

A Newsletter for Employees of the University of Louisville Libraries
Vol. 34, No. 6 ♣ Winter, 2018

The Owl

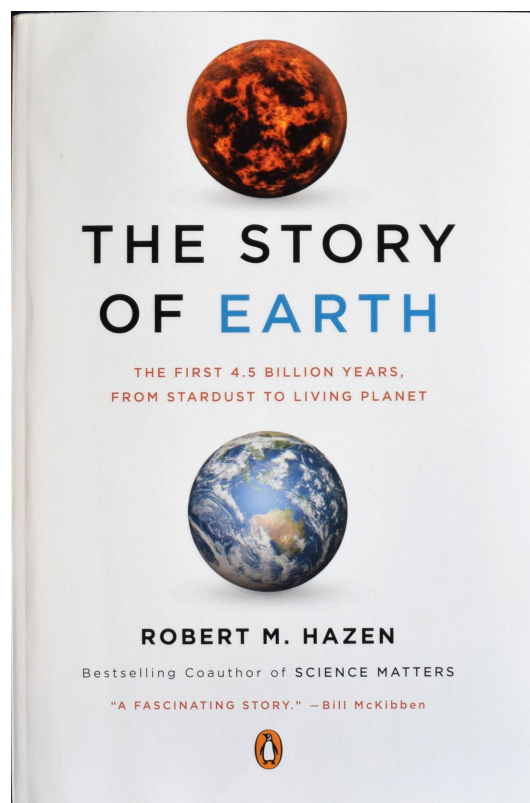
"The Owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall." — Hegel

Winter Readers' Picks 2018

Written and compiled by Christopher Poché,
Ekstrom Library

Last year I wrote about my growing interest in astronomy after the total eclipse. This year my scientific curiosity has come down to earth and focused on geology. I have browsed and sampled many books to get grounded in the field, as it were, and the most readable and comprehensive book I have found is Robert M. Hazen's ***The Story of Earth: The First 4.5 Billion Years, from Stardust to Living Planet***. In a lively narrative, Hazen makes the long, complex history of our planet comprehensible by organizing it into a novel sequence of colored Earths, each color representing a significant geological phase of mineralogical or biological development. Throughout this narrative, which is full of technical detail without being overwhelming, Hazen makes the argument that the mystery of the origin and the development of life can be at least partially explained in a surprising way: by examining the diversification of minerals. Hazen believes minerals and animals, once thought to be completely separate kingdoms, coevolved.

The story begins with black earth. When it first formed in our nascent solar system, earth was a mass of molten rock over which a thin, black crust of basalt cooled and hardened. Black earth belongs to the Hadean era of the geologic timescale—as in Hades, hell on earth—a violent time of global volcanism and frequent impacts from extraterrestrial objects. Much of the earth's water is thought to have been delivered by these objects. It is also theorized that our moon originated as a potential planet in its own right, but it became an unusually large satellite after impacting with earth and taking along a percentage of earth's mass along with it before taking up a close orbit. As our solar system neighborhood calmed and the new moon took some of the impacts that could otherwise have hit earth, the planet was able to cool, allowing the oceans to form—thus blue earth. This was followed by grey earth in which minerals crystalized on the surface of the crust, producing grey granites. During what is called



the “great oxidation event,” microorganisms in the oceans evolved to undergo photosynthesis. The resulting increase of oxygen in the oceans bonded with minerals in the water, primarily iron, producing rust and thus the red earth. Decreasing temperatures led to a frozen, white earth, often called by geologists the “snowball earth.” Though earth was a frozen planet at its surface, its interior heat, fueled by intense pressures and the radioactive decay of certain elements, continued to generate volcanic activity, and that volcanism released enough carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to create a greenhouse effect and thus melt the snowball. The final color phase is the green earth in which life diversified to produce larger and more complex forms.

