Steady Growth, Investment Raise Rankings of UA Libraries

First-class universities need strong libraries to power teaching and research, much as large steamships need big engines. As recent rankings show, The University of Alabama Libraries is growing in quality and support and is prepared to power academic pursuits at the Capstone in the 21st century.

Statistics compiled by the Association of Research Libraries show that University Libraries has risen in the rankings in several key areas, including investment and in overall criteria. Since 2003, University Libraries has moved from 97th to 56th among all criteria for the ARL’s member libraries, which include the top 115 private- and public-university libraries in the United States and Canada.

As for investment in libraries, UA has risen from 92nd to 76th overall and from 56st to 41st among public universities. In the Southern University Group, the ranking has risen from 18th to 15th.

Among the 68 U.S. public universities, UA Libraries has risen from 61st to 32nd since 2003. Among the 23 ARL members in the Southern University Group, including the University of Florida, University of North Carolina and University of Georgia UA’s ranking has risen from 21st to 12th.

“This recognition of our libraries reflects our commitment to providing the best academic and research materials for our students and our faculty,” said Dr. Judy Bonner, UA executive vice president and provost. “We are proud of the tremendous effort Dean (Louis A.) Pitschmann and all our librarians have made to improve the quality of our libraries.”

“The rise in investment stands as a key benchmark for the university,” says Pitschmann, UA dean of libraries.

“What these numbers represent is the University’s commitment to investing in a library that is commensurate with the quality of the teaching and research that is currently taking place at the University,” he says. “Without this level of funding, we could not put in place the type of library UA’s current programs and priorities require.”

The increase in rankings, for both investment and for overall criteria, represents the University’s efforts to improve access to materials for both students and faculty engaged in cutting-edge research. He notes that in 2003, University Libraries provided access to 23,000 periodicals for scholarly research; in 2011, the University community has access to more than 88,000 unique titles – almost all of them in electronic formats.

“An estimated 90 percent of the electronic information that one can access through the Internet needed for higher education is not free,” he says. “Libraries must license and purchase that material. Thanks to funding from the University and donors, we’ve been able to move the library to higher qualitative levels.”

As investment has increased, so has University Libraries’ commitment to augmenting the life of UA’s scholarly community, including undergraduates. The new Scout unified resource discovery interface from EBSCO, for example, allows students and faculty
While attending the Association of Research Libraries meeting last month, I had the opportunity to discuss with other library deans and university administrators their views on such diverse questions as:

- How is the quality of a library best defined?
- How should new priorities affect budget allocations?
- How might libraries best support knowledge creation and curation?

There was broad consensus that existing measures and past practices have limited applicability in assessing the quality of today’s libraries and that traditional budgetary priorities relating to space, resources, and staffing need to be reconceptualized. Many agreed that peer rankings alone are an increasingly inadequate measure of a library’s quality. Rather, the role a library plays in advancing institutional goals and a library’s impact on local values should be included in qualitative assessments. Or stated more precisely, the services and resources a library provides must serve the principal needs of its parent institution.

These beliefs and similar thinking expressed during the two-day ARL meeting confirmed that library priorities at the Capstone are indeed well aligned with guiding principles in place at the leading universities in the U.S. and Canada. Likewise, opportunities and challenges with which we in the University Libraries continue to grapple are the very issues that other university libraries confront daily: supporting e-science and digital humanities, enabling dynamic self-service options on-site and remotely, continuing to develop requisite print collections while building access to digital collections unimaginable only a few years ago, and dealing with the ubiquity of Google and social media and their roles in learning and scholarly communication.

Unlike the majority of our ARL counterparts, however, librarians at The University of Alabama are not confronted with the budget cuts, furloughs, or reduced buying power most other ARL institutions continue to experience in the current economy. Thanks to strong funding from the University and leadership from forward-looking librarians, the Libraries continue to make great strides in providing the latest print and digital publications, cutting-edge software to support students’ needs for design and data analysis, the latest computer supported finding aids and discovery tools, contemporary spaces for individual and group learning and research, and the resources necessary to collaborate with departments and programs across campus as well as with colleagues at the state, regional, and national levels.

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John Josey is a giver. He has spent a large part of his life in volunteer service to the University including the Libraries. In 1993, he was part of a group effort to start the first Library Leadership Board and has served on many levels including chair of the board.

At the Library Leadership Board meeting in September, Susan Tolbert, chair, announced Mr. Josey's retirement from the board after serving for 18 years.

