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Dacus Library

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**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **News About the Dacus Library and Archives**
- **Special Grant Awarded to Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections**

**IN THIS  
ISSUE:**

- On Finding One's Way** 1
- Dacus Library of Winthrop University** 2
- Lutz Grant of \$14,000 Awarded for Microform Conversion ...**

## On Finding One's Way .... Mark Y. Herring

College is a lot of things for many young people: new beginnings, broadening horizons, eventual adulthood. One could say that the college experience is four (5 or 6) years of finding one's way: in school, in career, and in life, if we may be so meta-physical. (And let me add, it isn't something one can do at home in pajamas, on the computer, while a parent brings in meals.)

All of this process produces a certain amount of angst and frustration. That's really part of the process, the rite of passage if you will, and every young person must come to terms with that. While students may like to rely (or over-rely) on their parents—and believe me, they do—there are some things they have to struggle through themselves, and no amount of tears, hand-holding, and smart phone calls to relatives and over-sharing on Facebook can change that. One of the more pedestrian parts of this process is, well, finding one's way about campus, and by synecdoche, each building.

When we began our grand and extreme makeover of the first floor in Dacus, one of the things

I had in mind was getting rid of as much signage as possible. Now, you must understand that we librarians are more than a little uptight about signage. We want signs anywhere there might be even the slightest bit of confusion. Before our makeover, our building had more signs than six zodiacs. The problem with so much signage isn't that it has to be present—that can be debated among friends—but that it's simply impossible ever to have enough money to buy all the needed signage that looks presentable. This means that some signs will be homemade, and that the prospect of some unsightly signage is more than inevitable.

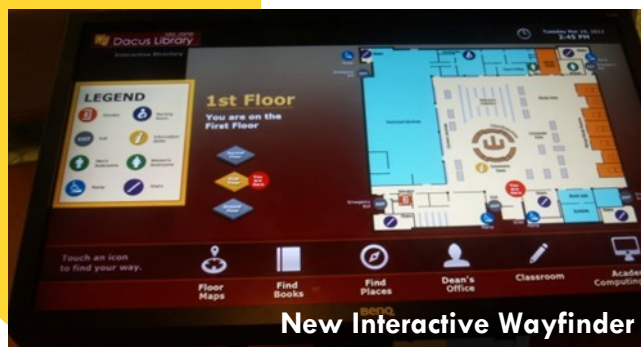
We made every effort in Dacus to avoid this at all costs. (My staff will tell you how uptight I am about overmuch signage, and how hysterical I get about homemade signs.) But some things other than death and taxes are inevitable. Our first-rate building committee came up with a grand solution: interactive signage. Interactive signage isn't exactly new but it isn't all that old, either. The committee went to work and found a company we thought might be both good and within our budget. The best laid plans *gang aft agley*, as almost no one, sadly, says anymore. Unfortunately, as with any building project, unexpected expenses occurred and before long it became clear that even very affordable interactive signage would not make it in our ever shrinking renovation

budget. And then, a miracle happened.

Well, okay, we worked our way into one. At the beginning of the process, I called on a number of companies we do business with and asked them, politely, that because we had done \$X dollars' worth of business with them over the years, would they like to return the favor and help us with renovation? Quickly and without hesitation, Innovative Interfaces, the company that made the software that runs our online catalog, jumped in and our interactive "way-finding" signage was on track again.

I won't bore you with the details of why it has taken until now to get this in place. All I can say is that the day is here and we have the system up and running. Dacus users now have an immediate interactive directional system to all three of our floors. We're excited about this new feature for Dacus. You have to see it to believe it, but the picture at the left may serve for illustration.

The new interactive signage is just one more example of how contributions to Dacus serve the library and the university. You've heard me say this before, but let me repeat it: *"The best part about giving to the library is that you are not helping one student in one discipline, but every student no matter what the discipline."*



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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.



## **Lutz Grant of \$14,000 Awarded for Microform Conversion Project**

The Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections was recently awarded a \$14,000 grant from the Lutz Foundation for the purchase of equipment and software for digitization of selected microform newspapers and other documents, dating as far back as the 1860s.

Dacus Library is joining other South Carolina university libraries in conducting a massive, multi-year effort to digitize Palmetto State media. The project proposed should start by this spring and will be ongoing, said Dr. Mark Herring, Dacus dean of library services.

Researchers have long complained to librarians how difficult and time-consuming it is to search on microfilm. Herring said it is growing increasingly difficult and costly to acquire microfilm, plus there is no search feature to aid researchers in finding information quickly.

The long-term plan for archives is to make the digitized records available to researchers and the general public where applicable under new copyright court rulings.

Included in the digitization plan is the

Winthrop student paper, *The Johnsonian* (1923-present), which provides valuable insights about S.C. women's history, civil rights and integration.

In addition, Archives staff members plan to cooperate in the digitization of the Chester County newspapers in the possession of the Chester County Library, including older back issues of *The News and Herald* (Winnsboro), 1866-1878, 1905-1919, and 1921-1931, *The Chester News*, 1933-1971, *The Chester Reporter*, 1874-1906, 1933-1971, and perhaps others. A cooperative agreement on this project has been entered upon between the Dacus Library and the Chester County Library Board.

Archives staff members also plan to digitize original historical records related to Chester and York counties, such as the *York County Soldiers Board of Relief Papers*, 1862-1863, which relate to York and Chester counties' militia troop strength during the Civil War.

The Lutz grant will be paired with university money and Archives money from the Louise Pettus Endowment, which is a fund established by a major benefactor of

the University to support Archives and Special Collections. The budget for year one, including in-kind contributions, is anticipated to be nearly \$24,000, said Herring.

The Chester-based Lutz Foundation, has provided three other grants between 2001-03 totaling \$22,500 for the library's digitization efforts. These grants made possible the Archives and Special Collections digitized website, which currently provides access to some 126 collections and 2,785 images.

The Lutz Foundation was established in 1995 after the deaths of Clarence H. and Anna E. Lutz of Chester, SC, and was designed to help fund religious, community, educational, health and welfare needs in the Upstate area. The Foundation's mission is to "enrich as many lives as possible with the funds available each year."