This interest in geology has found a lucky intersection with another of my perennial interests: art and art history, particularly landscape painting. Though I certainly appreciate the beauty of a representation of the natural world in a straightforward sort of way, I am especially fascinated by the fact that the history of landscape painting is a narrative not just of changing styles but of considerable ideological import. For most of Western art history, landscape painting was considered an inferior form of expression compared to history painting, which encompasses lofty subjects from political history (especially concerning ancient Greece and Rome), mythology, and biblical history. For many past art critics and theorists, if landscape was valuable at all, it was so only as a backdrop for historical subjects; and landscape for its own sake was considered frivolous. Yet, landscape painters asserted themselves and their subjects throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and not without controversy. In France, for example, the impressionists rocked the artistic establishment at the annual Salon exhibitions when they presented their new approaches to landscape. Their revolution was not just a matter of style but also of content: their work insisted that scenes from nature and everyday life were as valuable as history painting.

The 19th century also happened to be the time when geology was coming into its own as a science. Intellectual currents concerning geology and painting were joined particularly strongly in 19th century America where artists expressed national pride by celebrating the untrammelled lands of the new nation. Rebecca Bedell’s *The Anatomy of Nature: Geology and American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* examines the work of six prominent landscape painters and how they responded to the new science. I will focus on just two—Thomas Cole and Asher Durand—whose highly contrasting approaches can be seen as instantiating the most fundamental of philosophical positions. Cole can be seen as a kind of Platonic painter, emphasizing general ideas over particular realities, while Durand is more Aristotelian, seeing the highest realities in the most particular subjects. Though Cole enthusiastically read geological works and cultivated friendships with geologists (who often happened to be his patrons) and his works are indeed realistic, his paintings offer grand views of landscapes with allegorical meanings, not geological lessons. In the five paintings of *The Course of Empire*, for example, the vicissitudes of human history are contrasted with the persistence of nature: a civilization changes dramatically as it rises and falls, while a single outcrop of rock is seen to remain the same throughout. Durand’s paintings are quite different and incorporate geological observation more intimately.



Desolation, 1836 From Thomas Cole’s *The Course of Empire* series

Throughout. Durand’s paintings are quite different and incorporate geological observation more intimately.



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The Owl’s purpose is to promote communication among the various libraries in the UofL system.

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Opinions expressed in *The Owl* are not necessarily those of the University Libraries or the University of Louisville.

As its title suggests, Durand's *Rocky Cliff*, 1860 (below) shows a modest tableau. Here the detail is precise and

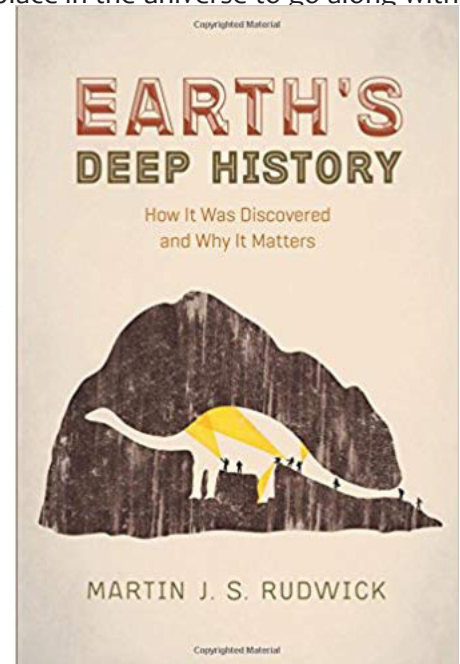


true to life. A geologist would especially appreciate the clearly defined strata of the rocks. For Durand, a landscape such as this is as full of meaning as Cole's grand allegories because he believed that the close observation of nature reveals the operations of the divine mind through its creations.