“From the first encounter with John, I felt his passion and commitment to the University of Alabama,” explained Tolbert.

“John welcomed me to my first Library Leadership Board with sage advice. He told me we are charged to provide the best services for our students and faculty to ensure that we bring the best individuals to our campus. He filled my heart with a desire to give of myself to the University in any possible way. I will always stand in awe of John’s generosity and will continue to appreciate his wisdom.”

Always mindful of his commitment to education, Josey represented the libraries in several past fundraising campaigns. He also leads by example and in 1992 established along with his wife, Carolyn, the John H. and Carolyn Cobb Josey Endowment Fund for the University Libraries.

“John Josey has been a loyal supporter of the University of Alabama and his service to the University Libraries has been exemplary,” stated Louis A. Pitschmann, dean of Libraries. “His generosity will allow the libraries to continue to support the goals and mission of the University of Alabama and to help provide the resources necessary for generations of students to follow.”

In recognition of this gift, a plaque was placed at the foot of the Gorgas Library steps, Quad entrance, dedicating the Rotunda Plaza in honor of John and Carolyn (classes of 1950, and 1951, respectively). The plaza marks the original foundation of the Rotunda, which housed the first library of the University and was burned by Federal troops during the Civil War. The foundation symbolizes the link between the library’s past and its future.

In addition to their commitment to the Libraries, the Josseys established an endowed fund in athletics and contribute to Tide Pride, the President’s Cabinet Fund and the Never Should Have Made It Club. Mr. Josey was honored on his 80th birthday by his daughter, Jan Josey Ehrhardt and her husband, David, in the establishment of the John H. Josey Endowed Scholarship in the Honors College.

“John Josey is a great American and has played a substantial role in all aspects of our campus for the past fifty years”, stated Dr. Pamela H. Parker, vice-president for Advancement. “I am proud to know him and his entire family. They are great donors of not only their financial resources but also their time.”

From his days as a student to his years in volunteer service, John Josey has made a difference in his university. His examples of leadership with his business knowledge and life’s experiences, his time, and his generous gifts will ensure continued excellence of library and information services to the University of Alabama for future generations to come.

... Donna Adcock
director, Public Relations

“Message”
continued from page 2

In this issue of Library Horizons you will see examples of the diverse programs and resources the University Libraries’ faculty and staff continue to develop and provide to advance the University’s priorities and to achieve the goals set by President Witt. You will see that many traditional library roles continue to be supported while new roles and services defy old stereotypes. The current goals and priorities of the University Libraries are ambitious, but they are what a great university requires for its faculty and students to achieve success as defined by higher education today.
“Rankings” continued from page 1

to search for articles and information simultaneously among electronic resources and catalogs of printed materials.

Librarians also have sought to acquire access to materials undergraduates can use for class assignments and original research. The result: Staff members have not only improved the quantity of material available but also the quality of the collection.

“We’ve moved to a totally different qualitative level that would have been impossible without the funding increases we’ve received,” Pitschmann says. “This funding also has allowed us to hire more staff. We have a very strong and committed library faculty who are developing the collections and developing new forms of access to the electronic information.”

Membership in the Association of Research Libraries is based on meeting high standards for libraries in research institutions. In Alabama, UA and Auburn are the only two members of ARL.

Other members include Harvard, Yale, the University of Florida, Florida State University, the University of Tennessee, the University of Georgia and Louisiana State University. Membership in ARL is a strong indicator of UA’s strengthening position as a major U.S. research institution and benefits the University in several ways.

“Membership allows us to work with and collaborate with some of the largest and oldest research libraries in the United States and Canada, and it assures us that we stay current with trends and opportunities that will support the university’s teaching, research and outreach agenda,” Pitschmann says.

Pitschmann also says the rankings reflect the commitment of University President Dr. Robert E. Witt and Provost Dr. Judy Bonner to improving the quality of the University as a community of scholars.

“The fundamental goal of the University Libraries is to make quality library content available to our students, faculty and library patrons. Web Services has been working with EBSCO Publishing’s EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) to improve the efficiency and accessibility to all library resources. What that means for our users is a discovery application that puts over 90% of all our material (print, electronic, and digitized) within easy reach via a single search box.

The new application, made available in August, carries the Scout label but provides significantly improved functionality and meets new accessibility requirements. Patrons are now able to access in a single search the Libraries’ classic catalog, the digitized collections from Hoole Special Collections Library and fulltext content in most all of our electronic journals and databases. The core of the electronic resources comes from the EDS Base Index representing content from approximately 20,000 providers in addition to metadata from another 70,000 book publishers.

