



MILNER LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT
2024

Patrons report high levels of satisfaction with Milner Library

1000 patrons responded to a campus survey distributed in Fall 2023

Overall Satisfaction

93.5% 

satisfied or very satisfied

I enjoy spending time at Milner Library

82.7%

strongly agree or agree

I feel welcome at Milner Library

95.8%

strongly agree or agree

I feel safe at Milner Library

94.1%

strongly agree or agree



Users feel confident accessing books, journal articles, databases, and library guides, asking for help, and using the Milner Library website

more than 70%

strongly agree or agree



95.8% **Printing Needs**

completely or somewhat met needs

STUDYING AT MILNER LIBRARY



Study Spaces

93%

completely or somewhat met needs



Study Rooms/Pods

76.8%

completely or somewhat met needs

Did students and faculty find Library instruction sessions to be useful?

Students

80%

strongly agreed or agreed that they were useful

Faculty

93%

strongly agreed or agreed that they were useful



Respondents showed the greatest satisfaction in Milner Library having the databases they needed, followed by (e-)books, journals, and media.

Those four questions had combined strongly agree or agree responses from over 65% to nearly 80% of the respondents.

In response to campus feedback, Milner Library has significantly expanded collections in the areas of e-books, scholarly journals, and primary source collections. If your needs are not being met, please submit a **purchase request form** or contact **Dr. Rachel Scott**.

The full report is available at the Milner Library Satisfaction Survey dashboard. The **dashboard** allows for more in-depth examination including sorting by Illinois State classification, college, and by major/department.

Table of Contents

Milner Library opens Digital Scholarship Lab	1
When the circus comes to town	2
Sewing a vision of peace	4
World War I Service Records	5
WGSS 50th Anniversary	6
Open access publishing milestone	7

Milner Moves in FY24

New Hires

Jayna Leipart Gutilla	Seth Peterson
Tom Hardy	Joseph Skotzke
Elizabeth Harman	Joseph Smith
Logan Janicki	Sean Winslow
Grace Norris	

Retirements

Vanette Schwartz	Richard Satchwell
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Milner Library opens Digital Scholarship Lab

Milner Library opened its Digital Scholarship Lab in room 165 in the fall 2023 semester. Interest in digital humanities at Illinois State University was documented before the global COVID-19 pandemic and persists today. Students and faculty alike use digital tools and platforms to enhance their research, and this will only increase in the future. With open lab hours weekly on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the lab provides a space for students and scholars to explore digital scholarship tools and community for those who embrace these processes.

The lab features 11 Dell Precision 3650 Workstations with the following specifications: Intel Core i9-11900K 8-core, 16 thread, 3.5 to 5.3GHZ CPU, 64GB DDR4 RAM, NVIDIA RTX A4500 w/ 20GB GDDR6 VRAM, and 2TB PCIe NVME SSD. Specialized equipment includes two Epson 12000XL Graphic Arts Flatbed Scanners and two Meta Quest Pro's with 256GB Storage. In addition to software available across campus, the lab machines also have Zoomtext Fusion 2023, ABBYY FineReader, and OxygenXML, among others. Please visit the Digital Scholarship Guide to explore related offers and opportunities.

The lab is staffed by two Illinois State graduate students with considerable experience in digital scholarship. Since opening the lab, Milner has also hired Digital Scholarship Coordinator Sean Winslow. Winslow is a medieval and Ethiopianist book historian and digital humanist. He holds a BA with Honours from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and an MA and PhD in Medieval Studies, Book History, and Print Culture from the University of Toronto. For the last six years, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the Austrian Centre for the Digital Humanities (now Department of Digital Humanities) at the University of Graz in Austria, where he worked on digital diplomatics, modelling historical data, digital manuscript catalogues, and the description and cataloguing of Ethiopian binding decoration using RDF and IIIF. His work at Milner Library includes planning speaker series, workshops, and consulting on digital grants as well as supervising the Digital Scholarship Lab.

