



Fall 2011

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Friends of Dacus Library

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# Friends of Dacus Library Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 2

Fall 2011

## Gragg on Civil War; Pettus and McSpadden First Life Members

More than 50 Friends of Dacus Library were on hand on October 7 as the organization held its annual meeting in Tuttle Dining Room, McBryde Hall. The event was held in honor of Dorothy Medlin, a former professor and founding member of the group, who died last July.

Vice Chair Jane White presided. Ronnie Faulkner, secretary-treasurer, introduced the speaker Rod Gragg, award-winning author of 16 books and director of the Center for Military and Veterans Studies at Coastal Carolina University, who spoke on "Up Close and Personal: The Civil War in the Words of Eyewitnesses."

Using letters, journals and other primary resources, Gragg gave an overview of both Union and Confederate soldiers' perceptions of "seeing the elephant"—the term for engaging in combat.

Gragg noted that very few Civil War soldiers had any military training and many possessed "a casual attitude toward discipline."

Also, most Southern soldiers and about half of Northern soldiers were from farms and had never been subject to the diseases rampant in mass armies. Over half of the 620,000 who died in the conflict, succumbed to vagaries of disease.

The battlefields were characterized by the roar of guns and artillery, which one soldier described as "un-bottled thunder." The horrendous casualties resulted in scenes of the "dead and wounded lying in heaps" on battlefields. Some became rather callous at the sight of so much death and destruction, but many

more turned to their Christian faith.

Gragg emphasized this pervasive religious attitudes and the "faith based comments" common to soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

Upon the completion of Gragg's talk, Dean Mark Y. Herring rose to induct the life members of the Friends of Dacus Library.

Louise Pettus, Winthrop University alumna and professor emerita of history for whom the Archives and Special Collections are named, was recognized as the first life member. Kay McSpadden, Winthrop alumna and York Comprehensive High School English teacher, was honored as the second life member of the Friends group.

The following officers were re-elected: Jack Weaver, chairman, and Jane White, vice chairman. Janet Gray and Marilyn Sarow were elected to terms on the Board of Directors, replacing Marla Black and Sandra White.

The event officially closed with a brief overview of the changes at the Dacus Library presented by Dean Herring. He noted the significance of the relocation of the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections to the former Bookworm on Cherry Road, which will lead to more "town and gown" cooperation. Gragg remained afterwards to autograph books and talk with attendees.



Below: Louise Pettus, Dean Mark Herring, and Kay McSpadden



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**Sharyn McCrumb  
Autographing Copies  
of Her Book**

### **McCrumb Relates Her Version of the Tom Dooley Story**

Hang down your head, Tom Dooley  
Hang down your head and cry  
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley  
Poor boy, you're bound to die.  
I met her on the mountain  
There I took her life.  
Met her on the mountain  
Stabbed her with my knife.

*The Kingston Trio, "Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley" (1958)*

**B**estselling author Sharyn McCrumb gave an entertaining talk to a group of over 40 fans and students in the Tuttle Room of McBryde Hall on November 3 about Appalachian culture and her latest novel *The Ballad of Tom Dooley*. She was introduced by Jack Weaver, professor emeritus of Winthrop and chairman of the Friends of Dacus Library.

McCrumb, who lives in Virginia, noted that she was the product of a "mixed marriage." Both her parents were North Carolina Baptists, but her mother was from Wilmington, N.C., and her father was from Appalachia, a few miles from the Tennessee line. Culturally, her parents were from very different worlds with radically different world views. Her mother was a genteel flatlander, while her father was a part of highly individualistic and aggressive mountain culture. The difference, she said, was as marked as that between the English and the Scots; between the movie *Steel Magnolias* and the movie *Braveheart*.

McCrumb indicated that her latest book was the result of some detailed investigation of court records, newspaper accounts, the U.S. Census, and the military records of Tom Dooley (whose actual family name was Dula) and James Melton, the husband of Tom's lover the beautiful and conceited Ann Melton.

She said that almost everything the public knew about the case, especially as it was related in the award-winning 1958 Kingston Trio song "Hang Down Your Head, Tom Dooley," was wrong.