EBSCO Discovery Service creates a unified, customized index of an institution’s information resources, and an easy, yet powerful means of accessing all of that content from a single search box making searching made even more powerful because of the quality of metadata and depth and breadth of coverage.

EBSCO Publishing is the producer of EBSCOhost®, the world’s premier for-fee online research service, including full-text databases, subject indexes, point-of-care medical reference, historical digital archives, and eBooks.

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Discover Library Resources with Scout
A New Single Search

Richard LeComte, media relations, University of Alabama

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Jason Battles
head, Web Services
An unprecedented 112 authors, poets and illustrators spoke and met with their readers at the 2011 National Book Festival, sponsored by the Library of Congress. The event held Saturday, Sept. 24 and Sunday, Sept. 25 on the National Mall offered more authors and activities for young readers than ever before.

President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, the first lady, were the honorary chairs of the event. The distinguished benefactor of the event, David M. Rubenstein, co-chaired the National Book Festival Board with Dr. James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress.

The Alabama Center for the Book was represented at the Pavilion of the States tent. Posters, bookmarks and brochures providing information about our state’s writers and the Alabama Center for the Book were given to thousands of young people and adults. Each state along with the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories was represented.

In addition, a popular pavilion feature was “Discover Great Places Through Reading”. A free map of the United States was presented at each table for an appropriate state sticker or stamp. A reading list of 52 books for young people with recommendations from each state was located on the back of the map. Alabama’s selection this year was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Youngsters and adults alike were thrilled to receive a bright shiny silver sticker with a picture of a mockingbird.

Special visitors to the Alabama exhibit included D.C. tourists from Alabama, alumni from Alabama universities, former state residents, and prospective students to the University of Alabama.

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Donna Adcock
director, Public Relations
The Alabama Tourism Department calls 2011 “The Year of Alabama Music.” With concerts and other events throughout the state, it has been a true celebration of Alabama’s rich musical heritage. That celebration continues at W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, where the musical history of the state can be studied and celebrated in many ways. The exhibit, “Sounds Like Alabama: Alabama’s Contributions to American Popular Music from Hoole Library’s Collections,” is on display through May 2012 in the lobby of W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library.

The exhibit, curated by Jessica Lacher-Feldman with graduate student Jamie Burke, focuses on popular music with Alabama ties. The exhibit highlights a sampling of the collections in several different areas through the use of album covers, sheet music, photographs, and even Corollas, the University of Alabama yearbooks. Much of the material for the exhibit is from the Wade Hall Collection of Southern History and Culture, which is rich in materials on Southern music.

Sections of the exhibit focus upon sheet music with “Alabama” or cities in Alabama in the title; the “Muscle Shoals sound” of the “Swampers,” the legendary rhythm section that has backed up everyone from Aretha Franklin to the Rolling Stones; and a section on Tuscaloosa as a musical venue, where the campus of the University of Alabama has hosted musical acts from Julie London to the Who over the years.

To create a digital and interactive component, there are QR codes included in the exhibit. This allows visitors with smart phones to scan the codes and access music videos or songs on YouTube by some of the artists featured in the exhibit, including Alabama natives Martha Reeves, Sun Ra, and Tammy Wynette. In order to promote the exhibit and share with a broader audience, we used Twitter, which allows us to share interesting tidbits on songs written or performed by Alabama songwriters such as W.C. Handy, Nat “King” Cole, Billy Sherrill, and Sam Dees.

Hoole Library is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 am to 5 pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am until 9 pm.

You can follow us on Twitter @coolathoole and visit our blog, at http://coolathoole.blogspot.com/

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Jessica Lacher-Feldman
curator of Rare Books and Special Collection
Coming Full Circle: Hoole Library Welcomes Authors Back for Readings

There are few things more rewarding for archivists and special collections librarians than to see the fruits of the archives come to life in the published works of their library patrons. September and October of 2011 were especially exciting as Hoole Library welcomed back two of their favorite researchers to speak about their books.


On October 5, 2011, B.J. Hollars returned to Tuscaloosa to discuss and read from his book, *Thirteen Loops: Race, Violence, and the Last Lynching in America* (University of Alabama Press, 2011). Mr. Hollars spent a great deal of time in Hoole Library for this book, as well as a second book which will be out in 2012. Both evenings were very special, with the reading room set up as a lecture hall, full of fans, friends, and interested members of the university community and the Tuscaloosa community.