Whether my gaze has drifted upwards to the stars or down to the ground, I have been awed by the myriad complex processes of nature working over immense periods of time. The study of geology places great emphasis on time. One of the great accomplishments of the science is the discovery of the earth's great age. Before the 19th century, most reckoned the age of the earth to be only in

the thousands of years. The most well-known chronology before the advent of the science of geology was that of the 17th century Irish bishop James Ussher, who studied the ages of all the persons mentioned in the Bible and concluded that the earth was created in 4004 BC. The most up-to-date scientific estimation is that the Earth is 4.45 billion years old. Such a number boggles the mind. In ***Earth's Deep History: How It Was Discovered and Why It Matters***, Martin J.S. Rudwick goes so far as to suggest that this discovery should be counted as the fourth great intellectual revolution to disturb humankind's sense of its place in the universe to go along with the three of a famous list suggested by Sigmund Freud: the Copernican, which displaced the Earth from its presumed place at the center of the cosmos; the Darwinian, which removed human beings from their presumed special status apart from the rest of the animal kingdom; and Freud's own theorization of the subconscious, which suggested that humans are not completely rational beings and do not fully know their own minds.

I have been able to appreciate the magnitude of the three revolutions identified by Freud from a historical perspective, but they have never caused me much psychological distress. Their lessons have largely been givens in my worldview. And I suppose I have always known that the age of the Earth is immense, but there was always something too abstract about this very large number until I have considered all the changes all those years have seen, including the extinction of the vast majority of the species ever to grace the surface of the earth. It's been especially sobering to learn that the whole 200,000-year history of *homo sapiens* accounts for only 0.004% of the Earth's age. Here I must admit my sense of human significance has taken a hit.



As always, many thanks to all who contributed to this column. Happy reading and happy holidays!

Scott Campbell, Law Library

I recently watched a Hong Kong romantic movie on Amazon. It wasn't very good, but in reading about it afterwards, I was intrigued to discover that it was based on a short story by Eileen Chang, a Chinese-American author I had never heard of before. Over the course of the next couple weeks, I came across her name a couple more times in other contexts. This seemed to be an obvious Sign. I took the hint and checked out a slightly waterlogged copy of her short story collection ***Love in a Fallen City*** from Ekstrom.

Chang was raised in an aristocratic family in Shanghai and went to Hong Kong for college to study Western



literature. Her college career was cut short when the Japanese invaded Hong Kong on the same day they attacked Pearl Harbor. She returned to Shanghai where she rapidly published a series of short stories that became immensely popular. She left Shanghai shortly after the Communists took control of China and eventually settled in America, where she continued to write books and screenplays. Despite her works being banned in mainland China for a number of decades, her works became wildly popular and today she is considered one of the greatest Chinese authors of the 20th century.

Love in a Fallen City is a collection of stories Chang wrote shortly after she returned to Shanghai. The stories are about people caught in the clash between tradition and the 20th

century, while people in China (particularly women) began to experience freedoms introduced by a change in government and exposure to Western ideas. The characters in the book's stories are both looking for love and trying to escape poisonous family lives. While many of the stories are love stories, none of them could be said to be romantic. Chang's dry wit and ironic detachment keep the stories well clear from being maudlin. Instead they are clear eyed studies of characters struggling to improve their lives.

Rob Detmering, Ekstrom Library

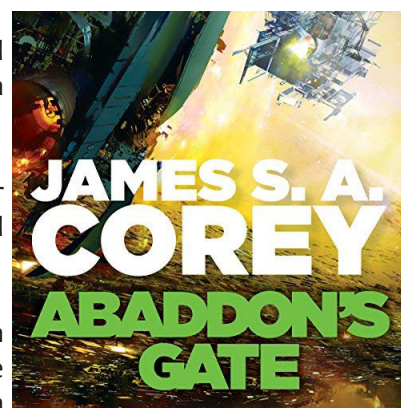
I've been reading musician autobiographies recently. I would recommend Bruce Springsteen's ***Born to Run*** and Phil Collins's ***Not Dead Yet***. Springsteen's book is much like his songwriting: passionate, reflective, and filled with vivid narrative details. I especially enjoyed the parts where he discusses conceptualizing his records around narrative arcs and describes the craft of his songwriting. I'm a big defender of Phil Collins and lifelong Genesis fan (all eras), so I was interested to read his book, which has a lot of self-deprecating humor. Most people know Collins for his somewhat bland soft rock ballads, but few people realize what an incredible drummer and musician he is—look up *Nuclear Burn* on YouTube for an example. His memoir is entertaining, and I especially appreciated his stories about performing at Live Aid (the infamous Led Zeppelin crash and burn reunion) and playing bongos on an unused take of "The Art of Dying" for George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass*—something Harrison has no memory of!