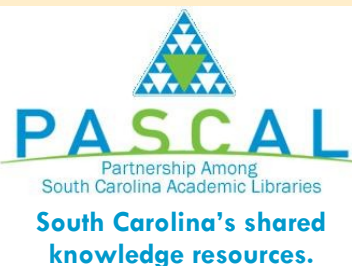
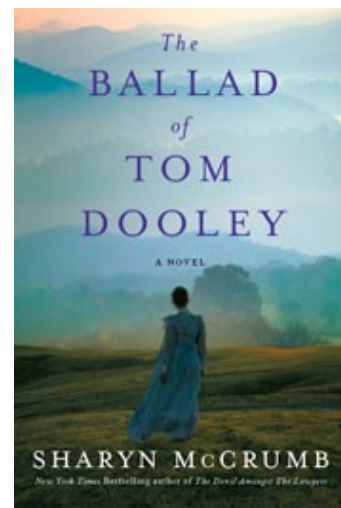
Tom, who always loved Ann, was convicted and hanged for the murder of another woman, Laura Foster, with whom he had a passing relationship. Laura vanished on the day of her planned elopement. Everyone assumed she was going to meet Tom, but McCrumb makes a strong case that she was planning to depart with another man who lived on an adjacent farm.

The author believes, based on a study of the evidence and the psychology of all those involved in the case, that the actual murderer was Ann Melton, who was driven to distraction by jealousy at the relationship between Tom and Laura. She thinks that Pauline Foster, who was related to both Ann and Laura and was the primary witness in the case, was driven by a sociopathic hatred of Tom and Ann. In the novel, Pauline plays a key role in fanning the flames of Ann Melton's jealousy.

After McCrumb's presentation, she took questions and then autographed copies of her books for attendees at the event. She also gave out buttons which read: "Ann did it!"



**Sharyn Uses Two Winthrop  
Students to Demonstrate the  
Heights of Alleged Murderer  
Tom Dula and Laura Foster**





## Friends Like These: a Tribute to Dot Medlin... Dean Herring

For several years now—actually more like two decades—I have been slog-ging my way through the Loeb Classical Library. For those of you who may not know these texts, here's a brief history.

Born in 1867, James Loeb went on to become a successful banker and founder of Kuhn Loeb & Company. A man of classical tastes, he liked music because his mother loved it and inculcated him at an early age. When James entered Harvard, he focused (we would say "majored") in Greek and Latin. He could have studied Egyptology but obeyed his father's wishes (imagine that!), and now we, those of us who luxuriate in shade of the tree he planted, are glad he did. He bequeathed a sizable gift to make classical knowledge more available "to the masses."

Probably nothing else demonstrates this better than his "Loeb Classical Library" series. Loeb's large endowment (he gave another one to the New York American Institute of Musical Art, or what became Julliard) made certain that the most gifted Latin and Greek scholars would translate the best classical works. Known by the familiar green (Greek) and red (Latin) bindings, the Loeb Classical Library became a staple of libraries across the world, bringing Cicero, Aristotle, Suetonius, Thucydides and all the rest to everyone from New York to New Guinea. While they, like us, have their flaws, the robber barons from Loeb to Vanderbilt to Rockefeller left behind, in spite of or perhaps because of their acquisitiveness, much that we enjoy with gleeful delight.

"The shifts of fortune test the reliability of friends," writes Cicero, whose works I've been reading this week. It struck me, seeing this line, that Dacus has much

to be thankful for in its friends, especially in one Dottie Medlin. Whatever the shifts of fortune, Dot remained one of the truest of Dacus friends. Earlier this week, we gathered to pay tribute to Dot whose un-stinting kindness left Dacus a most sizable gift of \$400,000. Dot began this gift modestly many years ago. And now, in the twilight of her life, it shines radiantly for the rest of us to enjoy. Dot planted a seed many years ago and because of that Dacus will enjoy a rich future harvest.

Most of you know Dot's unceasing kindness to Winthrop and most especially to Dacus. I first came to know her through the Friends of Dacus, a group that she was instrumental in starting and sustaining while it grew into the mature organization it has become. Dacus has had more than its share of true champions, and Dot was certainly one of those. She clung tenaciously to Dacus, supporting us, fighting for us, arguing for us, wheedling many into joining the Friends, and coaxing others into sustaining gifts. Fortunes shifted for Dacus, but Dot never wavered.

Dot will be missed for so many things: her unending smile, her wide-ranging intellect, her indefatigable energy. But perhaps more importantly, she will be remembered not only by those of us who knew her, but for by generations to come who will know her only by name. Thucydides, whose works were on last year's Loeb list, wrote that "we secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them." Dacus has been the recipient of an endless list of favors Dot Medlin did for her.



