

Spring 2011

## Portland State Library Update: News for Supporters and Friends; Spring 2011

Portland State University Library

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**Left:** Roberts became involved in public service as an advocate for handicapped children. She became an unpaid lobbyist in 1969, spurred by concerns for her autistic son, Mike Sanders. Mike and Barbara recently visited the Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room to identify images from her collection to use in her new book.

## Donor Spotlight: Governor Barbara Roberts

In the library world we often find that people are either “savers” or “spring cleaners.” Special Collections and University Archives depend on donations from generous “savers” to keep history alive and accessible to our current and future students, faculty and greater Northwest community.

Governor Barbara Roberts is one of those “savers” who generously donated her collection to the University Library as part of the *Oregon Political Leadership Archive*. Her collection includes personal papers, newspaper clippings, campaign materials, memorabilia, photographs, and public speeches from over 30 years of public life.

Barbara Roberts was elected the first woman Governor of the state of Oregon in 1990, serving from 1991 through 1995. Prior to her tenure as Governor, Barbara Roberts was a member of the Oregon House and was Oregon’s first female House Majority Leader from 1983 to 1984. She was elected the first Democratic female Secretary of State in 1984 and the first Democrat elected to the office in 110 years. She was reelected to that position in 1988.

Gov. Roberts carried the boxes of her collection with her on every move, 89 boxes total. She called them, “the boxes of my life.” After she laid out all the boxes she quickly realized she had a rich,

extensive collection and that it needed to be preserved and shared.

All 89 boxes are stored on-site at the University Library and prove invaluable to researchers and students. The collection supports the increased understanding of women’s roles in the worlds of politics and policy with the goal of developing the next generation of women leaders who will serve the city, state, region and nation. Gov. Roberts’s collection is heavily used and serves to greatly enhance what is already known about this great public figure.

For the last five and a half years, Gov. Roberts has been working on her second book *Up the Capitol Steps*, an autobiography to be published this fall. This book details much more of her personal life and her work as governor – it is filled with topics she found challenging and at times emotional to write. But, the end result is a truly inspiring account of her path from a small town girl to Governor of Oregon. Gov. Roberts was one of the first 10 women to be elected in her own right to the position of governor in the United States and hers will be the second gubernatorial memoir published from this elite group of groundbreaking women.

Governor Roberts chose to donate her materials to PSU because “it felt like home.”



## Portland State University Library: Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning and Research Support

The Portland State University Library is at the heart of the Portland State community, and is committed to providing excellence and innovation in research, teaching, and learning support. Along with its diverse collection of information resources, the University Library offers special collections and archives that feature unique materials of regional and scholarly interest; produces an extensive array of user-centered information services; and delivers a strong instruction program dedicated to improving students’ academic success. Located in an iconic building in the beautiful South Park Blocks, the Portland State University Library serves the largest student body in the Oregon University System, providing collaborative study spaces and technology-enabled environments designed to enhance students’ learning experiences.

### Upcoming Library Event

**May 12** **Lincoln Hall, Room 75, 7pm**  
Professor Scott Burns and Professor Marjorie Burns will present on the second edition of their book, *Cataclysms on the Columbia*. Book signing and light refreshments after the lecture.

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# Portland State Library Update

news for supporters and friends

Spring 2011



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### from the Interim University Librarian

Many of us in higher education are facing daunting challenges, with some of these challenges created by shifting economic, social, and technological conditions. We at the Portland State Library have worked hard to turn these challenges into exciting opportunities for collaborative improvements and innovation, focusing on the unique resources and services that Portland State students, faculty, and staff need to succeed. I believe this ingenuity and dedication are what make PSU unique and have helped our University evolve from its beginnings as the Vanport Extension Center to the internationally recognized urban campus we know today.

The University Library is evolving, too, to address rapid technological changes and new forms of research and scholarly communication. Core to this evolution is a continuing commitment to provide exemplary library resources, services and instruction. It’s a tall, exciting order and we

try to exceed our users’ expectations every day. Our Library Research Center is abuzz with learning activities, our computer labs are the most heavily used across the campus, and there is rarely an empty seat in our group study rooms. It’s an exciting time to be here at the Library and to be part of this vibrant urban campus as it grows.

Our donors have supported many initiatives through gifts to the Library Fund. With your help, we have been able to maximize student access to information by increasing our online holdings and expanding access to unique campus resources and scholarly materials. Our librarians and technologists have developed custom searching tools and dynamic research guides to help students navigate an increasingly complex digital world. There are many opportunities to support this great campus here at the University Library, and I invite you to contact us to get to know the Library more.

*Thank you for your support of the University Library. -Adriene Lim*

## Focus on Service: University Library Technologies

Just over a decade ago, Portland State University Library was coming to grips with the effects of technological revolutions that were fundamentally altering library services. The most significant was the impact of the World Wide Web on scholarly communication. Within just a few years,

research, writing, and technology support to students. Throughout the Library there are also group study rooms where students can take advantage of a number of technologies to support their studies, including computers, projectors, and video recorders for practicing presentations.



the Library's efforts shifted towards the provision of online resources and services, and the staffing and infrastructure changes necessary to accomplish these new projects.

Today the Library continues to grapple with the same challenges and opportunities, but with a whole new set of technological tools. To meet the diverse needs of its patrons, the PSU Library's technology infrastructure has grown to encompass everything from desktop computers to custom-developed web applications. Effective and innovative use of technology has enabled the Library to offer an interactive, resource-rich experience to patrons, whether in-person or online.