Mark Dickson, Music Library

Concerning my recent reading, I have finished ***Abaddon's Gate*** and started ***Cibola Burn*** (#3 and #4 of The Expanse series). So you could say I'm smitten with this book series by James S.A. Corey and the tv show adaptation.

Abaddon's Gate follows the third season of the tv show, mostly, until near the end. However, as is usually the case, there is much greater detail and development in the books.

For those not familiar with the books or the tv series, the story, begun in *Leviathan Wakes* and continued by *Caliban's War*, tells the story of our future solar system where the outer planets have been reached in space exploration and are routinely mined for minerals and water ice.



A mysterious molecule is discovered in orbit near Jupiter that infects and mutates any life form it encounters. The molecule begins decimating mining colonies and once it reaches a critical mass generates an appendage that breaks free and heads toward Earth at tremendous speed. Through a mechanism I won't reveal here, it passes Earth, lands on Venus, and repeats the process. This time, the created appendage leaves Venus and travels to the edge of solar system forming a "gate."

This storyline reminds me of the joy I felt playing the Mass Effect videogame trilogy, and so it's familiar and exotic at the same time. And it fuels my imagination with every book I read in the series.

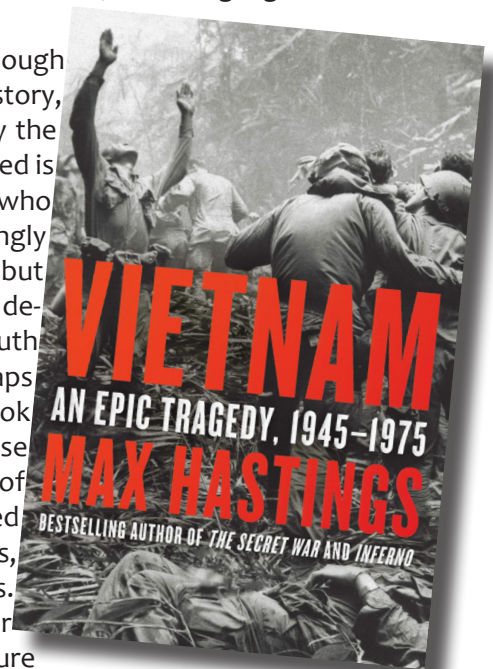
As my eyesight becomes less acute with age, it takes me longer to finish any book. Eye fatigue and strain are an annoying challenge. However, I like this series and I make the progress I *can* make. One book at a time.

Matt Goldberg, Ekstrom Library

Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945-1975 by Max Hastings

It's difficult to find new and thought-provoking ways to examine certain conflicts in American history. The Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War have all been dissected and discussed from every conceivable angle for decades. Despite that, Max Hastings's new work on the Vietnam conflict is a refreshingly different entry into societal-focused military histories, and most unusually, is a look at the war from more than just America's perspective. To that end, he actually traces the roots of the conflict back to France's first invasion of Indochina in the 1880s, then to their fall at the famous conflagration of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. This review of French involvement is so detailed that it's more than 200 pages into the book before the first American boots hit the ground. From this springboard he examines the failure of American policymakers to learn these Gallic lessons or from the history of France's time in-country. Lest you think that this is a history of how Europeans impacted Vietnam without reference to the Vietnamese themselves, Hastings's work is shaped by a treasure trove of recently unearthed documents from North Vietnamese policymakers, interviews with South Vietnamese peasants and politicians, and even substantial records from the Vietcong. In particular, Hastings has dramatically reevaluated Lê Duẩn's stranglehold on North Vietnam's leadership, thereby overturning decades of scholarship that emphasized the prominence of Ho Chi Minh and Võ Nguyên Giáp in NVA decision-making. Part of his ability to accomplish this comes from a new openness of research into the communist country that for decades during (and after) the conflict was nearly impenetrable to outside investigation (North Vietnam's Chinese, Russian, and North Korean allies serving during war were often just as confused as their American enemies about NVA intentions). Along with his penetrating views of North Vietnamese leadership is an equally exhaustive overview of American and South Vietnamese politicians and generals—JFK, Ngô Đình Diệm, Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, William Westmoreland, and the always unfathomable Richard Nixon, are all highlighted.

