

Polk Library Newsletter

Fall 2015

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After 19 years at Polk, Patrick Wilkinson is “checking out”

This New Year’s Eve, when he tunes in to Carson Daly and the ball drop on TV, Pat Wilkinson will have one more thing to celebrate: his retirement. After a nearly 40-year career in academia, Polk Library Director is “checking out.”

Under Wilkinson’s leadership, Polk moved from a 20th Century model of a university library to a thoroughly modern one through strategic and responsible changes and realignments. And while this model is continually evolving worldwide, Polk Library and its staff are in a great position, thanks to Wilkinson, to continue this trajectory.

Originally hired as an Assistant Director for Public Services in 1996, Wilkinson came to Oshkosh from the University of Vermont. Prior to UVM, he had worked at the University of Northern Iowa and Murray State. In 2001, Wilkinson was appointed Director after the then current head, John Berens, became the University’s Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology.

Often, in these pages, Polk’s contributions to campus are discussed in three realms: collections, services and place. During his tenure Wilkinson improved all three dramatically.

Collections:

Polk Library was the first of the UW System libraries to move to an all electronic journal collection in response to faculty and student preference for online access to these core academic resources. Wilkinson has positioned resources to support and grow Polk’s unique collections as well as to better leverage resource sharing opportunities to deaccession outdated and underutilized materials like Federal Documents.



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Services:

Continually evaluating vacant positions as each became available at the library, Wilkinson made strategic changes in the types of expertise needed to realize the library's goals. He transformed his staff from one that focused on physical collections to one that works to integrate digital access across multiple online platforms as well as one that provides instruction in core information literacy skills. While the total staff has decreased in size, its direct involvement with teaching and learning has never been greater.

Places:

Developing commitment from both students and the administration, Wilkinson was able to direct resources to the creation of study spaces in the building to support alternative ways of student learning, particularly group work. In Polk 101, the library took an outdated reference room that prioritized underused legacy collections and transformed it into a modern work environment optimized for collaboration and individual study. Prior to that project, Wilkinson oversaw the creation of the new UW Oshkosh Archives and Area Research Center, which provides the campus with a "humanities laboratory" where students work with unique primary source collections drawn from Wisconsin's unique 14 member Area Research Center network.

Beyond Polk Library, Wilkinson provided service to the campus through various search committees and campus wide task forces. Less seen by observers at UW Oshkosh, however, were Wilkinson's contributions to System, state and even international library efforts. He served as chair for both the Council of UW Libraries as well as the Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS). His presentations across the state illustrated the efforts at Polk and UW System in advancing library collections and services. In 2004, Wilkinson began his relationship with OCLC, the global library services company, known to many researchers for its WorldCat catalog. When OCLC reorganized its governance groups in the late 2000s, it appointed Wilkinson to serve as the initial chair for the Americas Regional Council. In doing so Wilkinson represented 22,000 libraries in North and South America.

Very few staff members at Polk know the library with another director in charge. Wilkinson served as mentor to a generation of current employees and his guidance will be missed. A search for Wilkinson's successor will begin soon.



5 SECOND RULE

just brush it off



3 DAY RULE

just be yourself



30 MINUTE RULE

just get some help already

Polk Library

THE RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RAP) HELPS STUDENTS GET A MOVE ON WITH THEIR RESEARCH THROUGH ONE-ON-ONE SESSIONS WITH LIBRARIANS. LOOK FOR THE  ON THE LIBRARY HOMEPAGE.

STAFFING CHANGES



In addition to the upcoming changes in the Director's office, Polk Library saw four departures of staff this past summer. While some vacancies were not refilled, others provided opportunities for strategic reconfigurations to further address current library priorities.

The first to retire from the library this summer was circulation & reserves assistant Mary Luebke, who left in late May. Mary's position was absorbed as part of the university's recent budget cuts. To compensate for this vacancy, remaining circulation library staff modified their own working hours to ensure coverage. Still, as a result, the library's closing hours Sunday through Thursday were trimmed an hour to 12 midnight. In addition, Polk's online reserve service, which was staffed by Luebke, also ended. Now Polk Library encourages and supports faculty to use D2L as their online reserve platform.

In June, Head of the Library Technology Services (LTS) unit, Maccabee Levine, left UW Oshkosh for a position at East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania (Levine's wife, Jody, had accepted a position at nearby Lehigh University). During his tenure, Levine was responsible for advancing Polk's technology services and developed a culture of experimentation and library integration with online services campuswide. Remaining staff in the department continue on this path, but Levine's managerial position was converted into an information literacy and distance education

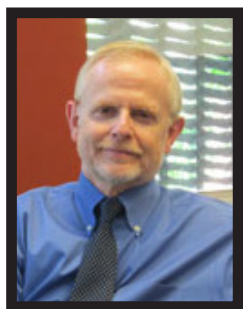
librarian position to help meet the great demand for Polk's teaching services. This position has recently been filled with a new librarian, Joe Pirillo, who is arriving in late October. Coordinating LTS now is Systems Librarian, Craig Thomas, who has joined the the Library's Coordinating Committee to represent the department.

