Unveiling the Three-Millionth

On October 3, 2009 the library community celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Vernon R. Alden Library and unveiled its three-millionth addition—a panoramic photograph by Ohio University alumnus, Thomas Schiff. This commemorative edition highlights that event.

In North America there are...

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<th>Libraries</th>
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<td>220</td>
<td>one million</td>
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<td>106</td>
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<td>three million</td>
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the Vernon R. Alden Library is now the 64th
“Selecting a millionth addition presents something of a challenge. It should point to the future, reflect our past, make a recognizable connection to our campus, challenge assumptions, be visually engaging, intellectually compelling, pique our curiosity, be universally accessible, offer new perspectives, and even encourage discovery. We think we’ve achieved all those criteria. The image created and gifted by alumnus Thomas Schiff speaks to the depth and talent of our graduates.”

Dean Scott Seaman
Remarks from...

President Roderick McDavis

Treasures of old were the focus for Ohio University’s Vernon R. Alden Library’s 40th Anniversary Celebration, but the spotlight of the October 3, 2009 evening was its newest treasure, Vernon R. Alden Library, Panoramic Photograph. President Emeritus Vernon Alden and President Roderick McDavis made remarks during the formal unveiling of the three-millionth addition to the Ohio University Libraries. Here is an excerpt from President McDavis’ speech.

“I am very honored to be with you this evening to mark this important milestone in the history of our libraries and Ohio University. This occasion is just one in a series of noteworthy events for our libraries.
Vernon R. Alden (left), 15th president of Ohio University, acknowledges Thomas R. Schiff’s (right) gift, *Vernon R. Alden Library, Panoramic Photograph*, which had just been unveiled. The reflected image is Ohio University President Roderick J. McDavis.
beginning in 1830. Our library was one of the first in the Northwest Territory with what was then—an astonishing 3,000 books in its collection. At that time, the library was housed in a corner room of Cutler Hall—the first college building in the Northwest Territory.

Traditionally, when academic libraries reach their million-volume mark, they celebrate the occasion with an acquisition of a special item. In 1979, by happy coincidence, Ohio University Libraries proudly acquired during the celebration of Ohio University’s 175th Anniversary, its millionth volume—a rare thirteenth century illuminated Bible manuscript. The gift was a generous donation by Carr and Hazel Liggett, distinguished alumni and frequent donors to the library. The Bible was accepted at that time by President Emeritus Charles Ping and now is displayed in the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center on the fifth floor.

In 1995, just a mere 16 years after our first millionth volume, my predecessor, President Emeritus Robert Glidden, accepted a copy of *John C. Baker: An Oral History* published by the Ohio University Libraries as the libraries’ second-millionth volume. These milestones represent the library’s progress in depth, breadth, and maturity. And both milestones were attained under the leadership of one library dean, Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee, whom we are honored to have with us this evening.

So we are here once again, to shine a spotlight on our collections and mark the occasion with a non-traditional gift that was generously created and donated by Thomas R. Schiff, a 1970 graduate of Ohio University.

Many of you here this evening have supported the library for many years, and because of you, our library’s collections have been propelled from modest to great. This three-millionth addition symbolizes your faith in Ohio University and the belief that this great institution is tied to its library—the heart of the University.

Mr. Schiff, on behalf of Ohio University, I thank you for this magnificent portrait of the Vernon R. Alden Library; we are very proud to accept it as our three-millionth addition.”
On October 3, 2009, the Vernon R. Alden Library celebrated its 40th Anniversary during its Passport to Hidden Treasures event. The gala was marked by the unveiling of the three-millionth addition, a panoramic photo by Ohio University alumnus Thomas Schiff, and the uncovering of rarely seen hidden treasures from the vaults in special collections. These treasures included discovering rare books such as a 13th century Bible, journeying through the Yao Ceremonial Artifacts collection, cruising the E.W. Scripps and Cornelius Ryan collections and the Alwin Nikolais & Murray Louis Dance collection, perusing diverse photographs from Ohio University alumni, and exploring cultures from around the world.

Remarks from...

Executive Vice President and Provost, Pam Benoit

Provost Pam Benoit shares a laugh with Anita James and Edward Baum at the 40th anniversary celebration.
Ohio University’s Executive Vice President and Provost, Pam Benoit, was one of the speakers during the formal dedication of the library. Here is an excerpt from her speech.

“Nowhere does the old blend with the new quite so seamlessly as in a library. For nearly two hundred years, our library has been the proud custodian of unique treasures, while more recently adding thousands of electronic resources to our collections annually.

