenthal says “The sureness of ‘I was’ is a necessary component of the sureness of ‘I am.’” Over the past twenty or so years libraries have experienced a sort of identity crisis as a result of the increasing ubiquity of information. This explosion of information has led many to question the traditional role and even usefulness of the modern library. It is in this very environment of blogs, self-published books, fake news, etc. that the modern library is so vital to an informed citizen. As a library our “I was” is the same as “I am.” We remain a place where students can find help identifying reliable information, test ideas that might make them uncomfortable, and carry these habits into adulthood and their careers. It is for these reasons we at the St. Scholastica Library thank all of our friends for your continued and generous support.

Cheers to Thirty Years Here!

Friends didn’t just celebrate Homecoming this year but also the 30th anniversary of the renovation of the Chapel and Library. During the “swap,” the Library spent a year in exile (1985-1986) before reopening with the Chapel located downstairs where the Library had been and the Chapel’s high ceiling converted into the upper two of the three floors of the current Library. To help commemorate the 30th, besides the obligatory sheet cake, there was a display of photos of the renovation and the sacred I-beam, signed by dignitaries at the start of construction over 30 years ago, was brought from its secure location for all to marvel at.
Library Co-Hosts 7th College Film Festival

On December 2 and 3, the Library co-sponsored a College film festival entitled Shakespeare on Screen: Great Adaptations. The series was organized as an unofficial follow-up to the exhibition of a Shakespeare First Folio at the University of Minnesota-Duluth’s Tweed Museum earlier in the fall.

Films on the series included Orson Welles’s Chimes at Midnight, Akira Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood and Kenneth Branagh’s Henry V. The films were presented by CSS faculty members Dr. Nathan Carroll, Dr. Tammy Ostrander and Dr. Tom Zelman.

This was the seventh film series presented by the College since the arrival, in 2006, of Dr. Carroll, who teaches film studies on the Duluth campus. The Library has been involved in each of the series. In addition to helping organize the festivals, we have been responsible for acquiring performance rights for each of the films which have been screened.

In a related project, the Library collaborated this fall with the College’s Indigenous Student Alliance (ISA) to screen Seventh Fire, a critically-acclaimed documentary which was filmed at Minnesota’s White Earth Indian Reservation in 2015.

Quarry Gives a DAM!

Heidi Johnson and Kevin McGrew collaborated with Linda Richter and Alex Kent from MnPALS on a presentation at the Minnesota Library Association (MLA) annual conference held in Duluth this fall. The presentation was on digital asset management (DAM) with the MnPALS-sponsored Islandora open source software as an example of a DAM. The Library has been working on creating a digital asset management system, which has been named The Quarry.

The Quarry contains photos, documents, and publications from the College, which are full-text searchable and freely available. Currently there are items from the early years of the College (1903 to the 1950s) and more recent items (2001 to the present) with more added every day to the middle years. Check it out at: http://quarry.css.edu/
Librarian & Assistant Professor Todd White and English Professor Dr. William Hodapp delivered two printing workshops this fall, one at the Medieval Association of the Midwest Conference held at The College of St. Scholastica and one for the tenth anniversary of the School of Arts & Letters Colloquium in conjunction with the nation-wide Shakespeare First Folio tour which visited Duluth in October. Medievalists from across the Midwest, as well as students and faculty of the Scholastica community, were able to pull the bar of a hand press and print their own Shakespeare sonnet, No. 27 & No. 66.

Dr. Hodapp spoke on Renaissance material book culture then White spoke on the process of producing books in the Renaissance. Audience members were then invited on stage to print their own Shakespeare sonnet and have it placed inside a Renaissance folded envelope and sealed with red wax impressed with a signet featuring the thistle, the symbol of Scotland.

White & Hodapp, along with guest calligrapher Meridith Schifsky, have worked with students in the Honors Program and Medieval/Renaissance seminars to produce 2 softcover books, 4 hardcover books, 4 illuminated manuscripts, and one illuminated page of The Rule of St. Benedict. White & Hodapp have co-authored and published an article in the national journal Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching.

The Library just made your life way more complicated! You use to know that if you owned a Scholasticat tee-shirt you were the hippest hipster on the block, a hepcat among house cats. But now with our new Friends' thinking person shirts you may have doubts. And what if your neighbor gets one first? The solution to your dilemma is obvious to any thinking person. YOU NEED ONE OF EACH! These 100% cotton shirts feature a Depression era WPA poster that states the obvious—For Greater Knowledge on More Subjects, Use Your Library Often!

But wait! There’s more! Each shirt also features The Friends of the College of St. Scholastica Library on the left sleeve and a vintage, 1930s era coat of arms of The College of St. Scholastica on the right sleeve. As part of our 30-Year Since the Renovation Celebration, shirts are 30% off, bringing this wonderful new wardrobe favorite to you at the amazing low, low price of just $7. Email Todd White @ twhite@css.edu to order.

**Move over, Scholasticat. It’s Thinking Person!**
“Whatever book I want to have I can get on loan from any library, while if I wanted to borrow money to buy these books I should find no one who would lend it to me.”

-Ibn Hayyan, 11th century historian

Friends add art to the Library

Thanks to the financial support of our Friends, the Library has acquired three new additions to its art collection. They are black-and-white mono-prints depicting the prophet Elijah by Sister Constantina Kakonyi, SND, who was a professor and artist-in-resident at the College for over 40 years before returning to her native Hungary in 1994. She achieved the lithographic quality of these images by what she termed "mono-print," first applying ink to a flat surface, placing a piece of paper over the inked surface, and then drawing on the paper in reverse.