

# Friendscript

## ‘I Belonged Here’

### Students reminisce about working in the Library

If you’ve spent time at a University of Illinois library, you know that, in addition to books and materials, the spaces are stocked with student workers.

At Illinois, the Library employs 300 or so student helpers at any time over the course of the academic year; nearly every library has at least one student employee. The slew of experiences these workers undergo—from simply checking patrons in to analyzing Chemical Abstracts—ranges from the mundane to the momentous.

A recent Library inquiry asked: “Did you work for the Library when you were a student at Illinois? We want to hear from you.”

And hear we did. Of the dozens of former employees who replied, here are five stories.

#### A Place Called Home

In June 1990, a lone **Anu Murphy** ’94 LAS, MS ’99 LAS, arrived in Champaign, Illinois, from India.

Not that Murphy, then 18, was totally unfamiliar with the University of Illinois campus. Her father had earned master’s and doctoral degrees at Illinois, and her mother had worked in the Asian Library (now the International and Area Studies Library). Anu was born during their time on campus, returning with them to India when she was a baby.

Regaled as a child with tales of the U, Murphy was determined to attend Illinois, too. To help their daughter adjust, Murphy’s parents got in touch with the same campus people who had helped them during their student days.

A member of the International Hospitality Committee opened her home to Murphy that summer, while a former library colleague of Murphy’s mother helped Murphy land a job at what is now the Social Sciences, Health, and Education Library. The position made her feel, “in a small way,” she said, “like I was an integral part of the University of Illinois community, and that I belonged here.”

“Somehow it felt like this was going to be my home,” said Murphy, now the associate director of

*continued on page 2*



Anu with her advisor, Professor Roy L. Schult, in May 1994



Anu with her son Ishan '22 ENG in May of last year

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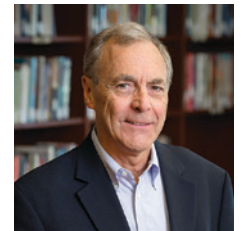
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**Friendscript** is a publication of the Office of Library Advancement, 1408 West Gregory Drive, Room 227, Urbana, IL 61801. Ideas and suggestions are always welcome and should be submitted to Heather Murphy at [hmurphy@illinois.edu](mailto:hmurphy@illinois.edu) or (217) 333-3758.

The Office of Library Advancement garners interest and secures external funds from Illinois alumni and friends, provides visibility for the Library through its programs and events, and promotes the Library within the Illinois campus and the community-at-large.

- ◆ **Kathryn Heise**  
Assistant Dean for Advancement  
[krh19@illinois.edu](mailto:krh19@illinois.edu)
- ◆ **Javonda Pelman**  
Director of Advancement  
[jpelman@illinois.edu](mailto:jpelman@illinois.edu)
- ◆ **Alyson Bell**  
Associate Director of Advancement for Stewardship and Donor Relations  
[afbell2@illinois.edu](mailto:afbell2@illinois.edu)
- ◆ **Vicki Sparks**  
Administrative Aide  
[vsparks@illinois.edu](mailto:vsparks@illinois.edu)

**EDITOR:** Heather Murphy, Chief Communications Officer

**DESIGN:** Studio 2D

**WRITER:** Beatrice Pavia/InkWell

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**'I Belonged Here,' continued from page 1**

**Anu's father, Somnath Datta, arrived in Urbana from Calcutta, India, in 1964 as a graduate student in Civil Engineering. He received his MS in civil engineering in 1966, then switched to a graduate degree program in physics. Somnath received his MS and PhD in physics, both from UIUC, in 1972. Anu's mother, Aloka Datta, joined him in 1965 and worked in the Asian Library between 1966-1971. This photo (right) appears in the 1972 Illio yearbook.**



NetMath in the UI Department of Mathematics, “not just the country, but this university. My experience at the Library really solidified that idea, and I never left.”

**FAVORITE EXPERIENCE:** The friendliness and generosity of her co-workers, including a gentleman who gave her his guitar upon learning Murphy loved to play.

**FAVORITE SENSORY MEMORY:** The combination of library aromas, including paper, wood, leather bindings, coffee, and copy toner.