In the forty years since this building was dedicated, the print collections have grown six-fold to three million volumes. Our journal subscriptions, government documents, manuscripts, rare books, art and international collections have more than tripled. And, on the strength of those collections, the Vernon R. Alden Library is now recognized as one of the top research libraries in North America. It’s an extraordinary achievement made possible by several generations of librarians, faculty, administrators, staff and donors.

But in those same forty years, libraries have undergone more change than in the past 300 years. We have moved from a print world in which information was scarce, highly organized, and tightly controlled, to a networked world in which information is ubiquitous, highly disorganized, and widely available. Most scholarship is now “born digital” and many faculty and students prefer using library materials electronically rather than the print equivalents.

Alden Library has always embraced information technologies. The library now owns hundreds of thousands of electronic resources that students, faculty, and staff can access from any place and at any time.

Book collections remain important but electronic journals and online databases now comprise over half our acquisitions. Librarians still staff the reference desk but, increasingly, questions come electronically and nearly a quarter of our questions arrive by instant messaging.

Quiet study spaces remain in Alden Library but our most heavily used areas are those that integrate network access and collaborative workspace.

So if you’ve ever wondered if students still come to the library in this age of digital information, you can be assured that this is a very busy building. Alden Library averages nearly 6,400 entrances daily when the term is in session. That’s over 2 million entrances last year! In fact, library traffic has increased by 73% in the last five years.
Our students come to the library knowing that if they encounter a barrier, librarians can show them how to find online resources or just the right book.

We offer technology-enabled work space and a technical staff who will immediately trouble-shoot any computer problems that arise.

In addition to reference expertise and technological assistance, we also partner with our colleagues in the Student Writing Center to help students master what remains one of the most important skills for any college graduate.

That our Learning Commons is open and staffed 24 hours a day may surprise some of our alumni, but late-night work is now a fact of student life. In fact, one of our peak usage times is at 2:00 a.m.

There’s some irony in this age of ubiquitous networked information that Alden Library remains one of the most used buildings on campus. That our library maintains its centrality to the academic mission is a testament to its enduring value as a premier learning environment as well as a tribute to the creativity and dedication of its staff.

The crowd at Alden Library’s “Passport to Hidden Treasures,” a special event celebrating Alden Library’s 40th anniversary. At the event, on October 3, 2009, the library’s three-millionth addition, a panoramic photograph by alumnus Thomas R. Schiff, was unveiled.
From left to right: Thomas R. Schiff, honored photographer, Presidents Emeriti Vernon R. Alden and Charles J. Ping, and President Roderick McDavis. The group enjoys a humorous moment in front of the three-millionth addition, hanging on the fourth floor of the library.
A Passion for Photography: Thomas Schiff

By Kate Mason

Ohio University Libraries’ latest treasure is the Vernon R. Alden Library, Panoramic Photograph, a gift from Thomas Schiff, a lifelong Cincinnatian and a 1970 graduate of Ohio University.

Tom’s passion for photography began as a young boy with his first Kodak Brownie camera. His zeal for taking photographs continued throughout his undergraduate years at Ohio University. Even while majoring in business, he sought out ways to satisfy his avocation by enrolling in photography classes taught by Arnold Gassen, Clarence White Jr. and others.

In the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, his early black-and-white prints found homes in the permanent collections of the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Milwaukee Center for Photography, the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Since then, Tom’s quest for discovering new camera techniques has led to his procurement of a Hulcherama 360, a camera that takes photographs by capturing a 360-degree range of vision—in essence, a snapshot of everything that surrounds the subject.

He is currently photographing sites for upcoming works on American architecture and the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright. Four books of his distinctive photography have been published, including Panoramic Ohio and Vegas 360. These images are widely held in institutions across the country, including Ohio University’s Kennedy Museum.

We are proud to now include his extraordinary work, Vernon R. Alden Library, Panoramic Photograph, as the three-millionth addition to the Ohio University Libraries’ collection.

By Kate Mason
1905
Carnegie Library (now Scripps Hall) opens for university and Athens community.

1931
Edwin Watts Chubb Library opens with approximately 75,000 volumes.

1969
Vernon R. Alden Library opens with some 550,000 volumes.

1979
In conjunction with the celebration of Ohio University’s 175th year, the Libraries acquire a 13th century Biblia Latina which is officially designated as the Libraries’ one millionth volume.

1981
Cornelius Ryan Collection acquisition.

1988
Sammy Kaye Collection acquisition.

1988
E.W. Scripps Papers acquisition.

1995
1999
Alwin Nikolaïs and Murray Louis Dance Collection acquisition.

1999
The Hwa-Wei Lee Center for International Collections is established on the first floor.

2000
Sydney and Sonya Buck establish the Traditional Shakespearean Collection.

2002
Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn announce a major gift and the Archives & Special Collections Department is renamed the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives & Special Collections.

