New library opens

By Anne Marie Koss

The new Women's Studies Library provides a little bit of everything, particularly for the student doing research on women.

This new library section, on the second floor of the main library, is set up to correspond to the Women Studies classes, librarian Abby Kratz said.

The library isn't limited to books. Pamphlets announcing classes from the Office of Women's Studies, guest speakers and projects are also available. The library's biweekly publication, "Women are Human," features book reviews, a calendar of local events for women and announcements for researchers. In addition, the library subscribes to numerous periodicals and has a microfilm collection dating from the 1960s.

The library, which provides a place to study and work, ideally should inspire new research for and about women, Kratz said.

Although the library has been planned since 1972, lack of funds delayed its establishment until this year. The books earmarked for Women's Studies were in Sullivan Hall and are still being moved, catalogued and shelved. About 1,400 volumes are already on the shelves.

"We've had a lot of good reactions about the library," said library assistant Virginia Reynolds. "A lot of people have been coming in to see what it's all about."

Kratz said, "We have had a lot of men coming in out of curiosity. A lot of faculty men and others like to come in and do research. But they don't have the feeling that it's a special place for them, as the women do."
Women's Library pioneer in its field

By Thrity Umrigar
Lantern staff writer
11-21-84

It is located on the second floor of the Main Library, sharing its quarters with the more well-known English Library.

But in its own quiet way, the Women's Library is a pioneer.

Adrienne Zahniser, head librarian, said that the library was one of the ten separate women's libraries in the country.

"Other universities like Wisconsin and Illinois have integrated women's collections in their main stacks. And OSU definitely has the only separate women's library in Ohio," Zahniser said.

Virginia Reynolds, the library media technical assistant, agreed. "It is certainly among the top 10 in the country," she said. "And we have an outstanding microfilm collection, which is the largest in the mid-West.

Although the agitation for the library actually began before the one for the Center for Women's Studies, it was only in 1977 that separate library was set up.

"Until then, we were part of the undergraduate library," she said. "Beth McNeer, who was the undergraduate librarian at the time, really worked in setting up this library."

In 1977, all the relevant books were transferred from the main stacks and the undergraduate library. The result was a library that started with a modest collection of 2,392 books and 44 publications.

"During the transfer from the main stacks, we also got some old 19th century and early 20th century women's magazines. They deal with women's rights, and the fashions and literature of their times," Reynolds said.

"Also, in 1978 we purchased the first book collection from a store that was going out of business. That was a major addition," she said.

Since 1977, the library has grown to its present collection of 7,000 books and about 75 periodicals. All except three of these periodicals were unique to this library.

Zahniser said, "We also try to maintain a balanced selection of books." Zahniser said, "We have conservative, modern and radical literature. Also our collection is heavily but not completely feminist.

"We do try to cover a wide range of topics — literature, history, sports, sociology," Zahniser said. "We also subscribe to publications from China, Poland, Canada, India, and England."

Reynolds said the library had been trying to expand its holdings of books on international women.

The library also has a pamphlet file, with "pamphlets on women in employment, battered women, third world women, abortion, etc." she said.

Zahniser said the funds for the library came from the Acquisitions Department. "As far as our budgets and functions go, we operate as separate units.

Zahniser said that there was a proposal to combine the circulation functions and the reserves with the main desk," she said.

Zahniser felt the proposal had its pros and cons. "The opportunity that a student has right now to get acquainted with the library staff will be lost. On the other hand, books disappear more easily from our shelves."

Martha Lawry, who was the Women Studies librarian from April 1979 to July 1980, and is now head of the cataloging department, said the library used to put out a bibliography of new books called "Women are Human." Later its role expanded to featuring book reviews.

"These reviews were scholarly, in-depth writings by the faculty." In 1979 the magazine changed its name to "Women Studies Review," which Lawry said "was very significant in the late 1970s, with nation-wide subscriptions." Today the magazine is produced by the Center for Women's Studies.

Lawry said the library's visibility had increased as had its recognition. "The library works very closely with the Center. And the size of the library has increased enormously."

"The Women's Studies Library is the fastest growing departmental library at Ohio State," Reynolds said.
The rising tide of feminism which spread rapidly in the late '60s and early '70s led inevitably to requests for library service to support multidisciplinary study and research from the viewpoint of the new women's consciousness.

The Women's Studies Library "was in no sense an overnight wonder, but rather a dream which grew slowly to reality." It began in 1972 with the publication of *Women are Human*, an annotated list of publications in the University Libraries by, about, or of interest to Ohio State women. It continued for a few years as a small collection within the Undergraduate Library, being first funded by donations from sororities and women's honorary societies, and was overseen by an ad hoc women's studies reference librarian, namely Beth McNeer. She first saw the university community's need for a women's studies library as an integral part of an academic, interdisciplinary women's studies program. She, with the help of other librarians who, like her, volunteered their time, piloted it through the difficult initial stages until Abby Kraus was appointed officially as the first librarian in 1976. A year later, in August 1977, the collection moved into its own refurbished quarters in room 240 of the Main Library.

The collection itself has been built with an eye to serving OSU women's studies graduates and undergraduates as well as others either interested only in a specific issue or who want to sample, in a general way, the current material dealing with women's issues.

The library is particularly proud of its microform collection (currently housed in room 140N, Main Library), which includes *The National Women's Party Papers and Her Story* (*Women's Serials, 1956-1974*). Late in 1979 the library ordered the microform edition of the British periodicals in the famous *Gerritsen Collection of Women's History, 1543-1945*. During the following years the library has been able to purchase the remaining titles of this collection, consisting of 1236 American monographs and 1059 British monographs. More recent acquisitions include microform reproductions of the Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt, the Papers of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the Papers of the Women's Trade Union League and its Principal Leaders.