**The Lawyer Librarian**

Follow this thread: **Jeffrey Sulenski** '71 LAS, MS '72 LIS, worked in the Undergraduate Library as an undergraduate and a graduate assistant, which inspired him to earn a master's degree in library and information science, which led him to working in the California State Law Library, which led him to want to go to law school, which made him realize he got accepted to UC-Berkeley School of Law partly on the basis that he was a librarian.



Despite every intention of eventually returning to the library world, Sulenski practiced law for two decades. Nonetheless, “I’ve always felt more like a librarian than a lawyer,” he said.

Sulenski learned to love books as a way to entertain himself as an Army brat, when his family was stationed in Germany. At Illinois, he was there for the move into the then-new Undergraduate Library, which he described as “an experience both in planning out where the collection would go and just for [the] thrill of going . . . into a spacious new library with all the latest equipment and furniture.”

“It was truly a fun and interesting time.”

**FAVORITE EXPERIENCE:** Tales of the never-caught ketchup culprit who skulked amongst library carrels. Girls who kicked off their shoes

while studying would find them filled with the wretched relish, even as they sat there.

**FAVORITE SENSORY MEMORY:** Moving to the brand-new Undergraduate Library filled with funky furniture and a fancy new study aide—carrels.

### Ready To Go

For **Alyssa Denneler**, MS '18 LIS, her graduate experience at the iSchool prepared her so well that she walked into a faculty position at the University of Indiana right after receiving her degree.

“It absolutely led me to the amazing job I have today,” said Denneler, who serves as a Scholars’ Common librarian at the Herman B Wells Library at IU-Bloomington. As a graduate assistant at Illinois, she worked in the Main Library at what was then called Research and Information Services, where she gained hands-on experience in instruction, reference, social media outreach, and more.

As an undergraduate anthropology major, Denneler had been looking for a graduate course of study which combined the excitement she derived from working with people with the satisfaction of helping with research. That search led her to the field of library and information science. “Just supporting our university community was really what I hope to do,” she said.

**FAVORITE EXPERIENCE:** A professor stepped in to cover Denneler’s desk when she was unexpectedly late to work at the Library. “They treated me like a colleague, and I appreciated . . . that we would just cover each other’s backs,” Denneler said.

**FAVORITE SENSORY MEMORY:** The Art Deco murals of the Four Hemispheres adorning the staircase ascending to the Main Library’s second floor.

### Speak To Me

As an undergraduate linguistics student, **Molly Banwart** '22 LAS loved studying historical languages, including Old Norse, Latin, and Hittite (yes, there is such a class on campus). As such languages are no longer spoken, “the only way that we have them preserved is through . . . the manuscripts that they’re in,” she said. “I was beyond excited I got to read and handle [similar items], along with other materials at the Library.”

Banwart says she got her dream undergraduate job at the Rare Book & Manuscript Library, a place that made her realize how much she loved the work environment of an academic library. The experience spurred her to apply to graduate school to pursue a career in archives and special collections.

“I feel incredibly lucky,” Banwart said, “that I was able to explore the hidden passion-turned-career of mine at the RBML.”



**FAVORITE EXPERIENCE:** RBML’s annual birthday celebration for Gwendolyn Brooks, including readings of her poetry and eating the poet’s famous orange cake.

**FAVORITE SENSORY MEMORY:** The occasional maple syrupy/cinnamon-like odor in RBML’s vault. While the aroma was pleasant, it signaled an increase in humidity that needed attention.

### Illinois Library Luminary

When **Linda C. Smith**, MS '72 LIS, came to the Midwest to pursue a degree in library and information science, it was just the start of an illustrious career.



Now the interim executive associate dean for the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois, Smith has spent nearly 50 years at the iSchool, first as a graduate student and later as a faculty member and administrator (with a short retirement in between). She is known for her innovation and mentorship, and as the key person behind creating the school’s renowned online master’s degree program in the late '90s. She has amassed numerous professional accolades, including being named an Illinois Library Luminary in 2019.