2004
Frederick and Kazuko Harris announce a major gift and the Fine Arts Library is dedicated as the Frederick and Kazuko Harris Fine Arts Library.

2004
The Learning Commons is created on the second floor of Alden Library.

2008
Yao Ceremonial Artifacts Collection acquisition.

2009
In conjunction with the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Vernon R. Alden Library, the Libraries acquire their three millionth addition by Thomas Schiff ’70, Vernon R. Alden Library, Panoramic Photograph.
When you think about people who break into song while working, courting and communicating, *High School Musical* or *Hairspray* might immediately come to mind, but the Yao ethnic community in North Vietnam also has its own culture of singing, much like an everyday musical. Singing is one of the cultural traditions the Yao kept when some of them immigrated to Vietnam from China. Creating artistic representations of religious and public figures was another ethnic tradition they did not forget.
One of Alden Library’s latest collections comes from this community. Yao Ceremonial Artifacts Collection features nearly 2,000 pieces of ethnic Chinese artwork from North Vietnam. It is the largest collection of Yao Daoist artwork in the U.S. and one of the largest in the world. The collection consists of portraits created by the Yao people to portray religious deities, local authorities and patrons.

The primary purpose of the collection is research, mostly for cultural anthropologists, religious scholars and art historians. “The founders wanted the collection to be made available to scholars everywhere,” said Gary Ginther, fine arts librarian and curator for the collection. “It’s about cultures coming together and learning from and experiencing the results.”

Frederick Harris, Robert Fallon and Nguyen Thi Diu purchased the collection and gifted it to the Vernon R. Alden Library under the condition the entire collection be kept intact. “We just felt Ohio University was a school that would not only appreciate it, but a school with expertise through its Southeast Asian Studies program,” said Robert Fallon, one of the founders of the collection and graduate of Ohio University, in an Outlook article about this past September’s premiere exhibit of the collection. President Emeritus Vernon R. Alden, President McDavis and Robert Fallon all spoke at the event.

The collection is stored and preserved at the Hwa-Wei Lee Library Annex on Columbus Road. It will soon become accessible online in an image database called ARTstor. Soon, the founders’ dreams for the collection will be fulfilled and every scholar researching this rare and one-of-a-kind artwork may have access to it.

Kristin Heinichen

President McDavis and Robert Fallon at the Opening Reception of the Yao Ceremonial Artifacts Collection held September 19, 2009.

Yao Ceremonial Artifacts
One of two ritual Daoist books in the Yao Collection.

This is one of nine Yao Daoist priest’s robes in the collection. The robes represent a variety of styles and mostly date to the late 19th–early 20th century.

610 masks
1,067 scrolls
1 ritual crown
There are well over 600 painted paper masks in the Yao Collection. These masks represent deities of the Daoist society and were used in rituals, including orientation rituals.

The single crown of the Yao Collection worn by high-ranking Yao Daoist priests.

These are three of the ritual scroll paintings. They were created on tracing papers and layered with backing for support.

12 banners

2 books

9 priests’ robes
What do gerontology research, a sailboat and the French language have in common?

Beth VanDerveer.
In September, the Friends of the Libraries welcomed Beth as their new president. While she’s polishing up her presidential skills, she also maintains several other roles at the University. Primarily, she coordinates the Recreation Studies and Gerontology Certificate programs. She’s an associate professor for the School of Recreation and Sports Sciences, and she leads a learning community for the College of Health and Human Services.

Outside of her career life, Beth has many interests, largely inspired by her dynamic childhood. She has lived in places such as Melrose, Massachusetts; Dallas, Texas; and Niagara Falls. Chautauqua, New York, however, the uniquely designed town centered on the Chautauqua Institution, is the place she still considers home even though she hasn’t lived there in years. It’s a place that greatly values education and the arts, and has shaped her to believe that teaching is at the forefront of all she does. “Chautauqua was very instrumental for me in my love of education,” she says. “My parents were both educators so guiding others in their learning is something I love.”

Along with a love of education, she has several other interests and talents, some fulfilled by Chautauqua Lake. “I just love to sail. I even just recently bought a new sailboat. I’ve been sailing since I was a kid.”

When she isn’t spending time on the water, she can also be found gardening, antiquing, reading and going to operas and symphonies. She’s even fluent in French. “The arts are very important,” she says. “A world without the arts wouldn’t be an interesting world at all.”
Born November 14, 1917, Jean (Whittaker) Rohde Mahn celebrated nearly 92 years of her life with friends and family, a commitment to her Christian faith, a strong support for her political beliefs, and an absolute love of animals—especially her loyal and attentive Shih Tzu, “Muffy.”