Still, it's hard to call this a political history or even a military history (though both subjects are covered in significant detail). Instead, it's a people's history, in which the true focus of the work is the average person impacted by the conflict. Every high-level fact, statistic, and memo that Hastings uncovered is balanced by interviews, pictures, and penetrating examinations of those who fought, lived, and died during the conflict. The homesick (and increasingly desensitized) American G.I.s wandering Saigon's bustling streets, jaded but haughty French colonists, starving yet determined Vietcong guerrillas, despairing North Vietnamese workers, and the mercilessly preyed-upon South Vietnamese farmers are all given specific and special attention. Perhaps most touching of the hundreds of personal stories highlighted by the book comes not from the American side but from a female North Vietnamese doctor serving with Vietcong guerrilla forces operating in the South. Bits of her diary chronicling the war appeared in several chapters as she described her homesickness for Hanoi, high-minded idealism, terrifying privations, and gruesome medical work in steamy jungles healing wounded fighters. Her war ended during a bombing raid by American aircraft, and when her body was found later under a pile of debris, her hands still clutched a picture of her sweetheart, an NVA captain, himself fighting hundreds of miles away.

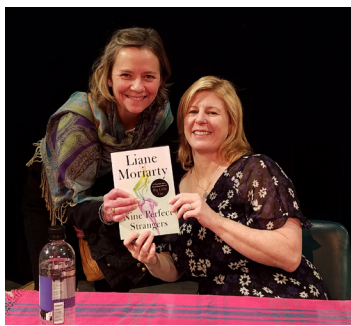
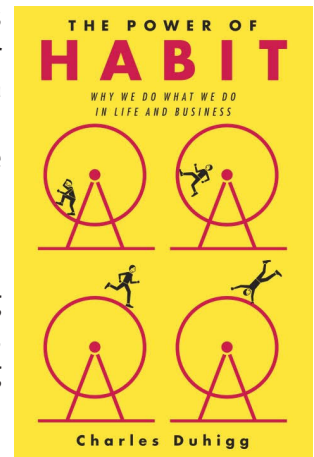


It was hard not to be moved by this story and by a hundred others that Hastings takes great pains to present. Overall, it's a deeply balanced history, with few illusions about the heinous conduct of the war by both parties, and actions like the My Lai Massacre are always contextualized alongside systematic NVA and Vietcong

depredations. It's an incredible book about a hideous war, one where there were few "good-guys" but many heroic moments and desperate failures. Hastings ultimately concludes that it was neither North Vietnamese persistence nor American exhaustion that won the war for the North, but instead it was the inability of South Vietnam's leadership to articulate a consistent and identifiable alternative to native communism that lost them the war. I rarely run into military histories as accessible and readable as this one, and for those reasons it is highly recommended.

Ansley Stuart, Kornhauser Library

The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business by Charles Duhigg discusses people's personal habits, how they're formed, how they help and hinder, and how data shows we are more predictable than we think. There is a surprising anecdote about how a father found out his teenage daughter was pregnant based on Target's coupon algorithms.

