Supporters Newsletter

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
FALL 2015

Celebrating 25 Years

From the Dean

Those who were there will know how special last month’s 25th Anniversary event in Snell Library was. A large and enthusiastic group of seasoned supporters and participants in the campaign to build the Library were able to savor their achievement and applaud the great strides we have made. And the Library welcomed hundreds of enthralled visitors to its Open House, where the proof of those giant strides was on display.

Snell Library is fortunate to have such devoted friends, and we are committed to keeping the Library worthy of your support and true to the University’s mission. This newsletter is our way of making sure that those of you who couldn’t be here on our 25th can share in the story of that day and the Library’s continuing success.

Over the years the Library has transformed itself in line with the University’s own ongoing evolution into a distinctive, indeed unique, place of higher learning. And because the transformation is ongoing, we’ve included a few thoughts from our staff about where the Library is headed in the next decade. I hope you find them stimulating.

Of course the shift from print to digital is a profound one, not just for libraries, but for all of us. In Snell Library, we’re also transforming the building space itself in radical ways. We see the Library flourishing as a digitally driven creative, collaborative commons. It’s not just about what the Library contains in terms of classic print and archive collections; it’s just as much about what we can do for the scholars who use them. So a great library like Snell continues to depend on the people who work in it, and the talent they bring to support student and faculty research, as much as on its new ebook collections and revitalized and re-energized space.

It was extraordinary to feel the warm glow of generosity and commitment rekindled among our 25th anniversary guests. And it remains a privilege for us to have so many dedicated partners interested in seeing the Library, and Northeastern with it, continue to thrive. We can’t thank you enough.

Sincerely,

Will Wakeling
Dean, University Libraries
Snell Library’s 25th Birthday Celebration

Saturday, November 7, 2015 marked Snell Library’s 25th Birthday Celebration, and the library transformed into a veritable bazaar with projects, resources, collections, and artifacts from Northeastern’s history on display, along with interactive activities for all ages. From recording memories in the audio visual studios and watching 3D printers in action, to browsing Cauldron yearbooks and digital research projects, members across the entire Northeastern community joined to reflect on the library’s history and experience what today’s modern facility has to offer.

Dean Will Wakeling and Distinguished Professor of History, William Fowler kicked off the celebration with a special reception to recognize the generosity of library supporters whose contributions have improved library space and collections through the years. As the Chairman of the Campus Campaign to build Snell Library in 1987-1988, Dr. Fowler honored the efforts of fellow leaders including former Senior Vice President for Development, Eugene Reppucci, and the campus campaign co-chairs, committee, and volunteers. Their campus wide effort to build a library realized $1.4 million from over 900 faculty and staff, and is recognized with a quilt on the second floor of Snell Library (seen above).

“On such a large and diverse campus, students always come together at the library, whether we are meeting up between classes or looking for a place to settle in and study. Snell Library is like a home away from home, and bringing the campus together for Snell Library’s 25th Birthday was like one big family gathering.”

– Laura Rivera, DMSB’19

“A quarter of a century ago we, the fabric of the university, came together and through our efforts helped build this library. It changed our world and gave an example of what Northeastern was on the road to be – one of this nation’s great universities. In a very real sense that journey began the day this library opened.”

– William M. Fowler, Jr., SSH’67

Distinguished Professor of History

William Fowler, featured speaker at Snell Library’s 25th Birthday Special Donor Reception
The Library Through the Years

Highlights from the many milestones in our history from Northeastern's first library located in the YMCA through the last 25 years at Snell Library.

1920-1929
Northeastern’s Library began as an informal collection of 12,740 books in the Huntington Avenue YMCA. In the mid 1930’s, Myra White was appointed the first Northeastern librarian.

1952
Outgrowing the YMCA, the library moved into Dodge Hall. Opening day of Dodge Library took place May 26, 1952 and University President Carl S. Elii welcomed students to browse through collections in the new facility.

1988
Harvey ‘Chet’ Krentzman, E’49 (left), Chairman of Northeastern University’s $175 million capital campaign, University President Kenneth G. Ryder, and University Senior Vice President for Development Eugene M. Reppucci, Jr. E’60, MEd’65, reviewed plans for the future Library Resource Center — a new library to meet growing research needs on campus.

1990
The fall of 1990 saw the completion of the new building and its dedication; the Library Resource Center was named after George and Lorraine Snell to honor their $5,000,000 donation, the largest single alumni donation in Northeastern’s history at the time.

1990
A one-of-a-kind quilt was unveiled to honor faculty and staff who participated in the Campus Campaign. More than 900 employees contributed $1.4 million toward the construction of Snell Library.

1998
Under the University’s first archivist, Joan D. Krizack, University Archives and Special Collections received a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for the preservation of the history of Boston’s under-documented communities.

1998
In July, the first floor became open 24/7; these hours were adopted for all floors of the library in 2010.

2001
Cyber Café opened in September 2001 on the first floor and food and drink were allowed in the library.

2000
InfoCommons opened on the first floor, providing greater computing access on campus. The new space offered 123 Dell PCs, 30 Apple iMacs, 17-inch monitors, and high-speed internet service!