But in 1971, Smith was looking for real-life experience as she started her master’s studies. Aspiring to be a science librarian, she found work as an hourly assistant in the two-story Chemistry Library in Noyes Laboratory. With large-scale digitization an as-yet distant dream, Smith had to learn how to use Chemical Abstracts to help researchers locate material (with some journals going back to the 1800s).

Her time at Illinois coincided with the pioneering use of computers for information retrieval, which, as she observed, would have “tremendous impact on all aspects of librarianship.” Smith pursued further degrees in information and computer science, which poised her to embrace this new path that fundamentally changed the library field.

**FAVORITE EXPERIENCE:** A demonstration of AIM-TWX, an early online database that could be searched remotely.

**FAVORITE SENSORY MEMORY:** Being in the Main Stacks and discovering materials to use for school projects.

# Prom Named Interim Dean of Libraries

*Professor, archivist to serve in provisional role*

In December, **Christopher J. Prom** was appointed as the Interim Juanita J. and Robert E. Simpson Dean of Libraries and University Librarian (Designate), pending approval by the Board of Trustees.

“As the interim dean, I will collaborate with people from across campus to strengthen our already excellent services and programs,” Prom said. “I look forward to helping everyone welcome the permanent dean, whose appointment will be announced this spring.”

Prom took on these duties after the previous dean, John P. Wilkin, stepped down on November 30, 2022.

Prom currently serves as a professor in the University Library and in two administrative roles: Acting Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation—Humanities, Arts and Related Fields and Associate Dean for Digital Strategies—University Library. From 2000 to 2018, he served as Assistant University Archivist in the University of Illinois Archives.

No stranger to the University of Illinois, Prom came to the campus in the 1990s to pursue a doctorate in history, which he received in 2004. He recalls “practically living” in the stacks and the History Library (when it was on the fourth floor), and indeed, in one instance was so absorbed in his work that he was nearly locked inside when he missed the closing call.



As to his new role, Prom credits his colleagues for maintaining the excellence of the Library’s services. “More than anything, it’s our talented librarians and staff members—past and present—who have made the University of Illinois Library a world-class institution,” he said. “And the

Library’s many users inspire me through the innovative ways they use our collections.

“When I first passed through the Library doors in August 1994, I was in awe,” said Prom, who earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Marquette University. “I’d never seen a library of such size or quality. For that reason, and many more, I feel both humbled and honored to serve in this temporary role.”

*Editor’s Note: At press time, a new University Librarian and Dean of Libraries had not been announced. Look for an announcement in the spring/summer issue of Friendscript or, in the meantime, visit the Library’s website at [library.illinois.edu](http://library.illinois.edu) for the most up-to-date information.*

## Thank You

**The following donors have adopted these items previously featured in *Friendscript*:**

- ◆ **Wendy Applequist** for *Statement of the St. Paul & Chicago Railway Company* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Jonathan Buchbinder** for the Auralex Project 2 Roominator Kit (Music and Performing Arts Library) and *Map Showing the Eastern Portion of the Union Pacific Railroad and its Connections* (Map Library)
- ◆ **DeLysa Burnier and David Descutner** for a press pass to the World’s Columbian Exposition (Illinois History and Lincoln Collections)
- ◆ **Dorothy Buzzard** for *Correct Map of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Rail Road and its Principal Connecting Lines* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Paul Garcy** for *Map of The Old Reliable Hannibal and St. Joseph Short Line—Always On Time* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Deborah House** for *Oxford Encyclopedia of Inclusive and Special Education, 2021* (Social Sciences, Health, and Education Library)
- ◆ **Roscoe Jackson** for *Atlas Containing Maps of Chicago River, Illinois and its Branches* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Ann Kleimola** for *Miras—nasledie, Tatarstan—Krym: gorod Bolgar i izuchenie tatarskoi kul’tury v Tatarstane i Krymu v 1923-1929 godakh* in memory of Benjamin Uroff (International and Area Studies Library)
- ◆ **Philip Martin** for *[List of Military Preparations of the Army of the Russian Soviet Federation (Manchria)] [Japan], 1935* (Map Library)
- ◆ **Teresa Proctor** to help underwrite an annual speaker series (Literatures and Languages Library)
- ◆ **Daniel Shin** to help underwrite an annual speaker series (Literatures and Languages Library)
- ◆ **Marilyn Steenwyk** for *Map of the Lakes and Drives Adjacent to the Wisconsin Central Lines* in honor of Louis Steenwyk (Map Library)
- ◆ **Tom Strayer** for *Map of the Lakes and Drives Adjacent to the Wisconsin Central Lines* (Map Library)