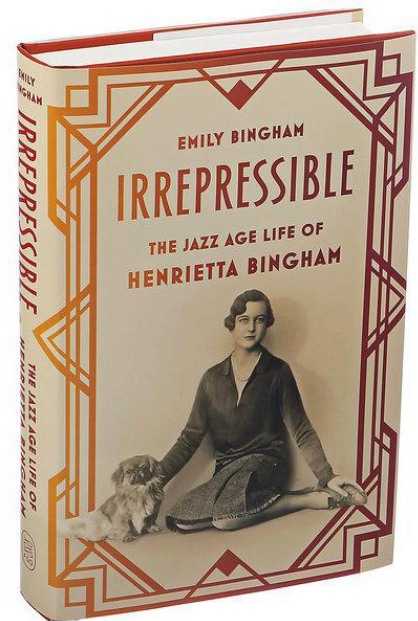


Amy Purcell, Archives & Special Collections

In November, Carmichael's Bookstore brought Australian author Liane Moriarty to Louisville. I discovered Moriarty a couple of years ago and since then I've read most of her books, so I jumped at the chance to see her. I enjoy reading non-American authors; reading these authors provides me with insight into everyday life in other countries. Moriarty's current book, ***Nine Perfect Strangers***, is about nine people who sign up for a ten-day spa package to de-stress, and discover that the person running the resort has developed a new therapy to help participants reach their goals. While at Carmichael's, I also purchased the author's first book, ***Three Wishes***, which Moriarty described as more humorous than her other works, and whose main character Moriarty modeled after her sister.

Robin Harris, Law Library

Irrepressible: The Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham, by Emily Bingham Whether or not you find Louisville's Bingham family fascinating—as many who grew up in Louisville do—Emily Bingham's thoroughly researched and well-written account of the complicated and ultimately sad story of her great-aunt, Henrietta Bingham (1901 – 1968), will take you on a wild ride through the adventures of a rebellious and remarkable woman. And yes, many books about the Bingham family are already out there, and quite well-known; especially noteworthy is 1989's ***Passion and Prejudice: A Family Memoir***, written by Emily's aunt, Sallie Bingham. (If you have not read *Passion and Prejudice*, I recommend it as well.) Unlike the other books about the wealth, influence, and history of the family, this book focuses on Henrietta, a flapper who loved jazz and played the saxophone, who befriended black musicians, and whose bisexual adventures certainly made her an outlier in her family. Her overwhelming charm even enabled her to become part of the elite Bloomsbury Group; several fell in love with her, including the painter Dora Carrington.



I highly recommend this book. After I read the Preface (detailing how Emily Bingham became interested in her great-aunt, and her discovery of trunks belonging to Henrietta in the attic of the famous Bingham home), I was totally hooked and could not put it down!

Emily Bingham will be the keynote luncheon speaker at the 2019 Kentucky Women's Book Festival on Saturday, March 2, 2019.

Library and Department News

ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Vintage and Kitschy

On December 4, Elizabeth Reilly and Rebecca Pattillo appeared on WDRB-TV's morning show, promoting the Fleur de Flea Vintage and Holiday Market on December 8 – 9, and their vintage kitschy Christmas crafts. Further proof that librarians are an eclectic bunch. [Watch here.](#)



Far left: crafts by Rebecca, middle and right: crafts by Reilly.

EKSTROM LIBRARY

Dean's Office

Transition

After sixteen years of University service, Karen Nalley is reducing her workload to part-time, effective January 1, 2019. Her schedule will be Tuesday through Thursday from 8:30am-4:30pm. Karen will continue her Lead Fiscal Officer responsibilities for Finance and Budget, and Staff Human Resources. After the first of the year, Christy Gambrell will assume responsibility for Payroll, and Rachel Hodge's duties will include Account Reconciliation. Karen will be working with them both over the next month to ensure a smooth transition.

Office of Libraries Technology

Shibboleth Login Interface

OCLC finished the testing with WMS and tested the production system on November 27. A switching date will be decided soon. The authentication to EZproxy will be switched to Shibboleth at the same time as WMS.

SharePoint Migration

IT completed the general migration to SharePoint 2010. People with personal SharePoint sites were asked to save their data since the personal sites will not be migrated. The Libraries were in the first group to migrate.

Updates on Canon Printing and Copying Service

All the public printers have been replaced. Multi-functional printers (former Xerox printers) located in departments have been replaced. Networked staff printers have been registered for Canon printing service

LAW LIBRARY

Empowerment Award

Robin Harris received the Women's Empowerment Award at the annual Women's Empowerment Lunch on Wednesday, November 14, at the University Club. The award is given each year "to an individual, community member or business who through their professional work, personal passion or sponsorship empower women supporting the mission of the UofL Women's Center."

