

# Library FRIENDS

SUMMER 2009



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UBC Library: Merging tradition with the future.

**FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN**

## What I learned when I went to the Library

*Dr. Peter Ward, University Librarian pro tem at UBC Library, steps down from his post at the end of June. The following is the final instalment of his regular column.*

**As my term in the University Librarian's office approaches its end I've begun to think more broadly about my sojourn in UBC Library.**

**Admittedly, it's been brief.** I arrived on short notice in December 2005 with a long academic career behind me and some experience in administration, but knowing little more about how libraries ran than most other patrons. I had a great deal to learn and not much time for the task.

It's been a fascinating 3½ years, one of the high points of my career. For most historians, including me, the professional task in its broadest sense is to

understand change over time. Since coming to the Library I've had an insider's view of profound change over compressed time in one of the world's most ancient cultural institutions. But instead of studying change from afar, I've been an active player in the process – and that's been an intriguing experience.

As all of us know, the information technology revolution has transformed our institutions and altered

*continued on page two...*

## What I learned when I went to the Library

*continued from page one*

*"The challenge is to find an appropriate balance between the old and the new."*

— Peter Ward,  
University Librarian  
*pro tem*



our lives. Libraries have always been in the information "business," collecting it and making it available to users. But the new digital age has confronted libraries with demands for comprehensive change. Every stage of the process of acquiring, storing and distributing electronic information differs dramatically from those required for the books, journals, maps, recordings and other physical objects that have formed our collections from time out of mind.

### The challenge of transformation

Libraries today lie at the heart of change processes as comprehensive as those of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution. But that revolution was a leisurely process compared to the technology revolution of today. Far-reaching changes that once spanned decades now press us for fast action. Our users expect access to our information wherever they are and whenever they want it, not just where we store it and when we choose to make it available.

At the same time, libraries continue to be what they've always been: buildings filled with books and other printed materials, spaces that users visit to consult the riches of the human imagination. UBC Library continues to grow as a traditional library while it reinvents itself as an e-Library. We remain what we long have been even as we transform ourselves.

For me the interplay of these continuities and changes has been the most fascinating aspect of the library world I've entered. The challenge for all of us – those who work in libraries, who use libraries, who enjoy libraries – is to find an appropriate balance between the old and the new, between the traditional library with its deep cultural roots and the emerging electronic library with its promise of universal access to human understanding.

I'm glad to report that the challenge is being very well met in UBC Library. I know that we are in excellent hands, guided by thoughtful, innovative, committed women and men who are reaching out to the future while preserving the best of the past. It's been a privilege for me to work with them all. ■

### Peter Ward

University Librarian *pro tem*

## COMING HOME

*Welcome back – Ingrid Parent, UBC's 14th University Librarian.*



A UBC alum is coming back to her alma mater to become the 14th University Librarian.

Ingrid Parent begins her new job in July for a six-year term. She comes to UBC from Library and Archives Canada, where she is the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Documentary Heritage Collection Sector. She also leads the organization's digital agenda.

Parent graduated from UBC with degrees in history and library science. She began her career with the National Library of Canada, moving

on to Université Laval in Quebec City. From 1994 to 2004, she was the Director General of Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services at the National Library of Canada.

Parent, who is fluent in English, French and German, has been involved with various other groups, including the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.

Stay tuned for an in-depth article about UBC's newest leader in the next issue of *Friends*.



Above: The Manuscripts Curator in his natural setting.



L to R: George Brandak and Anne Yandle of UBC Library, researcher Duncan Stacey and rare book dealer Stephen Lunsford examine papers, circa 1990.

## PROFILE: GEORGE BRANDAK

# The creative art of collecting

## After more than 40 years in the archival profession, George Brandak has plenty of tales to tell.

**The inspiring people** he met who contributed to the development of B.C., the amazing collections he worked with – and the time he was knocked out by a ball to the head while managing the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) West baseball team.

Brandak, an avid sports fan, survived that episode. Indeed, he managed the squad for more than two decades, stepping down after a Calgary game in May.