Dean Mark Y. Herring



The Bookworm, pictured above, is nearing completion of the renovations to become the new home of the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections in December 2011.

### "ONLINE READING

WILL NEVER  
REPLACE THE  
PHYSICAL AND  
EMOTIVE DELIGHT  
OF A LOVELY FAT  
PAPERY BOOK."

—"THE DEATH OF THE  
BOOK, AGAIN"

[WWW.GUARDIAN.CO.UK](http://WWW.GUARDIAN.CO.UK)



# Friends of Dacus Library



Supporting Winthrop's scholarly community since 1996: <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/friends>

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

## A Note from the Chair

**Dacus Library**  
824 Oakland Avenue  
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Phone: 803/323-2131  
Fax: 803/323-2215  
[www.winthrop.edu/dacus/](http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/)



### Board Members effective Jan. 1:

Marsha Bollinger  
Ronnie Faulkner  
Janet Gray  
Marilyn Sarow  
Mickey Taylor  
Jack Weaver (Chair)  
Jane White

A recent newsletter from my undergraduate alma mater, Berea College, begins with the question, "What Do You Remember?" and follows up with a series of short articles by that issue's contributors. I would add an equally valid question, "And Why Do You Remember It?" I had to miss the October gathering of Friends of Dacus because I needed to be in North Dakota, so I would have to leave the intended answer blank and substitute my own. I am told it was quite successful and know that Louise Pettus and Kay Darwin McSpadden were appropriately honored for being life-time members of this organization.

It is time for the rest of us to pay our dues for 2012 and that is something we must remember. Dr Faulkner tells me that our organization is within \$5,000 of having the \$25,000 necessary to establish a Friends of Dacus Endowment Fund. With that designation, FOD will have some control over how the fund is invested and how its receipts are used by Dacus. All who become Lifetime Members will be honored in the same manner as were Louise and Kay. So, please remember to pay your dues and do so expeditiously. Why? We are doing some good for an establishment in which we believe.

For me, libraries will always be collectors and repositories of books and serials, but they are always much more to students, faculty, and local citizens. On occasion, they also are able to honor the producers of those books, as well. On November 3rd, the Friends of Dacus sponsored a lecture and autograph session for Sharyn McCrumb and her latest book, *The Ballad of Tom Dooley*. That was also a successful venture, with students, FOD members, a number of library staff members, faculty, and townspeople in atten-

dance. Ms. McCrumb gave a highly informative speech about her work and answered questions about this particular volume with dramatic demonstrations. Since I grew up in the mountains of North Carolina forty miles from where the events of the novel took place, I was pleased to have a logical explanation of the Tom Dooley/Laura Foster murder mystery. Having plunged into the novel, I also admire the manner in which McCrumb tells the usual two stories for one in her "ballad" novels. Hope you are enjoying the book, too. It is good to remember the writers who furnish the works for our libraries, both institutional and personal. Why? Because, to a considerable degree, we are still educated by reading and, as we all know, education begins with thinking about something we have read and continues for the remainder of our lives. Like libraries and library endowment funds, we are works in progress.

Best regards,

*Jack W. Weaver*

Emeritus Professor of English

P.S. You can renew your membership online by going to the Friends of Dacus Library web page; or, if you prefer, by printing, completing and mailing the Membership Application on page 5. Contributions are tax deductible. —JWW

**"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them."**

**— Mark Twain**

**Membership Application : The Friends of Dacus Library (Mail to address in box below)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone No. (if different than home no.): \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Year (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Winthrop (check one):  
\_\_\_\_\_ Alumni \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty/Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Friend \_\_\_\_\_ Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Student

Amount of Gift: \_\_\_\_\_

- |         |   |                   |
|---------|---|-------------------|
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|         | Corporate (Businesses/Organizations Only) | \$500.00-\$999.99 |
|         | Patron                                    | \$200.00-\$499.99 |
|         | Sustaining Member                         | \$100.00-\$199.00 |
|         | Member                                    | \$50.00-\$99.99   |
|         | Winthrop Student                          | \$10.00-\$49.99   |

If you wish to make a gift \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of, or \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of someone, please indicate whom:

Name/address of person to be notified about honor/memorial in box below:

**Make check out to:**

**Winthrop University Foundation**  
**Sykes House**  
**638 Oakland Ave.**  
**Rock Hill, SC 29733**

**On "For" line write:**  
**Friends of Dacus Library**