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2008
Dr. and Mrs. Eugene M. Reppucci, Jr. gave a generous contribution to establish the Alumni Reading Room on the first floor. Opening in the fall of 2010, their gift honored Dr. Reppucci’s late mother, Anna Reppucci.

2010
The Digital Media Commons (DMC) opened after a complete renovation to the second floor — addressing the need for greater access to educational technology and collaborative study space.

2012
Northeastern completed another round of renovations, updating the Hub, InfoCommons, the Help & Info Desk, and adding more group study rooms, a 3D Printing Studio, and audio and video studios.

2013
The Digital Scholarship Group formed to enhance digital research at Northeastern. Located in the new Digital Scholarship Commons, this group provides expertise on open access, digital repositories, text encoding, data curation, and publishing and preserving academic work.

2015
Thanks to the generosity of a Northeastern parent, Snell Library was able to reconfigure over 5,000 square feet on the third and fourth floors, increasing study space and adding 180 new seats along with tables and outlets.
Looking Forward
Snell Library in 2025

In 2025, Northeastern’s global reach will be more extensive, with students and faculty pursuing co-ops, research, and learning experiences all over the world, and the library must deliver its full array of resources in any location and at any time, giving scholars immediate, online access to our collections. We will expand our partnerships with institutions with rich collections in all parts of the globe, offering localized access to resources in any subject area. And we will recruit specialized subject librarians in emerging fields to be sure that we can fully assist in all disciplines.

Imagine business students taking advantage of yearlong co-op and formal learning experiences that take place in various countries. Our business librarians will be ready to work and study. As these scholars progress toward various countries. Our business librarians will be ready to work with library colleagues and researchers across the university.

In 2015, thanks to funding from the Boston Library Consortium, the Archives and Special Collections initiated a multi-archive scanning project to provide access to historical material related to Boston’s school desegregation efforts, and the resulting busing crisis. Soon, thousands of our scanned documents, photographs, and letters will become findable on our website and in the Digital Public Library of America. These materials will be online and available to anyone, for free, to be used for curriculum and research.

Over the next 10 years, we will continue to seek outside funding for digitization. By partnering with faculty from the Department of Information Design and the College of Computer Science, we will create virtual realities where students both at Northeastern and beyond its borders can experience history. Although a costly and time-sensitive process, digitizing primary source information changes the landscape of access to historical information and the ways in which we teach and learn.

Students of all ages will be able to visit historical periods and the ways in which we teach and learn. Students studying alone will choose a digital carrel where they can organize research materials across the carrel walls with simple hand gestures. Group work will occur in collaboration rooms (like those introduced in 2014) or in data observatories — where dozens of flat-panel displays cover the walls and can be controlled to display real-time data and media feeds.

The library will continue to be a place of creation — the studios will be augmented by larger state-of-the-art facilities with highly trained staff. Students will avail themselves of motion capture tools, for example, to create highly detailed characters for educational games. The library will continue to be a place of creation — the studios will be augmented by larger state-of-the-art facilities with highly trained staff. Students will avail themselves of motion capture tools, for example, to create highly detailed characters for educational games.

Students will also evolve to serve as the home for scholarly research initiatives. As a new mode of research that involves working with digitized data and media — digital scholarship is all about the future. Founded in 2014, the library’s Digital Scholarship Group is uncovering the vast potential digital initiatives have on our research and information sharing capabilities.

One recent project placed photographs from 1950-1975 from University Archives and Special Collections’ Freedom House collection on a map. Freedom House is a center of advocacy for Boston’s African American community, and played a critical role in urban renewal for Roxbury. Now by clicking on a point on a map, a user can see images of Roxbury over time, revealing the depth and diversity of community connections in the changing landscape of Boston.

Data visualizations, interactive maps, and visual archive exhibits such as these enable scholars to share new expressions of their research and discover new patterns and information. In the next 10 years, we will continue to draw on our own collections and find ways to draw on data and archival materials from other organizations. We already reach beyond the university to engage remote collaborators, and in the future those collaborators will be able to annotate and enhance our research materials and use the results in education, public policy, and local culture.

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Julia Flanders
Digital Scholarship Group Director and
Professor of the Practice of English

James Dendy
Head of Research and Instruction

Giordana Mecagni
University Archivist and Head of Special Collections

Patrick Yott
Associate Dean, Digital Strategies and Services

Transcripts of oral statements by members of the Snell Library Advisory Board:

In 2025, Snell Library will be all about working with unimaginable volumes of digital information — our primary collections will be cloud based, managed by your own library avatar. Instead of stacks of volumes, visitors to Snell will find an array of personal and collaborative space.

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In short, the Snell of 2025 will be much like the Snell of 2015, cutting-edge, forward-looking, nimble, and doing everything possible to meet present and anticipated needs.
What’s Your Favorite Library Memory?

Library friends shared memories on a poll at Snell’s 25th Birthday Celebration.

“Staying at Club Snell 10 hours a day for 2 weeks straight.”

“Met my wife here!”

“When I stayed in the library ’till 5AM and got a 100 on my exam the next day.”

“Pulling an all-nighter with my students as they worked on their final papers.”

Stay Connected

Northeastern University Libraries
@ClubSnell and @Snell_Research
@ClubSnell

Visit the library’s website at library.northeastern.edu