When the lab opened, it was staffed by Shinjon Ghosh, Yashaswini Mekala, Rebecca Fitzsimmons, and Rachel Scott. Shinjon Ghosh, a graduate student with expertise in R, SPSS, SAS, Tableau(basic), Python(basic), and MySQL, has significant experience assisting faculty and students with data analysis. His "Case Study Concerning Airplane Accidents on a Global Scale" used a variety of data sources to conduct forecasting for air accidents. Yashaswini Mekala, a graduate student in computer science, is well versed in programming languages like C, C++, Java, Python, and JavaScript. She contributed to "Analysis of Women's Safety in Indian Cities Using Machine Learning on Tweets," leveraging social media to explore timely and important issues. Ghosh or Mekala will be available during lab hours to answer questions about lab technology and support users.

Rebecca Fitzsimmons has written and presented on digital scholarship methods in the humanities and is a frequent facilitator of digital humanities workshops for the Center for Integrated Professional Development. Rachel E. Scott is a librarian with a Ph.D. in historical musicology. Her research has utilized data scraping methods to consider what YouTube performances can tell us about the reception of 19th century Lieder (German-language classical songs) among contemporary performers.



Illustrations created by Special Collections Librarian Rebecca Fitzsimmons promoting the Digital Scholarship Lab workshops.



WHEN the CIRCUS COMES to TOWN

Circus history celebrated at Milner Library exhibit and conference



Visitors browse exhibits at the opening of Milner Library's Sites, Sights, and Sounds of Circus on August 25, 2023.



Milner Library's 2022 Circus and Allied Arts Fellow, Aine Norris provided a talk at the opening of Milner's Sites, Sights, and Sounds of Circus on August 25, 2023.

More than a year of planning and all six floors of Illinois State University's Milner Library were needed to accommodate an undertaking one library staff member called "the biggest exhibit the library has done."

Sites, Sights, and Sounds of Circus opened Friday, August 25, 2023 in conjunction with the Circus Historical Society's annual convention, which brought visitors from all over—some from as far as Australia—who browsed historically significant items kept in Illinois State's Circus and Allied Arts Collection.

"People have come from around the world," said Head of Special Collections Maureen Brunsdale. "It's neat to see their excitement and their enthusiasm for this glorious thing called circus."

Visitors were treated to a vast collection of circus posters, costumes, photographs, and artwork displayed throughout Milner Library. Famous names like Barnum and Ringling and Wallenda jumped off the pages of business documents, telegraphs, and handwritten letters preserved in the Illinois State collection.

"This has given us a chance to feature a lot of the more hidden aspects of our collections," said Special Collections Librarian Rebecca Fitzsimmons. "It's been a great opportunity for us to really show not just the scale but really the scope of the collection here."

The exhibit ran in conjunction with the Circus Historical Society's annual convention, which ran from August 24-27, as well as the Sweet Corn Circus, a community event attended by thousands in Uptown Normal featuring Illinois State's Gamma Phi Circus, August 26-27.

The rich circus history of Bloomington-Normal and Illinois State University was on display all weekend.

"From the 1870s to the 1950s, Bloomington-Normal was the trapeze capital of the world," said Brunsdale, who spoke at two Circus Historical Society events after the exhibit opening. "In the 1950s, when performers started being centralized in places like Sarasota, Florida, our library director thought we were losing this cultural component of this community, and we needed to do something about it."

"So, she started the Circus and Allied Arts Collection as a way to document the cultural component of the community that was once here and thriving."

The exhibit opening at Milner also included a gallery talk from visiting artist Yetti Frenkel and a talk from Milner Library's 2022 Circus and Allied Arts Fellow Aine Norris.

A former horse groomer in the Big Apple Circus, Frenkel's artwork was displayed in the Benway Student Art Exhibition Area. "This is wonderful to see so many people here who share the same love of circus," Frenkel told the crowd gathered for her talk. "We are kindred spirits."

A doctoral student at Old Dominion University, Norris spent a week in October 2022 collecting and scanning artifacts from Illinois State's collection for her dissertation research.