# Library Is Looking For



**\$350 for *The Democracy! Suite***, Wynton Marsalis' newest work recorded live during the COVID-19 lockdown. The eight jazz arrangements by a major American composer speak to contemporary issues of race, justice, and democracy, and will augment underrepresented voices in the **Music and Performing Arts Library's** collection.

**\$625 for *Map of the Illinois, Iowa, & Minnesota Railway, Chicago Southern Ry., Southern Indiana Railway, and the Chicago, Indianapolis and Evansville R.R.*** (1907), a little-known depiction of rail lines in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin that were either actual, under construction, or proposed (and never built). The **Map Library** would like to own this item, with its hand-drawn, inked lines, of which no other copy exists.

**\$655 for *Map of Middle-Earth*** (First Trade Printing, 1970), drawn and embellished by Pauline Baynes in consultation with *The Lord of the Rings* author J.R.R. Tolkien himself! The only artist/illustrator/cartographer authorized to create a map of Tolkien's works during his lifetime, Baynes features the northwest portion of Middle-earth, where the trilogy takes place, while 10 insets portray key locations in the story. Members of the Fellowship of the Ring grace the top, while down below fume Gollum, Orcs, and other antagonists. This item could complement another well-known Baynes map of *Narnia* that the **Map Library** already holds.

**\$750 for *Radioactive Fall-Out Over Illinois: Our Entire State is Vulnerable*** (1954), a two-sided broadsheet preparing citizens in the event of nuclear attack. With its protection checklists, effects of wind direction, and messages from the governor and head of civil defense, the item speaks to the efforts taken to protect the populace during the height of the Cold War. No other known copy exists of this extremely rare item, which is of high interest to the **Map Library**.

**\$750 for *Reference Map: Prisoner of War and Internee Camps in the Far East*** (1945) showing Japanese-run camps for prisoners of war and Australian civilians during World War II. Produced by the Australian Red Cross Society, the item focuses on China, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Philippines and would complement maps of POW camps in Europe that the **Map Library** already holds from this time in history.

**\$950 for *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg: Osten [Four Years of World War: East]*** (1918), indicating how Germany advanced in the East over the course of World War I. Issued by Berlin just before the conflict's close, the propaganda piece includes three maps of the Eastern Front as well as calendars listing major battles. Requested by the **Map Library**, the item is part of a series of four; the only other copy of this segment is housed at the Bavarian State Library.

**\$1,200 for *שנת שתיים למדינת ישראל [Second Year of the State of Israel]*** (1950), a visually stunning celebration of the second anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. The map, written in Hebrew, indicates the nation's growth by including three different boundaries (pre-Israel Palestine, the 1947 "partition plan," and the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War). The striking border includes Russian Social Realist illustrations by the well-known artist Michael Kara, reflecting the centrality of socialism in Israel's early days. The **Map Library** is interested in this very rare piece.

**\$1,250 for *Middle Earth Inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien*** (1976), an item the **Map Library** considers essential for its collection of fantasy maps. A rare piece of fan art, the illustration features Middle-earth at the center, bordered by colorful images from *The Lord of the Rings*, including a hobbit, Gandalf, Smaug, Gollum, Frodo and Sam, and others. Quotations from the texts edge the top and bottom. The primary artist, Larry Janoff, died in late 2022.

