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JAMES WHITE LIBRARY CELEBRATES THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY



By Margaret Adeogun

Dr. Meredith Jones Gray presenting during Alumni Weekend

The 85th anniversary of the James White Library and the current building's 60th are significant achievements and milestones for the Andrews University community and the Seventh-day Adventist higher education system. The celebration was planned to coincide with the Alumni Homecoming Weekend of Sept. 22 – 25, 2022, to get alums involved and reminisce about their experiences in the James White Library (JWL). The celebration offered alums the opportunity to market the library

among their social and professional networks, spreading the word about the library and making connections that can lead to lasting friendships and support for the library. The library anniversary committee organized programs to celebrate its extensive past and exciting future through events that captured the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community. One such program was the invitation of a guest speaker, Dr. Meredith Jones Gray, a prolific writer, and

researcher of Andrews University history. Her research activities demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the library timeline development.

The opening event was on Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, when Dr. Meredith Jones Gray, Professor of English, and author of *“As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College,”* presented her historical research on ***The James White Library: A History***, at the library's gallery. In the presence of

campus community members, friends, patrons, retired and current library staff, and leaders of Adventist education, Dr. Gray presented an exposé of the evolution of the James White Library. Her compelling description of the library's development using graphics, photographs of the construction, library floor plans, photographs of patrons, students, and workers of all ages from 1937 to the present evoked joyful memories of the past and how the Lord led the library to its present time. It was a reminiscing time, especially for those who witnessed the early days of library services and the development of its resources. This presentation will be included in a forthcoming book on the story of Andrews University that follows her previous work.

The event's venue was memory-provoking: The professionally crafted historical timeline exhibits in the gallery highlighted photographs, milestones, pioneering library staff, and founders of the



Dr. Meredith Jones Gray presenting during Alumni Weekend

institution, all communicating values and memorializing the library's history. All the eye-catching and thought-provoking wall graphics complemented Dr. Gray's presentation, heightened the occasion's significance, and reminded participants that God is faithful.

The reception that followed the presentation allowed a time for more recollections, as the alums, retired library staff, and current students and employees shared their memories of the library. A few even recalled the library's beginnings in the current building, of moving loads of books in carts from the old library to the new

one, and how impressed they were with the size of the building at the time.

The library anniversary committee is organizing more programs for the spring semester to celebrate its achievements and exciting future through events that capture the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community.

The Stafford Collection

This celebration also showcased the Stafford Collection, recently acquired from the Atlantic Union College. Thus, on the Sabbath, Sept. 24, 2022, the library organized a guided tour for alums, guests, and campus community members to explore the James White Library and browse the Stafford Collection. The Stafford Collection comprises approximately 1400 works of literature, previously housed at Atlantic Union College's G. Eric Jones Library. Some American poets, A.R. Ammons, Langston Hughes, and Carlos Williams, and British poets, W.H. Auden, Gerard Manley, and William Butler Yeats, are featured. The poets' works (some signed editions), biographies, criticisms, theses, dissertations, bibliographies,



Dean Paulette Johnson presenting Dr. Meredith Jones with flowers

and other reference sources make up this unique collection. The collection is named in honor of the late Dr. Otilie Frank Stafford (1921-2006), a distinguished professor of English who served at Atlantic Union College for fifty years. The collection focused on twentieth-century American and British poets and was established on Apr. 21, 1991. Dr. Stafford's husband of 58 years, Homer Stafford, and friends of the Stafford's contributed financially to the growth of this special collection that memorializes her exceptional teaching and outstanding leadership over five decades at Atlantic Union College. The JWL is fortunate to inherit this highly valuable and rare collection. Its addition to other special collections will enhance students' learning experience and boost the teaching, learning, and research activities of the Andrews University teaching and learning community.

A brief History of the James White Library

In 1937, the first brick academic building on the Andrews University campus was erected to house the James White Memorial Library (JWML). Previously housed in the Administration Building of the then Emmanuel Missionary College for some thirty years, this library collection had grown and expanded from its small start in Battle Creek College. By 1956, the JWML had outgrown its facility. Designed to accommodate some 30,000 books, it housed 50,000! When students left for summer breaks, books were stacked on the floor, in the hallways, and overflowed into staff offices, wherever there was space.

A new facility was built in 1962, and its 45,000 square feet were intended to house up to 280,000 volumes. Construction of an additional section was completed in 1976. Today, the extension houses most book stacks, while the older part holds most of the administrative offices, doctoral carrels, and reference areas. When the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary moved from Washington, D.C., to Berrien Springs in 1962, the James White Memorial Library merged with the Theological Seminary collection. It was reborn as the James White Library.

In 1992, the card catalog was replaced by the online computer catalog called JeWeL. Books were barcoded then, making circulation and inventory functions much easier. Several renovations were completed, including the Center for Adventist Research (CAR, 2000), the Lobby (2010), and the Multimedia Center (2012). Also, compact shelving was installed for the University Archives housed in CAR.

During the last decade, investments in information technology and James White Library digital initiatives have advanced Andrews University's knowledge creation and discovery. For example, the Digital Commons @ Andrews University (2015) hosts publications by Andrews University faculty and students, making Andrews University scholarship accessible



Part of JWL Timeline Display

globally. To date, it has over 5 million downloads worldwide. The integrated Discovery platform (2020) simplifies searching for resources, and the chat reference service provides ready communication between patrons and library personnel.

Future plans include a library renovation that would provide varied modern spaces for current and emerging library services. The James White Library is a jewel of Andrews University, where global scholars are made. We invite you to make it your home away from home.

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