"Access to this collection was formative," Norris said. "It helped me solidify the pieces I'll need to formally pitch this project in just a few months, and working here also helped me refine my methodology."



Visiting Artist Yetti Frenkel provided a talk during the opening of Milner Library's Sites, Sights, and Sounds of Circus on August 25, 2023.



A multi-panel advertisement included in Milner Library's Sites, Sights, and Sounds of Circus exhibit.

Sewing a vision of peace

Students create International Day of Peace quilt

In fall 2023, Milner Library

partnered with students in the Department of Health Sciences' Global Health course to create a community quilt based on the 17 goals for sustainable development established by the United Nations (UN). It was displayed on Milner Library's sixth floor through mid-December.

Each square of the quilt signifies one of the UN's 17 goals—from eliminating poverty to ensuring good health and well-being—in an effort to unite the community through a shared vision of peace for the International Day of Peace, which is observed globally each year on September 21.

Students at University High School and Thomas Metcalf School first created the quilt square designs on paper. Then, several Illinois State University students with various registered student organizations (RSOs), including the Student Wellness Ambassador Team (SWAT), Students Ending Rape Culture (SERC), PERIOD, and Fix-It Friday, transferred the designs onto fabric squares and contributed some original designs as well as written responses. Finally, Milner Library employees sewed the squares together to create the finished quilt.

"The process of creating the squares was my favorite part," said junior public health major Madison Heuer. As a member of SWAT, she helped transfer the students' designs onto quilt squares.

"I enjoyed the children's interpretation of what peace means to them. Being able to translate those thoughts into the quilt was truly a cool experience," Heuer said.

For the past few years, Milner Library staff and students in the Global Health

course have commemorated the International Day of Peace and what the day represents through various programming, according to Teaching and Learning Librarian Caitlin Stewart.



Students from various RSOs transfer designs onto quilt squares.

"This year, the theme for the International Day of Peace was actions for peace, and the United Nations provided a list of examples of what those actions could look like—one of those being a community art project," Stewart said. "There's a robust history of quilt making activism with examples all throughout history, specifically in the United States, but also globally."

She explained that the quilt provides a visual representation of peace. The artistic approach also made it easier to include the perspective of younger elementary school students. Stewart said the goal of the project was to be inclusive and involve community members of all ages and backgrounds.

"I would say that a quilt probably has a higher impact for students who are quickly walking through a hallway, who maybe aren't going to stop and read a lot of text," Stewart said. "I also think that including children in the creation of the project was important, because children's images are very powerful."

Outreach and Student Engagement Librarian Anna Twiddy said the project

acts as a time capsule. She and Stewart hope that future viewers of the quilt can acknowledge progress toward the community's ideal vision of peace.

"I think looking back on this from the future lens, it'd be really nice to see progress," Stewart said. "Maybe we'll look back at what people imagined for what a peaceful society looks like, and some of that vision has been realized or all of that vision has been realized. I think that's something powerful about this type of thing, where it's creating a record, or a snapshot of what people are hoping for in the future. I hope that we see progress."

The exhibit was installed on the sixth floor of Milner Library November 1, and was on display until mid-December.



One of the quilt squares featured in Milner Library's International Day of Peace quilt exhibit.

After that, the quilt made its rounds on display at Metcalf School and U-High. There's also a digital version of the exhibit hosted by Milner Library, which displays the students' original artwork. Heuer said the experience has been "both fulfilling and inspiring."

"Knowing that people would see our work and be inspired made the experience even more rewarding," Heuer said.

The quilt-making project and the display efforts were funded by the Faculty Community Engagement Learning Grant and Milner Library.

Newly digitized collection sheds light on Illinois State in the War to End All Wars

Explore the World War I experiences of Illinois State Normal University (ISNU) students, faculty, staff, and alumni through letters, photographs, questionnaires, news clippings, postcards, and other primary sources preserved by Milner Library's namesake, Angeline "Ange" Vernon Milner (1856-1928) in the World War I Illinois State Normal University Service Records. This digital collection vividly illustrates the extent and variety of ISNU's contributions during the supposed War to End All Wars and expands access to its contents for research and teaching.