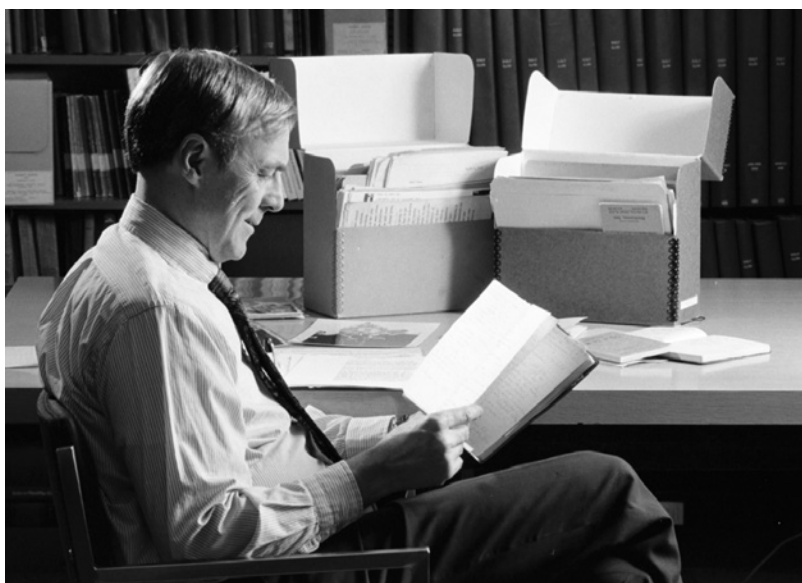
**\$5,000 to support the Image of Research Competitions** hosted by the **Scholarly Commons**. The annual multi-disciplinary event, open to graduate and undergraduate students, showcases images that represent the entrants' research in concrete or abstract form. This year is the 10th anniversary of the Image of Research. Contributions of any amount are welcome and would provide funding for cash prizes and reception costs. Please visit [blogs.illinois.edu/view/9030](https://blogs.illinois.edu/view/9030) to view stunning imagery from the 2022 Image of Research.

Find more Library Is Looking For items online at [library.illinois.edu/friends/library-is-looking-for](https://library.illinois.edu/friends/library-is-looking-for).

To fund one of these items or to ask for additional titles in an area of interest, call (217) 333-5682 or email [friends@library.illinois.edu](mailto:friends@library.illinois.edu).

# University Archivist Retires

*Maher touted as ‘champion of integrity’*



The man who devoted nearly half a century to preserving the history of the University of Illinois has closed his own chapter with the institution as he stepped down from the University Archives in December.

Longtime head archivist William J. Maher—known for his prodigious capacity for detail, his international reputation as a copyright expert, and his passion for grappling with the university’s heritage—retired December 31 after 45 years of service. Of Maher’s departure, Chancellor Robert J. Jones said, “I recognize that we are losing several encyclopedias of institutional knowledge and a champion of honesty and integrity.”

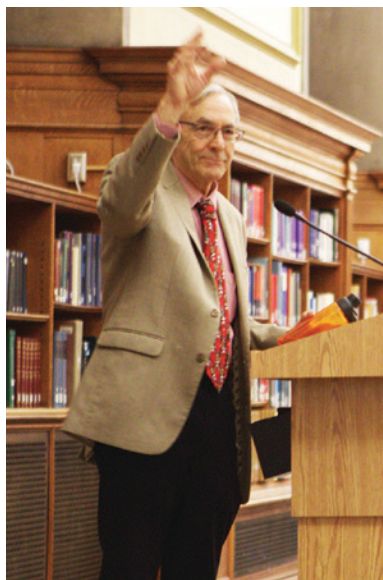
Maher, MS ’91 LIS, first arrived at Illinois in 1977, drawn to learn the archival trade from the campus’s esteemed first archivist, Maynard Brichford. “I couldn’t have done any better anywhere else,” said Maher, who earned degrees in history from Case Western University and Washington University. “I learned a tremendous amount from him, the way he approached history, and the job of the records keeping and the dedication to the institution.”

Upon becoming head archivist in 1995, Maher grew the scope, staff size, reference team, and professional stature of the unit, as well as upgraded its facilities to its current location on the Main Library’s first floor. But perhaps his most outstanding legacy is the tremendous effort he took to bring people to understand the importance of maintaining a record of an institution, as well as his firm commitment to creating an archive that acts as a “vibrant place of interchange” between staff and users.

“[Archives] are the authentic record of the past. And it is essential for society and institutions and individuals to be able to connect with the past so they understand their identities,” Maher said, “that they understand the culture in which they live and . . . that the Archives need to exist to provide accountability for the institution.”

