

## **B. Thomas Golisano Library History**

When the institution that became Roberts Wesleyan College was established as Chili Seminary in 1866, there was no formal library. When Seminary Hall, the original Seminary building, was destroyed by fire, it was replaced by two buildings. One of them, Cox Hall, opened in 1892, and housed a designated library. The fledgling library collection became a bit more robust when Cheshbrough Seminary began to offer a junior college curriculum in 1921, but in 1934 when Ora Sprague was asked to assess and evaluate the book collection as part of an effort to work toward meeting New York State requirements for junior college status she found fewer than 200 suitable titles and no reliable catalog.

Miss Sprague, originally hired as Dean of Women and Instructor in Mathematics, quickly added Librarian to her list of duties. In 1937, the library, now housed in Roberts Hall, was officially named the Benson H. and Emma Sellew Roberts Memorial Library. After the collection moved to the upper level of Cox Hall, Miss Sprague continued to develop the resources, and obtained a B.S. in Library Science from Syracuse University in 1941. By 1951, when Roberts Wesleyan College graduated its first bachelors' degree students, the collection had grown to 10,000 volumes and Miss Sprague had earned the M.L.S. degree from Columbia University. She was assisted in the library by Professor of French and Spanish Martha Humelsine, who established her library credentials with a graduate library degree from Rutgers University.

With regional accreditation efforts mounting, the collection grew to 25,000 volumes by 1960, and plans were begun for a new library facility. A Faculty Library Committee was established to promote faculty interaction with the library. A crucial milestone was reached in 1965 when the library moved into its own facility, the building now known as Hastings Center for Academics. The transfer of the collection from Cox Hall to the new library was achieved by a human chain of faculty, staff, and students. A third librarian was added when Alice Boyce became the library's first designated Reference Librarian.

The library continued to develop its collections and services in the new facility. In 1967 the library became a charter member of the Rochester Regional Research Library Council (RRRLC). In 1968 the library began a decade-long process of manually converting the book collection from the Dewey Decimal to the Library of Congress Classification. By 1970, the collection reached the milestone 50,000 volume count. In 1971, Ora Sprague and Martha Humelsine retired. Although much has been accomplished in the succeeding decades, none of it would have been possible without the foundation laid by these two remarkable women.

Alfred Krober succeeded Ora Sprague as Head Librarian in 1971. In 1972, the building, previously known as Roberts Memorial Library (the official name for the library collection), was named Kenneth B. Keating Library in honor of the Ambassador and former U.S. Congressional

Representative and Senator. Originally hired by the Division of Nursing on a part-time basis, Audio-Visual Technician John Kells became full time in 1974 and moved into Keating Library under the supervision of the Head Librarian. Reference Librarian Louise Campbell added the roles of College Archivist and chair of the Historical Committee to her duties. In 1976 the library classroom was designated the Chesbrough/Roberts Historical Center and refurbished to house and display archival and historical materials. In 1978, Charles Canon II was hired as the Assistant Head Librarian.

The functions served by the Keating Library facility expanded again in 1983 when the Learning Assistance Center (LAC), later shortened to Learning Center, was created and space in the library was repurposed to house the new academic support service. LAC Director Walter J. (Gus) Radzysinski was also given supervisory responsibility for Audio-Visual Services. Incorporating the LAC involved a sacrifice of space that grew rather painful toward the end of the library's tenure in the building, but the Library/Learning Center collaboration has proved fruitful and continues to the present.

Online and computer-based services entered the picture in the mid-1980s. In 1984, the library became a participant in the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) shared bibliographic utility. Initially, a single workstation in Technical Services was used for cataloging and interlibrary loan services. A dial-up mediated database search service was initiated at about the same time, but costs were passed along to the user and, except for MHR (an adult degree-completion program which included a fee that covered such searches) students, use was limited. Subscriptions to several CD-ROM databases provided offline database access starting in 1994.

In 1995, the addition of Director of Library Systems to Wendy Saxena's job title signaled an intensified commitment to web-based services. In 1996, the library chose Endeavor's Voyager as its first Integrated Library System (ILS). The online catalog and circulation modules were brought up first, followed by cataloging and acquisitions. A library website was developed in 1997, and the Historical Center was equipped to serve as an instruction and computer lab in 1998. The CD-ROM databases gave way to their online counterparts and were supplemented by additional databases, in part to support an expanding curriculum.

The 1990s also saw significant changes not directly related to information technology. In 1996 the Kenneth B. Keating Library was renamed the Ora A. Sprague Library, appropriately honoring the librarian most responsible for its planning. The College initiated graduate programs in Social Work and Teacher Education and provided significant financial support for collection development and staff enhancement.