The 65-year-old Brandak left UBC Library at the end of 2008 after working as the Manuscripts Curator for more than three decades. He hasn't had much time to relax – although his beloved wife Anne is giving him a sabbatical on house projects, he continues to serve on organizations dedicated to the preservation of B.C. and Canadian heritage, including the ACA, the Archives Association of B.C. (AABC), the National Archival Appraisal Board and local community groups.

His lifelong archival dedication resulted in an honorary lifetime membership to the AABC, a tribute presented at the annual general meeting at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre in April. He was also appointed a Fellow of the ACA in May.

### Dreaming big

Brandak's passion began early in life, as he eagerly collected sports cards (his first baseball card set was the 1952 Topps edition), an interest he harbours to this day.

Raised in Regina and of Ukrainian heritage, Brandak had big ambitions. He recalls being told by a Grade 8 teacher that he should become a carpenter, because that's what Ukrainians were good at. "Instead, I dreamed of playing football with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, becoming a lawyer, being elected to Parliament and becoming Prime Minister of Canada," he says.

However, a different career direction was in store. After earning his BA in History from the University of Regina in 1966, Brandak was hired to research 1,000 key dates in Saskatchewan history. This led to an interview with the Provincial Archivist of Alberta, and a three-year posting with the new Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta.

Up next was Wilfrid Laurier University, where Brandak obtained the institution's first MA Thesis in History. After a stint at the University of Saskatchewan Archives, he joined the Special Collections division at UBC Library in 1973 – and served as the Manuscripts Curator until 2009.

### Archival adventures

Highlights included working with writers and artists, including Joy Kogawa and Toni Onley, and labour leaders such as Harold Pritchett and Jack Munro – "just meeting a variety of people that have created fantastic material that you can see in front of your eyes." Brandak also acquired archival items from the mining, fishing and forestry communities, which he greatly enjoyed.

After decades of experience, he believes that collecting is not so much a technique or a science, but a creative art. "The art is one of convincing and making people comfortable with you and your institution, so they will donate material and continue to spread the word." ■

## TRIBUTE: EARL DODSON, 1928-2009

## A gentleman and a gentle man

Earl Dodson – loving husband to Suzanne, avid learner and traveller, and loyal friend of UBC Library – passed away on March 19, 2009.



*Earl and Suzanne Dodson, longtime supporters of UBC Library.*

**Dodson attended UBC** and graduated in 1954 with a degree in Geological Science. He went on to a distinguished career in mineral exploration and a calling as a top-notch prospector. He worked for companies such as Rio Tinto and Chevron Minerals, travelled all across Canada and the U.S., and explored for diamonds in the Canadian North.

“Earl was a very intelligent and kindly man, with an infectious sense of humour,” says Ann Turner, a friend of the Dodsons who was hired by Suzanne to work at UBC Library in 1965. “He loved nature and being outdoors, and his career as a geologist gave him ample opportunity to experience nature in all its moods.”

Earl met his future wife at UBC, an outcome that inspired the couple’s exceptional involvement with the Library. Suzanne received her degree in librarianship from UBC, and worked for the Library for 36 years.

Together, the Dodsons have provided significant support to the Library. “I was always coming home to Earl and saying ‘We need this and we need that’ and he always forked over the money,” Suzanne told *UBC Reports* in 1999.


“Earl was a gentleman and a gentle man, knowledgeable, and unfailingly courteous and respectful of all people and points of view,” says Margaret Friesen, UBC Library’s Assessment Librarian, who first met Suzanne in 1970. “He was interested in the development of the Library and always listened intently to ideas that would foster improved services and facilities. We miss him very much.”

### A Library legacy

Indeed, the Dodsons’ generosity resulted in an elevator at Koerner Library to accommodate people with disabilities, an air conditioning system for rare materials, a microfilming project and furniture for Koerner’s rooftop patio.

In December 2006, Suzanne and Earl gave \$20,000 to set up a fund that provides annual support for the professional development of library assistants. Earl also served as a member of the President’s Advisory Council on the University Library.