In July, long-time library staff members Paulette Feld and Sara Stichert both retired. Like Mary's position, Paulette's was also eliminated. Paulette's desktop support responsibilities will be distributed between IT and library staff. Her other duties will be absorbed by others in the library. It will take some time to complete this process. Sara Stichert's ILL lead position was filled, however, with Laura Briskie, the former night supervisor at circulation. The change in ILL and circulation offered Polk the opportunity to better integrate all of Polk's "fulfilment" activities by combining both areas into a single department housed behind the circulation desk. Polk Library has already found some efficiencies in this new arrangement. Briskie's nighttime position was filled by a new hire, Paul Wellington (see page 8).

This newly combined department, now named Access Services, is administratively separate from other departments and is headed by Crystal Buss. In this capacity, Buss joins other department heads in the Library Coordinating Committee.

Letter from the Director: Community of the Workplace

by Patrick Wilkinson



As I approach retirement, I have been thinking a lot about the “community of the workplace.” A term I first heard when a supervisor of mine retired back in the late 1980s. It is an idea that intrigued me then and means more to me now. I am grateful to have worked in the community of Polk Library for the past 19 years.

Polk has not been a perfect workplace. We have had our issues, tensions, and problems like anywhere else. Yet at our best, we have been a staff of strong individuals who have worked toward the common goal of providing the best library services that we can to campus, our UWS partners and the general public. We have been able to discuss ideas, procedures and directions and make decisions to move forward. We have celebrated individual and group success and a good deal more.

There will be many things I will miss when I retire. I will miss working with students, faculty and staff across campus. I will forego contact with my professional colleagues in UWS, Wisconsin and librarians nationally and internationally. Frankly, the biggest loss will be not working in the community of Polk Library. The staff are good people who are professionally active and work hard to serve campus. I thank the staff of the library for giving me such a strong and supportive community.

Patrick J. Wilkinson

ALMA brings UW Libraries Together

One System, One Library has been UW System libraries aspirational mantra for several years and, this summer, the nearly 70 libraries of System took two major steps to further realize that goal.

First, as reported in these pages in the spring, for the first time all UW campuses are sharing a single “union catalog” that now describes what is together arguably one of the ten largest research collections in North America. The project took more than two years to tackle, with professionals working across System to normalize the data from so many locations. These individuals also put continued pressure on the system’s vendor, Ex Libris, to make important changes to the software to handle UW System’s unique needs. In using Alma, UW System joins Committee on Institutional Cooperation partners University of Minnesota and Purdue University.

Work currently continues to fine-tune the Alma-backed catalog and its discovery layer, Search@UW. Faculty, staff and students experiencing problems with their account or other issues (particularly in borrowing materials from UW partners or specifically borrowing multi-volume sets of books or media) are encouraged to contact the Polk Library circulation desk for assistance.

The second step completed this summer, was the standardization of numerous policies governing circulation and collection replacement across ALL UW System libraries. While not required by the move to Alma, these common policies help secure the continued cooperation of members. Faculty and staff are now limited to renewing books up to a two year maximum lending period. This is a break from the past when faculty and staff could renew books in perpetuity which, at times, resulted in lost materials and delayed access by other users. Another substantial change in System-wide policies is the increased flat replacement fee for lost or damaged materials to \$100. This policy has some flexibility built in however, allowing Polk to work with users to find the best price on identical materials when it is under \$100.

The further coming together of UW Libraries is already producing efficiencies and useful sharing of expertise across System. It is our continued hope that the One System, One Library approach will continue to help all of our users access and profit from our world-class shared collection and professional services.

Petri Papers Arrive at POLK

In May, the UW Oshkosh Archives and Area Research Center received over 150 boxes of records from the 35 year career of U.S. Congressman Thomas Petri. Once arranged and described, the collection will join the papers of William Steiger and John Race to document 50 years of leadership from Wisconsin's 6th District.

In 1979, Tom Petri of Fond du Lac, won a special election to fill the seat vacated after the surprising death of the 40-year-old Steiger. Like his predecessor, Petri was a moderate Republican of a vein common to northern states at the time. While both had their more conservative projects, Steiger also worked to better protect workers (he was one of the architects of OSHA) and the environment (as an author of the Clear Lakes Bill) and Petri supported stem cell research, numerous labor issues and had for 10 years sponsored legislation that would have provided federally funded, government-run health insurance programs. Thomas Petri worked particularly hard to support the nation's transportation infrastructure

and, late in his career, he developed a deep concern about the financial burdens of students completing higher education. His papers document these issues as well as Petri's relationship with the Ripon Society, an organization he helped create in 1965 as force resistant to reactionary influences within the Republican Party.

Preparing the records for research will take time. Currently, two interns, one each from the Departments of Political Science and History are reviewing and inventorying each folder of materials shipped from Petri's Washington and Fond du Lac offices. From these efforts an archival finding aid will be produced to assist researchers in locating information. The Archives' partners at the Wisconsin Historical Society are handling the digital record component of the collection. The archives hopes the collection will be available to researchers by the end of the spring semester.



Wisconsin Historical Society staff drop off the Thomas Petri papers to Polk Library.