The Library building offers an increasingly technology-rich environment. The 1st floor and 2nd floors contain dedicated computer labs that offer computers, scanners, and printers alongside service points where Library and Technology staff collaborate to provide

With each passing year, the Library's dedication to innovative technology enables it to play a dynamic role for the university's changing needs. As the student population continues to increase, as greater numbers of students move to online courses, and as technology becomes increasingly embedded in the curriculum, the Library's technology needs will also evolve into even greater needs.

It's impossible to predict how the Library will be using technology fifteen, ten, or even five years from now. But what we can safely predict is that technology will continue to be a key factor in shaping the Library's future.

The Library's online environment provides patrons with a complementary experience through its extensive and fruitful use of technology.

Access includes:

- 300 searchable databases
- 60,000 electronic journals
- 20,000 electronic books
- An online system to reserve group study rooms

## Focus on Librarianship: Professor Sharon Elteto

Associate Professor Sharon Elteto retired from the Library in Fall Term 2010, after 32 years of dedicated service to Portland State. There were many changes that occurred in the Library during her career, but one thing remains the same: Sharon's passion for making a difference in the lives of all students she encounters.

Sharon joined the Portland State Library as a part-time Clerical Assistant in 1978 and was hired as Instruction Librarian in 1997, after completing her Master of Library Science degree. Sharon fell in love with libraries at an early age, as she explains, "I wondered if the books changed once they were 'branded' by this or that category. As I grew older, I questioned if thought itself could become caught in predetermined patterns, forever beholden to imposed systems... Those were my rebellious years."

Sharon firmly believes in the importance of teaching students about fundamental research practices. During her tenure, teaching the "Basic Library Skills" class granted her the opportunity to watch students mature in their understanding of the organization of knowledge, and to witness their emerging skills in manipulating the scholarship produced by the academic world. As the students thrived, she thrived; a true sign of every great teacher.

An alumna of Portland State, Sharon developed close ties with the English department and relished the opportunity to serve as the English Librarian. She worked closely with faculty teaching "Critical Approaches to Literature," the undergraduate requirement for English majors, stressing the need for research competencies to preserve the integrity of scholarship. She also worked closely with Writing faculty who adopted research competencies as a program goal.

When asked about the highlights of her career, she responds, "Of course, having been granted tenure was an enormous milestone, but what primarily emerges are snippets, an odd assortment of images



and memories, such as an English major thanking me for recommending a book that helped her win a prestigious writing award; or a student emailing a message to me to say 'you have an incredible gift to genuinely care about your students and to calm a room of dizziness.'"

On receiving the Butler Award for Excellence in Library Service in 2002, Sharon was proud, but she was more gratified to learn that she had been nominated and supported by many others throughout the University.

As the saying goes, "old librarians don't die, they just get re-shelved." Sharon continues to work on a book project with Portland State's Fine and Performing Arts Librarian, Associate Professor Kris Kern. The project will result in a full history of the Portland State University Library, and will be yet another legacy left by Sharon for the entire community. We are honored to have had Sharon as a colleague and friend these many years and thank her for her many contributions to the Library and the campus.

Left: As a collection developer for English, Sharon maintained a high-quality collection and was a staunch advocate for the necessity of maintaining a strong book collection for the humanities.

“Humor was my steadfast teaching partner: I will always remember the laughter I evoked when asking a classroom filled with freshmen who else played World of Warcraft. Telling them we were on another quest: an instant barrier breaker.”



## Focus on Collections: Oregon Political Leadership Archive

The University Library, the Center for Women, Politics & Policy, the Department of History and the Black Studies Department have partnered to build a growing archive of political papers from Oregon's trailblazing women leaders. The Oregon Political Leadership Archive is part of Portland State Library's Special Collections and includes approximately 162 boxes of primary documents and original materials, representing items from six important women in Oregon's political history.

The Archive includes the papers of Eleanor Davis, Hon. Avel Gordly, Hon. Gretchen Kafoury, Hon. Vera Katz, Hon. Barbara Roberts, and Hon. Betty Roberts. The materials within this collection hold particular cultural and historical significance, as these women represent some of the first to hold elected office at the state and national level. By generously donating materials, these elected women hope to allow current and future generations access to papers and other documents from an important time in Oregon's history.

Our students and faculty are constantly seeking access to primary documents reflecting the dynamics of implementing, managing, and effecting change within our

neighborhoods and cities. While many administrative documents reside in the region's government repositories, Portland State's holdings provide a unique and important supplement, bringing a kind of historical insight that can only be drawn from the personal reflections, photographs, annotated copies, correspondence, notes, reports and memorabilia that are retained in an individual's papers and are often lacking from the official public record.

What makes the Archive special is that it will provide a new lens with which to view the creation of public policy, rounding out the official record and the media narrative with the many details and complexities of how policy gets made. In the Archive you might find a printed document with the margin notes of the elected official's personal thoughts, a note for them to call someone to follow up on an issue, or drafts of speeches illustrating the development of ideas. These primary materials and the unique insights they share are a rich resource for original and new research. Seeing handwritten letters from constituents, thank you notes with personal photos or artwork or newspaper clippings saved creates a visual texture to the archive – a powerful experience for students and researchers.

Left: Hon. Betty Roberts with Hon. Jean Lewis and Hon. Helen Frye, 1982

Betty Roberts Papers, Special Collections, Portland State University Library

This one-of-a-kind archive provides access to the decision-making and intellectual development of our public officials and teaches us how their thinking evolved over time, bringing the complete story of political life in Oregon to life.