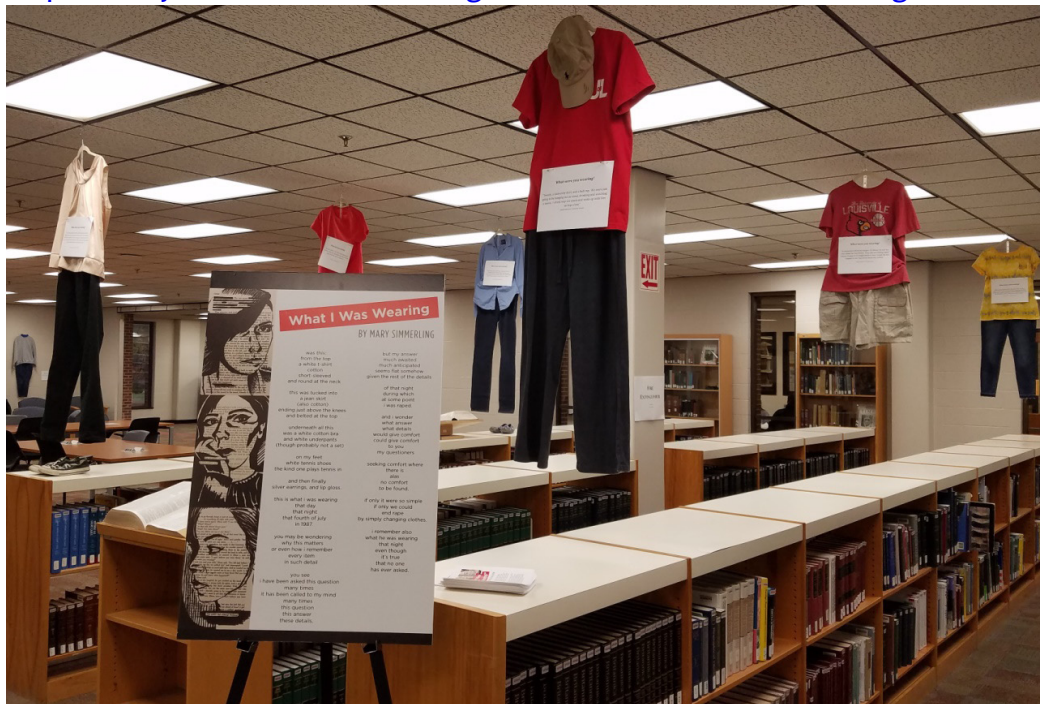


Robin at the luncheon with sister-in-law Linda, and Taylor, her niece. Robin's award is in front of her on the table.

"What Were You Wearing?"

From November 10 through December 1, the Law Library's reading room was home to a portion of an art installation honoring the survivors of sexual violence; the other portion was on display in the Cardinal Lounge of the Student Activities Center. "What Were You Wearing?" aims to dismantle stereotypes and assumptions people have about survivors, by displaying the clothes the victims were wearing when they were assaulted or harassed. The library partnered with the law school's Diversity Committee and the Human Rights Advocacy Program on the project.

<http://library.louisville.edu/law/blog/home/What-Were-You-Wearing-A-Survivors-Art-Installation>.



Library Exhibits

Archives & Special Collections



*Louisville Underground Music in
Photographs, 1980 - Present*
Photographic Archives Gallery

featuring circa 300 photos of the punk, hardcore,
rock music scene in Louisville

July 13, 2018 - January 18, 2019*

*updated the closing date, and added -

**Closing Reception:
Thursday January 17, 5 - 7 pm**

Exhibit Cases

1st Floor West
Ekstrom Library

December 2018 - April 26, 2019

The Roots of Activism: Kentucky and Radical Southern Organizing



“The Roots of Activism” examines local Kentucky connections to Highlander Research and Education Center—formerly known as Highlander Folk School—and radical southern organizing through three case studies: Anne Braden, the Appalachian Land Study, and Southerners on New Ground (S.O.N.G.)

Curated by the fall 2018 students of Public History (HIST 597/697).