Illinois State Normal University's first full-time librarian, Ange Milner began assembling a "war roster" documenting ISNU affiliates' World War I service as part of her work on the University's War Service Committee after the United States entered the conflict in mid-1917. The committee was comprised of faculty appointed by then-president David Felmley to document and provide services to soldiers and volunteers with connections to the University and its Lab Schools. With help from community members, including 14-year-old Kenneth R. Pringle who later became her chief assistant, Milner created a two-page survey and sent it to ISNU students, alumni, and employees who were involved in the war effort. Pringle was noted for his meticulous effort in clipping news articles from the Bloomington Pantagraph, Normal Normalite, and Bloomington Bulletin relating to the 802 individuals identified.

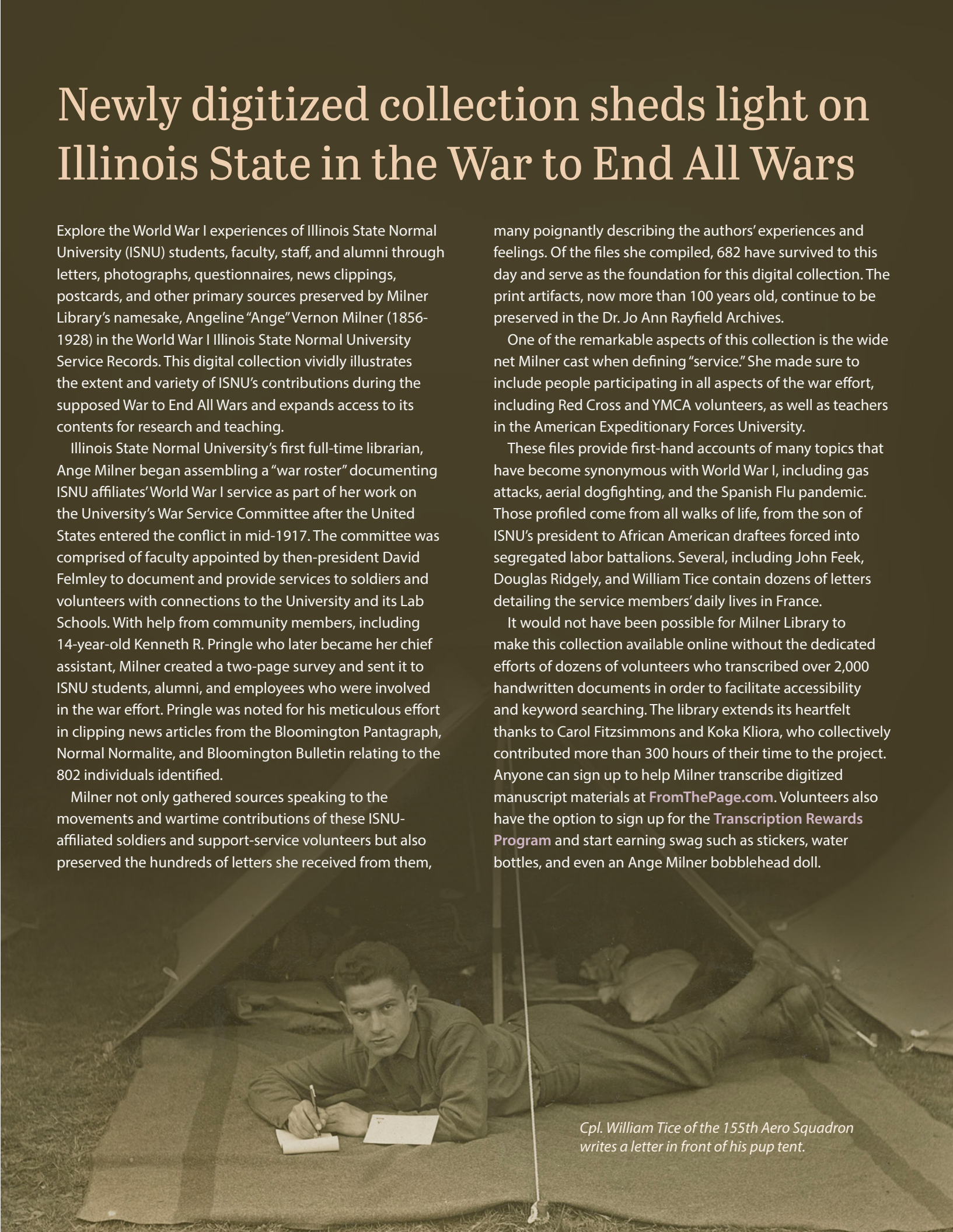
Milner not only gathered sources speaking to the movements and wartime contributions of these ISNU-affiliated soldiers and support-service volunteers but also preserved the hundreds of letters she received from them,

