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Dacus Library

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If you read these words of mine from time to time I know they must weigh upon you. I know that because when I write these columns, they weigh upon me. What can I say, what can I write, that will resonate in such a way that you’ll want to give, or to help us to grow, as is the vernacular these days? It isn’t easy, believe me.

But I don’t doubt readers find these columns perplexing. I know I would. When I look at our development pages here even I shake my head in amazement! What can I possibly do to help such large projects? A new building, repurposing of staff, a book and periodical fund, or a speakers’ series—all of them are a bit daunting, aren’t they? I wish we didn’t have to ‘pass the offering plate’ so to say, but that is the unfortunate new normal in higher education, and yes, even in public higher education. If you don’t believe me, just ask anyone working in higher ed in Wisconsin. Or North Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, or any of the other states with a higher education budget. These are indeed interesting if not very troublesome times.

So, what can you do to help? Let me count the ways. Elsewhere in this newsletter you’ll read about the raffle above have been hugely popular on campuses around the country. Our students often complain that they can never find a place to park, so, all at once we in Dacus have solved their transportation problem while getting them into the building to check the bikes out. Who knows, perhaps they’ll read a book while there! Not only are these great commuter bikes, but we can have them custom made for Dacus.

Apparently, according to the latest health information, sitting is the new smoking, or at least just as bad for you. So we at Dacus put our heads together and came up with a solution even for that. Should we have any students who really do want to read while cycling, the ever enterprising Dacus can help with that, too. FitDesks, stationary bikes that can be used while studying. We have the room ready; all we need now are the funds to fill it with

Plato® SharedBike
a half dozen FitDesk bikes. Again, for a nominal fee, you can help with that project, too. The library wins by getting students over here, you win by having helped not just one student or discipline but any student studying any subject who comes in the building, and the students win by overcoming the sedentary ways that have been the hallmark of the cloistered scholar.

If none of these ideas appeal to you, drop me a line or give me a call, and I’m sure we can come up with something. The point is, Ida Jane Dacus can use your help, and you don’t have to be Donald Trump-rich to help us (though we’d never turn down the Donald’s bucks!). Libraries do not generate a great deal of revenue and we know it. We’re not exactly a sport that everyone flocks to, a wild and crazy place everyone runs to. If truth be told, a good many students come to see us only because they have no other choice.

But the fact is, we’re happy to have them here for whatever reason. If I had a nickel for each time someone told me he only went to the library to look for a smart date, I wouldn’t be writing these lines—we would have a perpetual endowment. But I don’t, so I am just as happy to welcome in star-struck paramours as I am the ideal student. We’re convinced that just by coming in here, students will leave smarter. And whatever hook it takes to get them here—bikes, books or bytes—we’re more than ready to use that tactic.

Can you help us?

LAURA MAHONY TOURS THE DACUS LIBRARY

As everyone is aware, the new top campus administrator moved with his family from Kent State University in Ohio to become the 11th president of Winthrop University on July 1, 2015. On July 30, Laura Mahony, the president’s wife toured both the Dacus Library and the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections.

Mrs. Mahony was born and raised in northeastern Ohio. She attended the University of Cincinnati and earned her B.A. in linguistics. She later graduated from the University of Louisville with a master's degree in social work. While not currently working in the field at this time, she remains a licensed clinical social worker.

Mrs. Mahony demonstrated an active curiosity about the library and its manifold operations as she was shown around the facility and introduced to faculty and staff by Dean Mark Y. Herring. The Dean made these post-tour observations: “We had a most delightful visit with an engaged and interesting First Lady even though the Palmetto State lived up to its usual reputation for sweltering summer heat. But Mrs. Mahony was undeterred, trekking with me to Pettus, too, where she was enthralled by the artifacts and history of the university she has come to call home.”
On June 3, 2015, the Friends of Dacus Library received a raffle authorization from the South Carolina Secretary of State’s Office. This means the organization can proceed with its planned beach house raffle. The official launch will be on October 5, the time of the Annual Meeting. This will give us a reasonable amount of time not only for distribution and sale of tickets, but will make possible a drawing in the Spring term, well before the summer vacation season of 2016. The winner will then have a number of options for possible stays at the North Myrtle Beach house. The house in question is being made available by the generosity of Judge Henry Woods and his wife Gale Teaster-Woods, Electronic and Continuing Resources Librarian at the Dacus Library. Both are longtime supporters of the Friends of Dacus Library. We will issue a minimum of six tickets per membership with a goal of selling a minimum of 200 tickets at $100 each. Funds raised will go toward the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund. Keep an eye out for a raffle surprise, too, details to come.

CAROLINE B. COONEY, bestselling author of more than 90 suspense, mystery, and romance novels for teenagers, with over 15,000,000 copies sold, made a generous contribution to the Friends in 2012 and has continued to support the organization. Her book The Face on the Milk Carton has sold over 3,000,000 copies and was made into a television movie. Her books have won many state library awards and are on many booklists, such as the New York Public Library’s annual teen picks. Caroline grew up in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, and spent most of her life on the shoreline of that state but is now in South Carolina near her family. She has three children and four grandchildren. She was a church organist for many years, accompanied the choirs at her children’s schools, and now plays keyboard for musicals. Janie Face to Face, the fifth book in the Janie series, which begins with The Face on the Milk Carton, came out last year. Other recent titles are Three Black Swans, They Never Came Back, If the Witness Lied and The Lost Songs. No Such Person, a thriller, appears in the summer of 2015. She is currently researching the exciting, terrifying, and completely unexpected story of the children who will one day sail on the Mayflower to the New World.