Jean’s early years in Briercrest Village, not far from her birthplace in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan (Canada), were not only filled with religious fulfillment, but also her love of piano and pursuit of world travel. She was the daughter of the late Sinclair and Isabel Whittaker (both instrumental in founding Briercrest College and Seminary) and sister to her late brother, Morgan. Jean was preceded in death by her first husband, Tom Rohde (whom she married at the age of 53) and second husband, Bob Mahn.

Following the passing of her husband Bob in 2004, Jean spent the last five years of her life in their home on Second Street in Athens, Ohio under the vigilant care of four dedicated and loving caregivers. Jean remained involved with the First Presbyterian Church of Athens, the P.E.O., and the Helen Gray Club, as well as hosting special parties and receptions. Jean often said that the secret to health and happiness was to “exercise and socialize.” She fulfilled her own philosophy late in life by regularly working out at the Athens Community Center.

Jean and her husband Bob were major donors to the Ohio University Libraries. Bob, during his administrative career at the University, founded the University Archives. In recognition of this achievement, the Mahns made a major gift to the Libraries’ Archives and Special Collections Department during the University’s Bicentennial Campaign. The department was subsequently renamed the Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for Archives and Special Collections. The Mahns also served on the Libraries’ Bicentennial Campaign Committee.
At the young age of 17, Jean earned her Associateship diploma at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. She also was an early graduate of Wheaton College. Jean eventually became a faculty member at the Salem College and Academy, King’s College in Delaware and Eastern College in Pennsylvania. In 1989, she moved to Athens following her marriage to Bob and remained close to Bob’s daughter Elizabeth Nollen and her family in Delaware.

Jean was never one to shy away from sharing her wonderful stories of travel, love and commitment. Whether it was delaying her marriage to Bob Mahn because she only had one ticket to sail across the Atlantic on the Queen Mary, paying her own way through Wheaton College, or teaching and advising hundreds of students, Jean could always make you laugh, cry or simply share her joy.

Above all, Jean (Whittaker) Rohde Mahn was a caring person who prided herself on her commitment to Christian faith, her ongoing education through reading and travel, and her embracement of life’s adventures. Jean passed away on August 25, 2009, and now rests under a bed of pink roses in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan next to her brother Morgan and parents Isabel and Sinclair.
A library patron approaches the Vernon R. Alden Library on October 27, 2009.
If It Weren’t for Libraries...

By Doug Partusch

How would students have free access to the academic journals needed to complete projects, theses, and dissertations?

Who would provide the academic support that today’s students need to succeed?

What would promote excellence and innovation to support the teaching, learning and research mission of Ohio University?

When would a facility be open, and staffed, 24/5 to provide for peak student usage, often at 2 a.m.?

Where would students find space for quiet study and reflection; and private group study space that most students require?
It is certainly true that more and more people are accessing material online, but just like hard copies of that same material, online academic materials come with a cost. If not provided for by the University Libraries, students and faculty at Ohio University would need to pay for each scholarly journal that they wanted to use during their everyday study and deeper research.

Access to these portals and the guidance to navigate the path to knowledge will need a few road signs along the way. Academic libraries and a trained staff of librarians not only can provide the path but they know how to read the map. If feedback noted recently is any indication, graduate students and faculty appreciate the service they receive and resources made available at Alden Library.

Dan Dennis, an Interdisciplinary Arts doctoral candidate said, “I use the (online) journals. Every time I embark on a new research project, I utilize JSTOR and Project Muse to search for articles.”

“I use the library all the time,” said Jamie Cleland, English MA candidate and Group IV faculty. “Alden is definitely one of the better academic libraries I’ve used.”

For Ohio University to remain academically strong, it is essential to provide the resources that students and faculty need to succeed. To paraphrase a quote by Benjamin Disraeli, famous British statesman of the 19th century, “as a general rule, the most successful person in life is the person who has the best information.” With the ubiquity of information today, it is not only important to get that information but to get the best information possible. What better resource to help find the “best information” than University Libraries and the professional library staff.

**What’s your story?**

**How** has the library contributed to your success?

**Who** have you interacted with at the Ohio University Libraries over the years?

**You** can help provide the valuable resources that the library offers through your financial contribution.

Your gift today could make a very tangible difference in our ability to provide the resources necessary for Ohio University students to learn, to grow and to enter their chosen fields prepared to succeed.
A typical evening in the Learning Commons at Alden Library.
About the Cover
Thomas Schiff (B.B.A., ’70) and his Hulcherama 360 camera that he used to photograph the Ohio University Libraries’ three-millionth addition.