many poignantly describing the authors' experiences and feelings. Of the files she compiled, 682 have survived to this day and serve as the foundation for this digital collection. The print artifacts, now more than 100 years old, continue to be preserved in the Dr. Jo Ann Rayfield Archives.

One of the remarkable aspects of this collection is the wide net Milner cast when defining "service." She made sure to include people participating in all aspects of the war effort, including Red Cross and YMCA volunteers, as well as teachers in the American Expeditionary Forces University.

These files provide first-hand accounts of many topics that have become synonymous with World War I, including gas attacks, aerial dogfighting, and the Spanish Flu pandemic. Those profiled come from all walks of life, from the son of ISNU's president to African American draftees forced into segregated labor battalions. Several, including John Feek, Douglas Ridgely, and William Tice contain dozens of letters detailing the service members' daily lives in France.

It would not have been possible for Milner Library to make this collection available online without the dedicated efforts of dozens of volunteers who transcribed over 2,000 handwritten documents in order to facilitate accessibility and keyword searching. The library extends its heartfelt thanks to Carol Fitzsimmons and Koka Kliora, who collectively contributed more than 300 hours of their time to the project. Anyone can sign up to help Milner transcribe digitized manuscript materials at [FromThePage.com](https://www.fromthepage.com). Volunteers also have the option to sign up for the [Transcription Rewards Program](#) and start earning swag such as stickers, water bottles, and even an Ange Milner bobblehead doll.



Cpl. William Tice of the 155th Aero Squadron writes a letter in front of his pup tent.

Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies marks 50th anniversary with historic exhibit

“WGSS at 50” opened April 3, 2024 in the Benway Student Art Exhibition Area on the second floor of Milner Library. The exhibit chronicles the program’s history since its founding in 1974 and was on display until May 11.

Former and current WGSS faculty, staff, students, and community members attended the exhibition opening to view the photos, memorabilia, artifacts, and documents in the display cases and the photo collages along the walls. The objects from University Archives collectively told the story of student activism, scholarship, and community. An interactive timeline integrated these events into a national timeline of women’s history.

Dr. Alison Bailey, WGSS director and university professor in the Department of Philosophy, has been with the program since 1993. She assumed the director’s position in 2006 and has been

behind many of the programs and events featured in the gallery.

“I really love the pictures of our students doing activist work,” said Bailey. “I started the local chapter of the Clothesline Project the second year I was here, and it’s still going. There are pictures of our students at the Springfield Capitol with their shirts.”

The exhibit was a community effort organized by Dr. Kyle Ciani, professor of history and core faculty for WGSS, Rebecca Fitzsimmons, special collections librarian, and María

Tudela, humanities and social sciences librarian.

“My role in the exhibit was working closely with Dr. (Kyle) Ciani and Rebecca Fitzsimmons from Special Collections, and of course our university archivist (April Anderson-Zorn),” said Tudela. “It’s just such a brilliant group of people to work and collaborate with. I am honored to be able to witness all these things.”

Anderson-Zorn gave an inspiring talk at the exhibition emphasizing the

program’s history, contributions to the community, and the importance of its preservation.