As a sign of appreciation, in 1999 UBC Library dedicated the Suzanne Cates Dodson and Earl D. Dodson Reading Room in the Main Library. Today, this site remains a treasured space within the refurbished core of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre.

UBC Library is grateful for the support that Earl and Suzanne have provided over the years. Earl is fondly remembered, and will be sorely missed. 

### UBC LIBRARY VAULT

*Detail of “Sky Flower” from Paxton’s Magazine of Botany, featured in one of the new card sets.*



New cards and captivating canvases are the latest items to emerge from UBC Library Vault ([www.ubcvault.ca](http://www.ubcvault.ca)), where you can find hundreds of images from the Library’s rare and special collections.

The 4.25" x 5.5" card sets feature striking images based on topics including Japanese fairytales, books

as art objects, 19th-century floral illustrations, an illuminated Spanish manuscript and much more. The sets are beautifully packaged for gift-giving as well – so make sure to select some for those near and dear before they sell out.

If you’d like to enjoy Vault images on a grander scale, then you’ll be



## A life in a library

**Sonia Lawrence Williams – a lifelong learner, fan of opera and travel, and generous donor – was born in England, grew up in Yorkshire and settled in Vancouver in the 1950s.**



*Sonia Williams in Maui, Hawaii during one of her many travels.*

**She worked** as an X-ray technician and returned to school at UBC, obtaining her BA Honours in History in 1967. This was followed by another UBC degree in 1974, a Master of Education in Adult Education. Sonia spent the majority of her professional life as an educator at BCIT, where she ran the Health Part-time Studies Program. Sonia married David L. Watkins in 1976; David passed away in 1991.

Sonia, an avid reader, bequeathed nearly \$1 million to UBC Library, which was directed to the UBC Centenary Library Endowment. This fund allows the Library to meet high-priority needs and emerging opportunities. We are hugely grateful to Sonia for her support.

Sonia valued her friends, who miss her greatly. Below is an account from a close friend and gracious recipient of Sonia’s personal library.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Is it possible to know a person through her library?**

I mulled over this question after the death of Sonia Williams, a close friend and confidant. I inherited her library: 13 large boxes of books.

Sonia lived in a small condominium, and since she was not a collector, I was surprised by the quantity and variety of books. It was a melancholy delight to open box after box and find books that reflected so many facets of Sonia’s life and our shared experiences.

Sonia must have kept all the travel books she had bought in anticipation of her trips to the Middle East, Australia, South Africa, India, Asia, Turkey, and Europe. They were well-thumbed, representing more than 20 years of travel.

There are the cookbooks. Sonia began baking and cooking at a very young age, encouraged by her parents and grandmother. Among the cookbooks is an early colour edition of British cookery, which I believe she brought to Canada in the 1950s. Hefty volumes of Italian baking, the exotic flavours of the Middle East, the many varieties of Asian cookery – all are reflected in Sonia’s library. Flipping through them, I find notes in her inimitable handwriting, commenting on the success (or not) of certain recipes.

**Abiding interests**

Sonia had a lifelong interest in history – specifically, medieval history. Her library reflected this, from volumes on the Reformation to a popular account of Renaissance life in an Italian city. She had an equal passion for illuminated manuscripts, resulting in at least 10 books of wonderful collections at museums around the world. Among her history books were those she first bought, as a poor undergraduate, while studying at UBC and completing her BA Honours in History.

My connection with Sonia grew through a common passion for opera. Thanks again to her library, I now have full-length biographies of Verdi, Puccini and Wagner, as well as reference books. Her favourite opera composer in later years was Benjamin Britten, and I was happy to find four books about him she had bought and read. They complemented a lecture she gave to The Opera Club on Britten’s work. We travelled long distances to see opera, and I will always fondly remember our many trips to Seattle, Portland and Victoria, and a recent trip to Glimmerglass in New York State. In 2006, Sonia attended operas at Germany’s Bayreuth Festival.