In addition to their research at Hoole Library, both authors have donated materials to the Library, including research notes, personal papers, and other materials. Hoole Library also now holds copies of the uncorrected page proofs for both of their books, which will be of interest to scholars and students. These events are excellent examples of the importance of connecting researchers with collections, and helping an encounter in the archives evolve to a finished scholarly or creative product. These books are the latest examples to come from the rich holdings of W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library.

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Jessica Lacher-Feldman
curator of Rare Books and Special Collection
Beth Holley and Wayne Rau have been named recipients of the 2011 Library Leadership Faculty and Staff Awards. Eleanor Streit, program chair of the University of Alabama Library Leadership Board, announced the winners at the Spring Library Forum meeting.

Holley, recipient of the Faculty Award, began her career with University Libraries twenty years ago and currently serves as head of Acquisitions. She has been an integral part in refocusing the work of her department to create a more efficient workflow in the fast paced environment of the 21st century research library.

Rau, winner of the Staff Award, is a digital media specialist with the Sanford Media Resource and Design Center (SMC) in Gorgas Library. He has been with UA Libraries almost ten years.

Rau was a part of the early development of the SMC and continues to make the SMC the premier facility on campus for students working in digital media through his service to University students from one-on-one tutoring sessions to group seminars, to video and audio production and distribution.

The recipients received a framed certificate and honorarium. Their names have been added to the Library Leadership plaque displayed in Gorgas Library.

The Library Leadership Board supports the University of Alabama Libraries in its mission to provide the best library and information services to the students and faculty of the University and to the state-wide community by serving as an advisory body to the Dean of Libraries.

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Donna Adcock
director, Public Relations
Clark Center Retires

Clark Center, university archivist and curator of Southern History and Life Collections in W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, retired in June after a long and interesting career with University Libraries.

Center graduated from Samford University in 1969, and holds an M.A. in history from Samford (1972) and an M.L.S. from the University of Alabama (1994). He is a long-time member of the Society of American Archivists, where he has held several positions in the Preservation Section and the Academy of Certified Archivists.

Center began his career as a microfilmer of historical newspapers at Samford University and has worked in various positions at the Hoole Library. Center joined UA Libraries in August of 1977 and except for a period of four years remained at the University for close to thirty years. His interests are varied and include Alabama history, the history of the University of Alabama Corps of Cadets, good fiction of all kinds, and good music of all kinds, especially American fiddle music.

When asked what he had been doing since his retirement he replied, “I have been collecting tools and I look forward to making things.”

Center’s UA career was celebrated in June with a retirement party, where he was presented a silver tray. Center and his wife, Cheryl, plan to retire in eastern Tennessee.

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Donna Adcock
director, Public Relations

DeRidder Graduates from Library of Congress Workshop

On September 23rd, 2011, Jody DeRidder, head, Digital Services, graduated from the Library of Congress’ first-ever workshop on teaching digital preservation. DeRidder was in the inaugural class of 24 professionals selected from around the nation and provided with a scholarship, accommodations, and transportation to Washington, D.C., for the four-day event.

The workshop was sponsored by the Library of Congress’ Digital Preservation Outreach and Education Program (DPOE), whose mission includes fostering national outreach and education to encourage individuals and organizations to actively preserve their digital content. Examples of materials that commonly need this specialized form of preservation include Web sites; emails; digital photos, music, and videos; and electronic records.

Many people mistakenly believe that digital resources will last forever, when in fact they have a shorter lifespan and are more fragile than paper-based resources. The September workshop was designed to produce a corps of trainers equipped to teach others in their home regions how to preserve digital materials. Thus, in the upcoming months, Deridder will be holding one or more events locally to teach digital preservation.

DPOE is committed to sharing high-quality digital preservation training across the nation, eventually making it available and affordable to virtually any interested organization or individual. For more information on DPOE, including its work with corporate, academic, and other partners, visit www.loc.gov/dpoe.

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Jody DeRidder
head, Digital Services
Like other members of the campus community, faculty and staff from the University Libraries pitched in to assist those in need after the devastating April tornadoes. Efforts included assisting our own staff and faculty who suffered losses, assisting at Temporary Emergency Services, at the Tuscaloosa City schools, delivering and donating materials and giving blood. A few of the many examples of acts of kindness are listed below.