Political Science intern, Susan Ritchie and History intern, Devin Venden work to organize and describe the many boxes of the collection.

ZOMBIES STRIKE!

We here at Polk have long believed that the library can help develop young brains, but can it also improve their flavor? For this we must ask the pack of zombies that took over the library on September 11th for our first ever, Humans vs. Zombies event. Organized by library staff and S.T.A.N.D (Students and Teachers Against the Not-quite Dead), the HvZ event replaced the retired Murder Mystery as Polk's welcome back weekend treat. While HvZ events have taken place in and around campus, this was the first time participants could play indoors.

From 9-10:30 PM, Polk Library went dark as an initial group

of nearly 100 humans scattered across the building in search of five different vials of chemicals that, when combined, create the zombie cure. It helped that these vials looked an awful lot like activated glow sticks. In pursuit of these would-be-saviors-of-humanity were zombies, who as everyone knows, wear orange arm bands instead of the humans' yellow ones. Humans defended themselves with soft "stun grenades" and if they failed and were tagged, were forced to join the undead legion.

Ultimately, a small party of humans survived long enough to acquire the ingredients for the cure.

Prizes and a trophy were given to both the human winners as well as to the zombie with the most "conversions." All participants left with some snacks and refreshments courtesy of the campus Pepsi Fund and the knowledge that the library actually has three floors. Based on the reaction, it is likely that come next fall, the zombie apocalypse will return to Polk Library.



Beyond bragging rights, Human Team Winners and the Most Effective Zombie left with a trophy and some free pizza certificates.

Good Semester / Bad Semester

Good Summer/Semester for:

...for staying in the know...as Polk staff began their Library Representative program to arrange visits to all departmental meetings twice a year. Last spring, library reps were able to meet with 70% of departments.

...being a toddler after Education Media Collection librarian, Stephen Katz, treated University Children's Center clients to a variety of story time hours over the summertime.

...never having to rewind again as the library began analysis and deselection of its entire VHS collection.

Bad Summer/Semester for:

...seeing the world in black and white after Polk 101 begins to offer color printing.

...looking at book art after Polk Library lends its Noah Purifoy sculpture "A Book Flown" to the Los Angeles County Art Museum for a long-term exhibit.



Staff Profile: Paul Wellington

Everything is Awesome! for Polk Library's new night supervisor and Lego savant, Paul Wellington. When he's not watching over Polk's Access Services department in the evenings, Paul can often be found exercising his architectural training while building complex Lego cityscapes. Wellington holds a Masters Degree in Architecture from UW Milwaukee and came to library work during his years there in a position at the Milwaukee Public Library. Wellington combined these activities into his thesis, *Agora of Knowledge: The Regeneration of the Library*. In his study, Wellington takes on an architect's intellectual challenge and consolidates three Detroit neighborhoods into a centralized 'town' whose daily life revolves around a library featuring makerspaces, a cafe, bookstore, several types of meeting rooms, auditorium, a great hall IN ADDITION TO traditional library spaces. Like the public Agora spaces of Ancient Greece, this new library becomes the gathering and social space for a revitalized community. Clearly bitten by the library bug, Wellington is considering continuing his education to become a library professional. For now, he is most happy when he is helping users who come to the circulation desk needing access or even reference assistance.

Do a Google Search for "Paul Wellington Lego" and you will see what the Adult Fans of Lego (AFOL) community has known for years: this guy can build. Recently, Wellington's model of the National Congress of Brazil was published in *The Lego Architect*, a new book by Tom Alphin. Wellington is also a frequent exhibitor during Brickworld Chicago, the biggest Lego convention in North America. Of course, it didn't take Paul long to see just how easy Polk Library's Miesian and Brutalist lines lend themselves to the Lego. Will we soon see a Lego Polk on display? If he knows what's good for him, we will.

STAFF NEWS

Crystal Buss, *Head of Access Services* and **Ron Hardy**, *Head of Collections and Technical Services* were named to UW System Shared Systems Expertise Groups due to their extensive knowledge of the Alma library service platform.

Erin McArthur, *Distance Education Librarian*, along with husband Mike, are the proud parents of a new baby boy, born October 12.

In addition, please see page 3 and above for other changes and additions to staff.



POLK BY THE NUMBERS

QuestionPoint

is a reference support service that allows Polk users to receive chat-based assistance to their library research questions AFTER Polk staff have left work for the day. Academic library professionals from schools as far away as University of Washington and Cornell and as close as Minnesota State and UW Milwaukee, field questions between 5:00PM and the early morning hours. In turn, Polk Librarians help those and other schools' users when their libraries are closed or otherwise unable to take questions. Instruction and Distance Education Librarian, Erin McArthur recently finished an analysis of the service during the 2014-2015 school year. Based on her report, Polk Library is considering tweaking home-grown chat service hours to ensure best service.

As for last year's chat questions...

71% came from on-campus
(not DE) students. 🏫

79% were asked
by undergrads 🧑

66%
were "research reference" in nature 📚

67% were received between
5pm and 10pm 🕒 🕒

Messages spike in number
in mid-late November and
mid-late April 🍗 🐰

Sunday is the most
popular day of the week
for questions ☀️



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Polk Library