“My role at the University is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the University’s history,” Anderson-Zorn said. “Everybody’s materials, photographs, memorabilia, ephemera, documents—I try to preserve it. My role is to get that stuff to the people who want to use it, but also to educate with those materials. This exhibit is a prime example about educating about the importance of women’s and gender studies on campus. And we need to keep advocating for it.”

Ciani, also spoke at the event, emphasizing the importance of the program and the need to preserve the history of women who, in her experience, don’t often save their work for the future.

“They don’t think about saving their stuff because they don’t consider it valuable,” Ciani said. “Fortunately, people in WGSS did. University Archives has received materials from former faculty, staff, and alumni. We are always

interested in more, so don’t throw it away, but give it away. Give it away to April.”

For junior history and social sciences education major and WGSS minor Hannah Pelphrey and second-year English master’s student Xan Daggett, the history revealed in the exhibit is fascinating.

“It shows the progress the program has gone through and how it continues to move with time,” said Pelphrey.

“I would say the same,” said Daggett, who’s working toward their graduate certificate in WGSS. “I went here for my undergrad from 2015 to 2019. It’s interesting how it’s progressed even during the time I was gone, the change that happened, and seeing that go all the way back, step by step.”

The exhibit will become a new chapter in the program’s history, one immortalized in the WGSS reception book.

Begun eight years ago and filled with old and new names alike, the book will become another storied artifact in the program’s enduring history.

Illinois State University authors reach open access publishing milestone

With the publication of his article “Meaningful Consumption” in the Journal of Macromarketing, Dr. Aditya Gupta, assistant professor in the Department of Marketing, secured the achievement of an important milestone in the University’s support for scholars. Gupta is the first scholar from the College of Business to have published an article open access under one of the 10 active journal open access agreements negotiated by Milner Library. Authors from all colleges have now benefited from these agreements; by publishing open access, authors increase access to their work, enhance their stature as public scholars, and contribute to the public good.

“It is a pleasant surprise to be the first person from the College of Business to get an open access publication!” Gupta said. He further noted the value of open access publishing, not only to individual researchers and an academic discipline but also at the institutional level. “Scholars, particularly those on the tenure track, can benefit from the higher level of accessibility such agreements provide because it makes it easier for us to disseminate the findings from our work to a larger audience. At the end of the day, the more our work is read, shared, and discussed, the better it is for all of us and for the University.” Illinois State University is enriched by the excellent work of its scholars in their classrooms, labs, and stages; the reputation of the university benefits greatly when this research can be freely read by all.

Dr. Somnath Lahiri, professor of strategy and international business and research director in the College of Business, adds his congratulations to Dr. Gupta: “Every publication is a scholarly success, and Dr. Gupta’s publication is special because it happens to be the first College of Business open access publication under university journal agreements. We hope to see many more open access publications from the College of Business faculty in the future.”

Milner Library is working to support expanded open access publishing across diverse publishers that serve all academic disciplines. Milner entered into its first open access agreements with Cambridge University Press and IGI Global in 2021. A positive response from scholars whose work was published open access via these agreements led to additional agreements with ACM (Association for Computing Machinery), ACS (American Chemical Society), Annual Reviews, Company of Biologists, IOP (Institute of Physics), Microbiology Society, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sage Publications, and Taylor & Francis. Additionally, Milner Library has contributed to open access support for open access publishing ventures including the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, MIT Press e-books, Open Book Publishers, and PhilPapers.

Works published open access via these agreements are deposited in a collection in ISU ReD on behalf of the authors. Materials that are not published open access are also welcome in ISU ReD; green open access, or open access via deposit, is viable for many publications. If you would like more information about open access publishing or would like to discuss your publishing goals, please reach out to Milner’s Scholarly Communication Team.



Students look through the WGSS 50th Anniversary Exhibit in Milner's Benway Gallery.



Dr. Kyle Ciani encourages audience members to preserve their history for the future while presenting at the WGSS event.



Special Collections Librarian Rebecca Fitzsimmons, Dr. Kyle Ciani, and Humanities and Social Sciences Librarian Maria Tudela at the WGSS event.



**ILLINOIS STATE
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Illinois' first public university®

Milner Library

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