THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WILSON READING ROOM
by Cassie Brand, Methodist Associate and Special Collections Cataloger

"Splendid. Wonderful. Absolutely perfect!" These are the exclamations of people when seeing the transformation of the Wilson Reading Room in the United Methodist Archives and History Center. The renovation was completed this January, made possible by a generous gift from Maribeth Collins, daughter of Clarence True Wilson, a well-known Methodist minister and prohibitionist for whom the room is named.

The renovation created a new look and feel for the reading room, harkening back to the reading rooms of the 18th century, mixed with modern technology. The large wood tables with built-in electrical outlets accommodate more researchers than before, and the wood bookshelves lining the room add to the overall elegance. Comfortable chairs and a handicap accessible computer station complement the new room.

Preservation and security measures have been augmented to ensure the safety of the rare and unique materials used within the reading room. Speciality shades protect materials from fading in the sun and the new location of the Methodist Associate's desk will allow the Associate to better serve the researchers and monitor proper handling of the rare materials.

The Wilson Reading Room is the space where researchers consult the Special Collections and Archives materials of the Drew University Library and the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church. Materials range from the 11th century to the present, encompassing a wide range of topics. In addition to books and archives covering the history of world Methodism, Drew is home to a number of distinctive special collections including Willa Cather, Walt Whitman, Lord Byron, R. S. Thomas, Jacob Landau, Governor Thomas H. Kean, Ambassador Richard Walker, and a wealth of theological and religious source materials.

The Wilson Reading Room is open Monday–Friday, 9–5, with special late hours until 9 p.m. on Tuesday nights during the semester. Drew students, outside researchers, and members of the general public are encouraged to visit the newly renovated space and to take advantage of the vast collections available at the university.

ANNE Sexton at Drew
by Jesse D. Mann, Theological Librarian

As readers of Visions know, in the spring of 2014, Drew acquired the personal library of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Maxine Kumin.1 Not surprisingly, this library includes numerous works by Kumin's longtime friend and fellow poet, Anne Sexton. Like Kumin, Sexton also won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, and she remains one of the more highly regarded, if controversial, American poets of the 20th century. Unlike Kumin, Sexton suffered from mental illness much of her life, a life that ended in suicide on 4 October 1974.2

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The question is how to establish the balance between electronic and print resources.

Jesse D. Mann, Theological Librarian

O
course the campus home of Ernie Rubinstein, the office of the Theological Librarian is a corner of the reference area of the library. Ernie retired in the summer of 2014, and a new Theological Librarian has been in the position of the space. Who is that man? He might look familiar to you. Even if you have not availed yourself of his services, you might feel that you’ve seen him somewhere before. There’s a good possibility that you have. Jesse Mann became the Theological Librarian last August, but his affiliation with Drew long predates his incumbency as such.

You might recognize him as the Chatham Bookseller. For more than two decades, Jesse ran the used book shop of that name so well-known and beloved by many Drew faculty and graduate students. That appointment was intended to be a short-term, temporary position. It turned into a long-term one, for which his love of books and the written word made him well suited. It is, however, just as likely that you might have seen Jesse many times around campus. Indeed, his connections to Drew go back to his childhood. Jesse grew up near the campus of Chatham. During his teen years, he would often ride his bicycle to campus to purchase same-day discount student tick- et performances for the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Later, during the early 1990s, he worked in the library of the Drew, as a patron, while he completed his work on his PhD.

For the better part of the last decade, Jesse might also be sighted in the Theo- logical School. He taught several courses, one on Reading and Spirituality, with Heather and Bill Hinkin; one on Liturgy and Canon Law; courses in Latin; and, with Lisa Pickrel, the research segment of the course Theological Writing and Research. Many students benefited from his independent tutorial work in Latin, German, French, and Spanish as they prepared to pass their language exams. His responsibilities on the Theological Library team include teaching, and his role as an instructor in the Theological School will be ongoing.

Jesse has a lifelong fascination with what he terms “the religious phenomenon,” or the role of religion in human life. This interest helped shape his academic path, which led him from a double major B.A. in Religion and Spanish from Dickinson College to his graduate work at the University of Chicago, where he earned an M.A. in Religious Studies and a Ph.D. in the History of Christianity. As is often the case, libraries were critical in shaping his research. It was among the old manuscripts in the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago that he discover- ed his dissertation topic. This led him to the library at the Uni- versity of Salamanca, housing the Library of the 15th-century theolo- gian Juan de Segovia, the subject of Jesse’s dissertation. The final bit of research relied on the resources of the Drew Library, especially a particular edition of William of Ockham’s Nomina, critical in the completion of his dissertation.