The books she read and kept are only a tiny aspect of the vivacious, upbeat and energetic Sonia Williams I knew. She was a great reader, but enjoyed people and experiences even more. 📖

*– Ingrid Woldenga*

happy to hear about UBC Library Vault Canvas Treasures. These feature select images on canvas giclée, dazzling the eye with archival-quality inks and premium canvas. Images can be printed in various sizes; each one is gallery-wrapped on a wooden frame and accompanied by a letter of provenance.

Proceeds support the growth and care of UBC Library’s collections. For more information, please contact [library.development@ubc.ca](mailto:library.development@ubc.ca).

And remember to sign up for the award-winning eVault newsletter at [www.ubcvault.ca/signup.php](http://www.ubcvault.ca/signup.php).

*If you are interested in learning more about leaving an estate gift to UBC Library, please contact **Shakeela Begum**, Director, UBC Library Development, at 604-822-8926 or [shakeela.begum@ubc.ca](mailto:shakeela.begum@ubc.ca)*

## THE BIG PICTURE

## Do the database walk



## What do you do if your data gets dirty? Take it to the cleaners.

*“Making things better for the patron”*  
– Rue Ramirez,  
AUL, Library Systems  
and Information  
Technology.

**That’s exactly** the sort of housekeeping that UBC Library recently undertook. Its pile of library laundry was big – indeed, millions of bibliographic records were sent to Backstage Library Works, a company whose specialties include cleaning code.

The project, called a database walk, has been in the works since Rue Ramirez began working for UBC Library in May 2007 as the Associate University Librarian for Library Systems and Information Technology. Susan Andrews, the Library’s Principal Cataloguer, led the complex project.

At the heart of the effort was a desire for a comprehensive clean-up and update of the Library’s entire catalogue. As UBC Library grew over the decades, so too did its cataloguing anomalies – and subject terms used in the catalogue’s early years became out-of-date.

Given how technology, libraries and terminology have changed over the years, it’s not surprising that issues arose. From 1925 to the late 1970s, UBC Library’s cataloguing was done using paper and card formats. Then, until the mid-1980s, data files were used and the catalogue was made available on microfiche.

Soon these files started to become searchable online – and their number continued to multiply. In

1992, an enhanced Library catalogue was launched for the public, although it really represented a unified view of files that were updated separately.

This was followed by the formation of a single massive file in 1996 that included the Library catalogue, orders, serials and more, and the implementation of database management software. Since then, many more thousands of bibliographic records have entered the catalogue, while cataloguers have encountered a decreasing ability to perform global changes in the Library database.

These permutations over the years led to inconsistencies. For example, variants of author and company names, from William Shakespeare to Macmillan Bloedel, emerged. Different terminologies came into use – the Great War is now listed as a World War, moving pictures are listed as motion pictures.

### Library laundry

A major laundry run was necessary. In November 2007, UBC Library sent a single DVD containing more than four million bibliographic records to Backstage. The company used a series of automated programs to resolve conflicts over name headings and series titles, update subject headings, and eliminate obsolete codes and fields.

Reloading of the sparkling new data began in early January with the assistance of Ex Libris Group, a library automation firm. The records were reloaded into the Library’s catalogue in about four and a half days.

And the work continues. Stray names and subject terms that escaped the net of the automated programs are being cleaned up by staff, and catalogue maintenance will be ongoing. From February through April, the Library enriched 120,000 of its catalogue entries with full tables of contents. This process covers selected records going back to 2001 and means that individual chapters, essays or plays can now be found through keyword searching. Additional records will be enhanced, dating back to 1991.

Also, an application called Primo, used to improve “discoverability” when patrons run searches on the Library’s website, was put on a fast-track installation process in the spring. Further updating and enrichment of records are being planned to improve online searching and access.

And that, as Ramirez points out, is really what this whole exercise is about. As he says, “The ultimate goal is to make things better for the patron.” ■

Dean Giustini,  
Luddite and Tech  
Evangelist.



## LIBRARY AWARDS

### Spreading the word

He doesn't own a cell phone, his television is as old as vintage *Miami Vice* episodes and he's a self-confessed Luddite.

**Oh, and one other thing** – Dean Giustini is also a “Tech Evangelist” as labelled by *Library Journal*, a prestigious American publication that named the Reference Librarian as a 2009 Mover & Shaker. He's also the only Canadian-based librarian to make the list this year.