In 1998, Northeastern Seminary was created as a separate but closely allied institution. The library was provided with a substantial budget line for Seminary-related collection development

in 1999. In 2000 the library coordinated with the Seminary in selecting a Theological Librarian. Barry Hamilton was chosen.

The expanding student body and curriculum increased the demand for library study facilities, as well as for library resources. In 2001, the library extended weeknight hours to midnight and hired an Evening Supervisor. However, in its fourth decade of service the building was hard-pressed to provide adequate study spaces and housing for the collections. A breakthrough came in 2002 with the announcement of a major gift (approximately \$5,000,000) toward a new library facility from Rochester-area philanthropist B. Thomas Golisano. Chaired by Facilities Director Rich Greer, the Library Planning Committee incorporated trustees, administrators, librarians, faculty members, and a student. Key decisions in the planning process included site selection, setting LEED certification as a project goal, selection of Jay Lucker as consultant, and selection of Leo A. Daly as the lead architectural firm (working with local firm SWBR). A professional library collection-moving firm transferred the Ora Sprague collection into the B. Thomas Golisano Library in the summer of 2007. The staff moved into the new building in July, and it opened to the public on August 20. A formal dedication ceremony took place on September 10.

The 43,000 square foot, two-level building offers numerous amenities. Its numerous “green” features include geothermal heating and cooling, use of rapidly-renewable materials, and ample provision of natural and energy-efficient lighting. The building offers a variety of comfortable study settings, ranging from group study rooms and other collaborative study spaces to multiple options for individual study. A Study Café with a snack and beverage counter is incorporated into the library’s study area options. Two gas log fireplaces add significantly to the ambience during the cold weather months. The entire building is wireless enabled, and there are plentiful data and electrical jacks throughout.

The building also provides a number of services. Those services include: two state-of-the-art instruction labs which can be merged to accommodate groups as large as 42; an attractive conference room; a 32-station Information Commons providing full library catalog, subscription database, Internet, and office software access plus print capability; a 32-stations computer lab which, together with the Study Café, is available 24/7 via swipe card access; a Graduate Research Room; a Curriculum Center offering juvenile trade book and curriculum materials collections as well as assistance in producing materials for classroom use; and an Archives for storage, display, and use of archival and special collections materials. Functioning as a separate academic support unit, the Learning Center is another important service component.

Golisano Library the building received a number of awards and recognitions: the Energetix Excellence in Green Lighting Award from the Rochester Section of the Illuminating Engineering Society, a Merit Award from AIA (American Institute of Architects) Rochester, an Arts &

Culture Award from the Gates-Chili Chamber of Commerce, and a LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Golisano Library is more than a building, however. Golisano Library remains the only area library to have received two awards in the annual Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC) Library of the Year contest: Academic Library of the Year in 2010 and Honorable Mention in 2011. Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES also honored the library in 2009 as a Partner in the Connecting Youth with Successful Employment Experiences initiative.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century transition from print resources to electronic access continued to accelerate the technological demands on the library, it became clear that a full time systems librarian was required. In 2011, Lynn Brown was hired as Director of Library Digital Services & Systems.

Our rich legacy provides a strong base on which to build future library services, but we recognize that in today's rapidly changing information environment we need a vision and a strategy in order to sustain the level of service that is expected of 21<sup>st</sup> century academic libraries. In 2010, the library drew on the expertise of RWC business faculty members Steve Bovee and Joel Hoomans to initiate a strategic planning process. The five-year Strategic Plan included the following revised Mission Statement:

*The B. Thomas Golisano Library supports the mission, educational goals, and curricula of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern seminary by providing information resource collections and access services of consistently excellent quality, creative collaboration in support of information literacy, and research and study facilities of the highest possible caliber, while demonstrating a commitment to the ideals of Christian service in every interaction.*

A vision statement was also developed:

*The B. Thomas Golisano Library will increasingly be recognized as the premier research and information resource partner with the lifelong learners of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern Seminary.*

The Strategic Plan identified four goals related to acquiring resources, designing and implementing services, being recognized as a contributor to the institutional mission and goals, and establishing internal and external learning partnerships. Objectives and action steps were developed from those goals.

Changes in information technology and in the landscape of higher education will no doubt pose formidable challenges in coming years, but we are confident that access to information will remain fundamental to the scholarly missions of Roberts Wesleyan College and Northeastern

Seminary and that, building on our heritage and alert to the opportunities inherent in our changing environment, Golisano Library will be a vital contributor to the future of these institutions of Christian higher education.

A second landmark personnel transition occurred in 2015 when Al Krober retired after 44 years of service, and Charles Canon III retired after 37 years of service. Esther Gillie was appointed as Director of Library Services in 2014.