It is impossible to spend any time with Jesse without being struck by his abiding affection for books, and for the libraries that house them and value them. There is also a commitment to and reverence for education and learning that infuses the passion with which he talks about his studies and his work. These are among the forces that led him to the position of Theological Librarian. When asked why he applied, Jesse replied, “While I very much enjoyed my life as the Chatham Bookseller, I had been at that for more than two decades and wanted to do something new. I wanted new intellectual challenges, and I wanted to learn new things. I wanted to work with students more regularly and fully. I was a long-time adjunct at Montclair State. I also wanted to be in a situation where there was more confront and more serious conversation about religion and the role of religion in human life.... Of course, I also love books and learning, and an academic library seemed an ideal place to find both.”

Jesse’s perspective on the library and on Drew as a whole combines the insight of long years of association with the freshness of someone now truly seeing the place from the inside out. Asked to articulate what most surprised and im- pressed him, he coyly demurred. He said that the thing that struck him most profoundly was “that the work of the library is much more integral to the overall enterprise of the university than I’d ever realized as an outsider or as a patron.”

He is also impressed with the depth of engagement with the students that he sees in both his library colleagues and among the Theological School faculty. When his work here is done, he hopes to be able to look back and feel that he had an impact upon the success of Drew students as both scholars and human beings.

Hopefully, you now realize why new man in the corner office seems so familiar. He is Jesse D. Mann, bookseller, scholar, multilingual tutor, teacher, and Theological Librarian.
ANNE SEXTON
continued from page 1

Barbara Schwartz was the last of Anne Sexton's many therapists. What makes this volume especially unique is that Maxine Kumin and Barb- ara Schwartz were probably the last two people to have seen Sexton alive. The day of her suicide, Sexton had a session with Schwartz in the morning, then Kumin for lunch during which the two women discussed the gallery proofs of The Awful Rowing. After that lunch, Anne went home, closed her garage door, turned on her automobile, and died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The final item from the Kumin collection that I wish to mention is not a book by Anne Sexton. Rather, it is a book that seemingly belonged to Sexton but that ended up in Maxine Kumin's library. It is Nancy Milford's well-known Zelda: A Biography, a life of Zelda Fitzgerald published in 1970. This biography was among the first to treat Zelda as a significant figure with legitimate literary talent in her own right and to suggest that she was not as stigmatized by her opium, alcoholic husband. We do not know for sure that Sexton ever read Milford's work. The book bears her signature on the front free endpaper, but there are no notes, no under-linings, no margins. Still, it is intriguing to imagine Anne Sexton reading this depiction of Zelda Fitzgerald as a proto-feminist who, like Sexton herself, struggled with her marriage and with her emotional and mental health. And we can only speculate about Anne's reaction as the news about Zelda's death in 1948 in a fire at the Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, where she was being treated with insulin for her mental illness.

These three items, certainly among the most interesting in the Kumin collection, underscore the significance of this recent addition to the Drew Library. Scholars interested in the lives and poetry of Maxine Kumin and of Anne Sexton will no doubt want to consult these and other items in the collection. Thanks to her friend's donation, Anne Sexton has now established a unique presence at Drew.

About the author: Since 1987, Anne Sexton has been a professor of English at Drew University. She has written six books of poetry. Her most recent is The Real Nixon: An Intimate Biography, a work that was published in 1990. She is currently working on a new collection of poems called The Real Nixon.

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NEW STAFF

JUDY AHNERS joined the staff as the new Evening Circulation Supervisor in January. Judy recently relocated to her native New Jersey from Maine. After a career as an IT professional, she is excited to be starting a second career that encourages her love of books and libraries.

MARCO BOSCALI began as a new part-time Weekend Circulation Supervisor in January. Marco also works as a real estate agent with Town & Country Properties, a freelance writer and editor, and an active community volunteer.

DEPARTURES

SAN SOLU our Weekend Circulation Supervisor for the past two years, left Drew at the end of December to begin a position teaching art history at Kent University, Ohio. San’s boundless energy and great spirit will be missed, but the staff will still see him regularly as he has volunteered to continue doing collection development work for us in art and art history.