Giustini, who was nominated for the award by a trio of UBC librarians, notes that technology should serve as a tool and not as an end in itself. “My focus is not on the technology as much as bringing our users together to collaborate,” he says. “Technology is just a means to that end.”

Giustini has excelled at reaching out to the medical masses with tech tools. A health-focused librarian who works at the Biomedical Branch at Vancouver General Hospital, he has launched a blog about Google Scholar (<http://blogs.ubc.ca/dean>) and an influential wiki (<http://hlwiki.slais.ubc.ca>).

As the award application notes, while his wiki is used primarily to assist Canadian health librarians, it also serves as a site for librarians from around the world to share information, and as a tool for a class that Giustini teaches at UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. He recently added updates to the wiki about the H1N1 flu (swine flu) in Canada.

When he began working as a librarian more than 20 years ago, e-mail, e-books and the World Wide Web didn't exist. Now, “Google” is used as a verb and Web 3.0 is touted as the next trend that will continue to shape librarianship. It's an exciting, if sometimes confusing, time.

“Information technologies will improve access to information and scholarly materials for everyone. But it will shift librarianship away from managing print collections to a hybrid model built around digital assets and knowledge objects,” he says.


“Somehow our field has to maintain our traditionalist orientation while encouraging innovative thinking in using the Web and creating online spaces for collaboration.”

For more information on *Library Journal's* 2009 Movers & Shakers, please visit [www.libraryjournal.com/MS2009Inductee](http://www.libraryjournal.com/MS2009Inductee).

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In other awards news, Allan Cho and Lindsay Willson are the 2009 recipients of the Diana Lukin Johnston Award, which supports education and training for UBC Library's professional staff. The award was established in memory of Diana Lukin Johnston, who was a big fan of books and reading. Cho is a Program Services Librarian at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, and Willson is a Library Assistant with Interlibrary Loan.

Willson also was named as this year's winner of the Suzanne Dodson Award, established to help library assistants develop their professional skills. Willson plans to use both awards to help her pursue her Master's degree in Library and Information Studies at UBC.

Congratulations to all of UBC Library's award winners! 

## LEARNING CENTRE UPDATE

## Consulting the Community

### No Learning Centre is an island.

**That's why**, in the spirit of outreach, the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre is establishing an advisory committee to help guide its efforts on campus and beyond.

"I hope we achieve really good dialogue with members who represent different types of education or community-support services," says Sandra Singh, the Learning Centre's Director.

Singh is keen to expand the facility's community-oriented services. "We need to better understand what role we might play that does not duplicate existing services – such as those provided by public libraries,

post-secondary institutions, and service centres or agencies – but rather enhances and supports them."

The goal is to reach UBC stakeholders and other valued members beyond campus borders. "We're asking people to represent their organization and its interests as examples of other like-minded institutions. So we can understand, for example, what it is like to be a public library in a small community, or a college supporting lifelong learning," Singh says. "From this understanding, we can begin to have conversations about what role the Learning Centre might play."

UBC members include representatives from various faculties, the First Nations House of Learning, UBC Okanagan, the Alumni Association and more. Those from the broader community hail from organizations such as the Vancouver Public Library, the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., colleges, secondary schools and other groups.

In total, the advisory committee includes 25 members. "B.C. is really diverse and there are a lot of stakeholders," Singh says. "I am hoping that this group will help us start to understand how to think about communities that we are unfamiliar with."

The committee is set to meet twice a year, with the inaugural gathering planned to take place this summer.

Outreach is a vital part of the Learning Centre's mandate, as it strives to support lifelong learning opportunities for those at UBC and throughout the province.

In 2004, consultations were held across B.C. to find out what kinds of resources and services would best suit the Learning Centre's wide range of users. But that was just the beginning; as Singh stresses, much has changed since then, and the results from 2004 are helping foster new discussions. **▣**



*Aiming for diversity and dialogue:  
Sandra Singh, Director, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre.*

## FRIENDS

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