To nurture his vision of dynamic use of the unit, Maher fostered a welcoming attitude on the part of his staff. “Bill has built an environment where you can be . . . a sixth-grade student without any research background, and you’ll be treated as respectfully and seriously as a scholar that’s been . . . globe hopping,” said Joanne Kaczmarek ’88 LAS, MS ’00 LIS, director of Records and Information Management Services. “Part of what Bill is known for is helping people understand [that] the relationships between information and . . . what sometimes might seemingly not be very significant” can be seen as significant when put in context.

Maher counts it “a great good fortune” that as a young professional he landed at Illinois, entrusted with safekeeping the history and heritage of a leading research institution. “[It] is a responsibility that I have been really privileged to have had,” he said.



**Bill Maher, who devoted 45 years to maintaining the University Archives, was feted at a December 9, 2022, celebration with friends and colleagues.**

In addition to his archival duties, Maher participated in the University Senates Conference and the Urbana-Champaign Senate, as well as national and international professional groups, including the World Intellectual Property Organization. In 2017 he received the Chancellor’s Medallion, the highest honor awarded by the Urbana-Champaign campus.

Kaczmarek will take over as interim archivist in January as a search committee is formed. Known for her innovation, collaboration, and flexible thinking, she has worked for the University Archives for more than two decades, focusing primarily on the shift from paper to electronic records.

# In Memoriam

## Benefactors Hallene, Wetzel to be missed

This fall saw the passing of two friends of the Library—Phyllis Hallene '51 LAS and Rebecca S. Wetzel, MS '69 LIS.

**Phyllis Hallene** and her late husband, Al '51 ENG, were well known for their generosity to myriad aspects of the University of Illinois campus, including student scholarship; research in engineering, as well as the arts and humanities; athletics; the restoration and installation of the Hallene Gateway, now a notable landmark on the campus's eastern edge; and the endowment of several chairs. In 2003 the couple established the **Alan M. and Phyllis W. Hallene Library Endowment Fund**, which provides unrestricted support for the Library and the acquisition of the 10-millionth volume (*Unlocking Our Past, Building Our Future*). Phyllis Hallene passed away in November.



After earning her master's degree in library and information science at the University of Illinois in 1969, **Becky Wetzel** enjoyed a long career in computer technology on the Urbana-Champaign campus. As an academic professional computer consultant, she specialized in the role that magnetic tapes played on the university's mainframe computer, and helped manage the student computer consulting service. In 2010, she and her late husband, John (Jack) Wetzel, a UI professor emeritus of mathematics, established the **John E. and Rebecca S. Wetzel Library Endowment** to "enhance and preserve the Mathematics Library's collections for scholarly endeavors and to enhance and preserve the Library's collections for scholarly endeavors." Rebecca Wetzel passed away in September.

Memorials to Hallene and Wetzel may be made to their respective endowments. Call (217) 333-5682 or visit [go.library.illinois.edu/gift](http://go.library.illinois.edu/gift).



We encourage you to visit the Library's online calendar at [go.library.illinois.edu/calendar](http://go.library.illinois.edu/calendar) for the most up-to-date information about events.



Annual gifts strengthen the Library and ensure its standing as one of the world's preeminent public university collections. We invite you to join this tradition of private support, which makes a critical difference in the quality of the Library's collections, programs, and services.

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Office of Advancement  
1408 W. Gregory Drive, Room 227  
Urbana, Illinois 61801  
(217) 333-5682

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## **8 FRIENDSCRIPT WINTER 2022-23**

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Demolition has begun on the interior of the now-closed Undergraduate Library (UGL). These efforts are preparing the building to house the University Library's archives and special collections. Furniture, shelving, carpet, ceiling tile, lighting, and piping have been removed. Shelving was donated to the Evans Public Library in Vandalia, Illinois; metal shelving that was not donated, almost 12,000 pounds, is being recycled. In fact, as much material in the UGL as possible is being repurposed or recycled. Read more at [library.illinois.edu/specialcollectionsbuilding](http://library.illinois.edu/specialcollectionsbuilding).