ACADEMIC COMMONS (continued from page 7)

ment, the ability to walk students over to the University Technology Help Desk, the Instructional Technology Center, or the Center for Academic Excellence, when students will be better served by those departments. The Center for Aca-

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Ms. Lucy Marks
Ms. Lucy Marks
Ms. Catherine G. Ryan
Dr. Andrew D. Scingour
Bishop John S. Spong
Mrs. Deindor C. Scan
Ess. Espee C. Farrell and
Donald E. Weatherbee
Ms. Emma Lee Yu

GIFTS IN KIND

Dr. Danjil Cowell
Fairleigh Dickinson University Press
Ms. Rosa Galenti
Ms. Lois Jackson
Dr. Arnold Saltman
The Estate of Hilfred Smith
Society of Biblical Literature
Westar Institute

RECENT GIFTS

The Library gratefully acknowledges the following gifts.

GIFT IN KIND TO THE METHOdIST LIBRARY

Mr. Matthew Bierman
Dr. Vivian A. Bull
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Southwestern University. Smith Library
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Ms. Tricia Carroll Starling
Ms. Carolyn K. Tanzer
Rev. Dr. W. James and Joan H. White
Ms. Marjorie Wolf


Editor: Deborah B. Bronz
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HONORING JOAN STEINER

Joan E. Steinert, long-term Professor of English at Drew, was a great advocate for and support of the Library. Her significant bequest to the Library Fund Endow-

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE TO THE FULL EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW.
LIBRARY EXHIBITS

Exhibits are free and open to the public. For additional information contact the Drew Library at speccoll@drew.edu or 973.408.3590.

MAIN LIBRARY

MARCH 1–APRIL 20, 2015
Women and the Graphic Novels They Write:
Alternative Narratives
This exhibit will showcase a study of women writers and artists and the graphic novels they create including a distinctive collection of memoirs, "self" conscious representations, the confessional, and the fanciful.
Curated by Dr. Sloane Drayson-Knigge

APRIL 27–JUNE 30, 2015
Reading the Reformation
This exhibit displays rare books and artifacts researched by undergraduates in Professor Louis Hamilton's class, The Reformation: Theology, Society, and Devotion. The materials provide rich insights into a period of intense theological debate and social upheaval.
Curated by Students of CLA REL 332 Course

METHODIST CENTER

The Methodist Center is open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Tuesday until 9 p.m.

MARCH 1–JUNE 30, 2015
(a series of three exhibits)

Methodist Women of Distinction
A Women's History month display of "firsts" among women of the Methodist Church: the first ordination, first female bishop, first bishop of color, and first missionaries.

Sand Creek: Hallowed Ground, Haunting Memories, and Hope for Healing
This exhibit, gathered from the shadows of the 150th anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre of November 1864—one of America's most inexcusable atrocities—uncovers Methodist Church connections to the horrific events and the denomination's engagement with the enduring work toward healing.

Methodist Heritage
May is Heritage month for Methodists around the globe, remembering founder John Wesley's "heart strangely warmed" personal, spiritual awakening (1738) and the revival he and his Methodists began in England, forming one of this nation's and the world's largest Christian denominations.
Curated by Fred Day, General Secretary, and Dale Patterson, Archivist, General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church

Out of the Vault Series

These interactive workshops introduce people to materials from various Drew collections and allow them to hold a piece of history in their hands. The workshops are free and open to the Drew community and to the general public. Located in the Wilson Reading Room, Methodist Center, 7–8 p.m.

MARCH 3
The Drew University Student Organizations Collection
Matthew Beland
The University Archives houses the records of various associations and clubs in Drew's past and present, such as the WERD radio station, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Phi, as well as various literary and academic groups, such as the Mead Hall Study Circle, the Polyglot Society, the Browning Club, and more.

APRIL 7
The Methodist Collections of Drew University and the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church
Christopher Anderson, Mary Alice Cicerale, Lucy Marks, and Lisa Miller
The session highlights materials from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, missionary periodicals including the Heathen Woman's Friend, and a selection of 19th-century Methodist Sunday school books for children.

MAY 5
The Robert Frost Collection
Jesse D. Mann
This workshop provides an overview of the Robert Frost collection, focusing on the more unusual items, including a significant number of Frost's annual Christmas greeting cards.
For additional information contact the Drew Library at speccoll@drew.edu or 973.408.3590.

Conversations on Collecting

MARCH 31
Collecting Collectors at The Grolier Club
Eric Holzenberg, Director,
The Grolier Club of NY
Since 1994 Eric Holzenberg has shaped The Grolier Club's mission to celebrate the book-as-object, promoting its research library on books and prints, its public exhibitions on bookish themes, often drawn from the collections of individual members, and its collection of finely printed books-on-books.