Lindley Shedd, media center coordinator in the Sanford Media Center, became aware of an injured Tuscaloosa citizen named Tommy who lost everything in the storm and had no homeowners insurance. She reached out to members of the Libraries’ staff and faculty, as well as friends and family, to raise money and gather donations. Through her generosity, Tommy received new clothes, movies to keep him entertained as he recovers from multiple surgeries, and a new washing machine for the family.

The Tuscaloosa City Schools Donation Center was one site that received many donations of school supplies and materials that needed to be sorted and organized. Jill Grogg, electronic resources librarian, spent time assisting at the Center in part because Alberta Elementary students are temporarily placed at the Tuscaloosa Magnet School where her son attends school. Beth Holley, head of Acquisitions, spent several Saturdays at the warehouse set up by Temporary Emergency Services where she sorted clothes and other goods that came into the center to be distributed to those in need.

Dr. Millie Jackson, associate dean for Research & Instruction, coordinated with Dr. Elizabeth Aversa, then director of the School of Library & Information Services, and Dr. Laurie Bonnici, assistant professor in the School to organize Totes for Tuscaloosa. The need for tote bags to pack groceries and supplies was mentioned when Jackson and Tom Wilson, associate dean for Library Technology, were dropping off donations to United Way. Many staff and faculty in the Libraries and across campus donated tote bags from conferences and other events for the project. The SLIS faculty reached out to their colleagues across the country and received hundreds of tote bags in return.

Mangala Krishnamurthy, reference librarian at Rodgers Library, worked with the Alabama India Business Partnership and the Association of Physicians of India, SW Alabama Chapter, to raise over $20,000 for the Governor’s Emergency Tornado Relief Fund.

Wayne Rau, Sanford Media Center, reached out to help the four legged victims of the storms. Through his work with Alabama SPCA, he helped find homes for stranded cats and took in a few himself.

See “Doing Good” on next page
Many staff and faculty volunteered with events like Dress Up! Tuscaloosa and the Tuscaloosa Candlelight Vigil, with the Backpack Meals program for school children, at the Tuscaloosa Public Library, local relief shelters and with their churches and synagogues.

Volunteer efforts by the Libraries’ staff and faculty are not limited to tornado relief. For several years, the Libraries’ Staff Association has led the Toys for Tots drive at the holidays. Over the years the effort has collected thousands of toys for needy children. Retired staff member Karen Hoss chaired the drive for several years. This year Mary Ann Robbins, Government Documents, and Mattie Compton, Williams Collection, will co-chair Toys for Tots which kicks off on November 21. Toys will once again be collected at several places on campus.

Staff members frequently participate in walks which support causes they believe in. Last February a number of employees raised $1320 for the American Heart Association through the Heart Walk. Celeste Dill-Davis, OLT, Jason Battles, Web Services, Shawn Averkamp, Metadata librarian, Jessica Lacher-Feldman, curator of rare books, Hoole, Jill Grogg, electronic resources librarian, and Kim Colburn, former employee in Circulation formed a team to raise money for this effort. In September a team from Gorgas raised over $800 for the American Diabetes Association’s Step Out for Diabetes Walk. Dr. Millie Jackson, Beth Holley, Diane Cannon, Acquisitions, Patricia Ratkovich, Cataloging, Lindley Shedd, Brenda Lewis, OLT, Cheryl Smith, Business Office, and Mattie Compton participated. Many of them walked because they have been personally affected by diabetes in their families. Angela Wright, human resources officer, has participated in both the Step Out Walk and the Caring Days’ Alzheimer’s Walk.

Faculty and staff members can also be found performing music in the area’s nursing homes (Mary Alexander, metadata librarian and Karen Chapman, reference librarian, Bruno), working with the Books 2 Prisons Program (Barbara Brosier, Bruno and Mary Ann Robbins) and serving on boards (Dr. Millie Jackson, Tuscaloosa Morning Rotary President Elect and member of the Alabama/Mississippi American Diabetes Association Board).

These examples are only a few of the many ways our faculty and staff participate in the community beyond the libraries’ walls. As the holidays approach, many will be involved in coat drives, Angel Tree programs, and food drives. Thank you to our library team for volunteering time and financial support to make Tuscaloosa a better place to live. More than ever, you do make a difference.

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Dr. Mildred Jackson, associate dean for Research & Instruction  
Donna Adcock, director of Public Relations