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**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **News About the Dacus Library and Archives**
- **Friends Move Forward After SC Raffle Enabling Act**

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Making Every Dollar Count... Mark Y. Herring

Every year, Dacus examines costs with respect to its return on investment, something every business does, or rather should do. This isn't an easy process when it comes to libraries. Everything we buy, we buy for a reason. We don't buy a book simply because it has come to us with a recommendation. We tie it to a program, a discipline, a faculty member and his or her courses. This is one reason our first-year circulation of books is much higher than the national norm. The same is true for our much more costly databases. Ideally, we'd like to have at least one aggregate database for every discipline. That isn't always possible, but fortunately aggregate databases do overlap, so even smaller programs are often covered, even if we can't afford one specifically tied to that discipline.

Looking over what we have and trying to ascertain if we should keep it, often becomes for us a painful process, like trying to figure out which of your children you no longer wish to have around, even if they are teenagers. It isn't an easy task, but it's one we do regularly because we have to, because it is the best practice. We look for duplication, for less costly ways of doing what we must do but still doing it all

the same. Too often for libraries this becomes a through-the-motions exercise: you look but nothing changes in your budget. Not for us, not for this library.

We have looked to what is called "open access," a kind of access that does not cost much but isn't aggregated by a middleman. What open access offers can be equally formidable as far as scholarship goes, but it can also be filled with junk, so we have to move carefully in this milieu. It may take a little more time, but once we find the right piece, it can save us thousands.

For some months now, we have also been looking at what we librarians call our ILS (integrated library system). For more than thirty years, we have been with the same vendor. The system is robust, does everything we want it to do, is fast, efficient ... and costs ... well, let's just say it isn't inexpensive. Given the landscape that is higher education nationwide and especially here in the Palmetto State, we began looking at less costly alternatives. We think we have found one.

It goes without saying that we weren't going to find one that is cheaper and does every single thing our current one does. What we found is an

ILS that is much less costly, allows us to redeploy staff, but will force upon us a bit more work on the librarian side of things. From a user point of view, there is no difference. A different look will greet users by mid-summer, but it will not take long to get used to it.

Why do such a thing? As I intimated above, given the landscape of higher education, assuming budgets will increase with need is as silly a view as it sounds. Yet, we still need to make progress, to provide patrons with resources, and to create new avenues of research. We could not do that and remain as we are today.

We know there will be hiccups with a new system; there always are. But once we have ironed them out, we look forward to providing users with the same excellent service they have come to expect of us.

We want to make every dollar count. We have always tried to do that. While the jury is still out and will be until this summer, we think that we have found yet another way to be sure every dollar counts as much as it can.

Frankly, no one can pinch a penny quite as well as a librarian can. So if you hear some squealing, it's just us making every dollar—no, make that every penny—count.

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The Dacus Library of Winthrop University was constructed in 1969 and named for the school's first librarian Ida Jane Dacus, who served from 1900 to 1945 and was also the first person in South Carolina to receive professional training in library studies. Today the facility houses over 500,000 volumes and provides extensive online resources to support the educational and research needs of the Winthrop academic community.



FRIENDS NEWS : RAFFLE AND SHOWCASE OF JOYCE PLYLER!

As noted in an earlier issue of this newsletter, and after the approval of an amendment for charity raffles at the November general election, the Friends of Dacus Library Board authorized us to pursue the possible raffle of a one-week stay at a North Myrtle Beach house. On March 5 the South Carolina Legislature passed enabling legislation, which outlined raffle requirements, including the need to apply for an authorization through the SC Secretary of State. This application was completed and submitted on March 23. The Secretary of State's Office will start issuing the appropriate permits on April 4, 2015.

Pending the approval from the state, the Friends of Dacus will be selling raffle tickets to raise funds for the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund. Stay tuned for the details about this important fundraising activity.

JOYCE E. PLYLER, a 1980 B.A. cum laude graduate and 2010 M.A. graduate of Winthrop, has a J.D. from Emory University and is a practicing attorney in the Charlotte area.

In addition to her significant legal career, Joyce has been a longtime friend and benefactor of the the Dacus Library, the Pettus Archives and Special Collections, and Winthrop University. In 2012 she made a generous gift to establish the Historical Preservation Fund, which supports the mission of the Archives as it relates to the history of South Carolina.

At the time she did this, Plyler said, "Winthrop's Archives is a historical treasure and is greatly in need of support to increase the accessibility of its holdings for students and scholars."

Plyler, a Life Member of the Friends of Dacus Library, has served on both the Library Advisory Board (LAB) and the Friends of Dacus Library Board.

These boards were consolidated into a single board in 2013.

Dean Mark Y. Herring observed, "Joyce's service on our board and her contributions to it have been both insightful and generous. She is the ideal 'friend' for any organization to have: intelligent, extraordinarily capable, and unswervingly devoted."

Joyce is married to Mark J. Horoschak, who is also an attorney.