Feminism is an entire world view . . . not just a laundry list of women's issues.

—Charlotte Bunch

Today, the Women's Studies Library collection consists of close to 12,000 volumes and 85 currently received journals. There is also an extensive pamphlet file of some 2500 items dealing with women's issues and arranged by subject. The annual materials budget is nearly $16,000.

The collection is heavily used, and last year over 16,000 monographs circulated through LCS to faculty and students. Reference service is available during weekday hours. The current librarian is Adrienne Zahniser who came in 1980, succeeding Martha Lawry. Virginia Reynolds has been the full-time staff member since the collection moved to the Main Library in 1976. As a part of the general reorganization of Main Library public services the past two years, the Women's Studies Library moved from room 240 to room 210, and, along with Black Studies, was placed administratively under the purview of the Assistant Director, Main Library Public Services. Both units share an information desk with the English, Theatre and Communications Reading Room and the History, Political Science, and Philosophy Reading Room.

The library is open the same hours as the Main Library, and service from the Information Desk is available from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday; 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday, and 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sunday. The library office hours (room 228) are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays. For further information, call 292-3036.

ed. note: The bulk of this article has been excerpted from a piece written by the late Martha Lawry and which appeared in the November 1980 issue of *Friends Line*.
A Brief History of the Women's Studies
Library at OSU
Linda Krikos and Virginia Reynolds (Spring 1997)

The momentum of the feminist movement and the advent of
women's studies courses inspired women on the OSU
campus to request a separate Women's Studies Library in
1972. Several women, including reference librarian Beth
McNeer, recognized that such a library would be an integral
component of the academic, interdisciplinary Women's
Studies program being developed. They began purchasing
books and producing Women Are Human, an information
sheet and annotated list of books of interest to women.
Donations from sororities and women's organizations initially
funded a small collection of books and journals housed within
the Undergraduate Library.

As ad hoc Women's Studies reference librarian, Beth McNeer,
with the help of other OSU librarians, especially Reggie
Brown and Carol Krumm, piloted the collection through its
initial stages, organized a file of information resources for
women, and provided Women's Studies reference assistance
to students and faculty.

With the establishment of the Office of Women's Studies in
1975, the desire for a formal separate library intensified. The
goal was partially realized in October 1976 with the
appointment of Abby Kratz as the official half-time Women's
Studies librarian. She had a budget of $3,590. In August
1977, a separate library became a reality when the collection
moved to the second floor of the Main Library. Virginia
Reynolds joined the staff as the full-time Library
Bibliographic Assistant, a position she still holds. The
collection consisted of 1,463 cataloged volumes, 38 serial
titles, 48 microforms and archival material. Circulation for
the first year totaled 3,539.
By 1980, the women's studies program had advanced academically and developed into a Center for Women's Studies, and the Library was an official departmental library. The collection expanded to 4,000 cataloged volumes, 64 serials, and 569 microforms. The budget was $8,000 and circulation mushroomed to 9,747. The Library had also obtained the entire inventory of Isis Books, a feminist bookstore in New York unable to stay in business. Other materials, particularly memoirs, autobiographies and other primary sources, were transferred from the Main Library stacks.

Under the literary expertise of Martha Lawry, appointed as Women's Studies Librarian in 1979, Women Are Human evolved into the Women's Studies Review, the first publication in the US devoted solely to reviews by and about women. The new publication was distributed to over 1,000 students and faculty at Ohio State and elsewhere. Adrienne Zahniser, who became the Librarian in 1980, continued as editor until 1988 when the Review combined with the Center for Women's Studies' The Sojourner to become Feminisms. Responsibility for the publication then transferred to the Center.

During this time period, Adrienne fought to keep the collection intact and under her direction. Important microforms sets were added to the collection, which by now numbered over 12,000 volumes and included an extensive pamphlet file. In 1990 Linda Krikos assumed the tasks of Women's Studies Librarian.

The 1990-91 academic year marked the admittance of the first class in the newly approved MA in Women's Studies degree, and in 1995 the Center became the Department of Women's Studies. Professor Krikos guided the Library into the electronic age with bibliographic instruction on the complexities of the new databases. The Library had moved to a new area of the second floor and had become an official unit of the Main Library.

As of late 1996, the collection consisted of almost 18,000 cataloged volumes, over 100 serial titles, and nearly 2,000 microforms. Materials circulated over 26,000 times during 1995-96. Circulation grew as Ohio colleges and universities
accessed the collection through the OhioLink program. Additionally, an electronic index to women's studies materials was mounted on the Library Resources Network, and a small video collection was begun. The microforms collection is particularly strong and contains papers of individuals, families, and organizations as well as many historical journals.

The Women's Studies Library continues to grow and evolve. It slightly expanded its space in 1997-98 and can preserve less used, fragile materials in the Book Depository. A web site was added in time for the 1998-99 school year.

The staff strives to build on the strengths of the collection, reinforce other areas as publishing patterns change, and remain cognizant of new directions in the library field. The Library's goal is to provide the best possible service to the Department of Women's Studies as well as other courses or projects that focus on women or contain a component on gender.

Women's Studies Librarians have included:

- Beth McNeer (Ad Hoc), 1972-1976
- Abby Kratz, 1976-1978
- Martha Lawry, 1979-1980
- Adrienne Zahniser, 1980-1989
- Susan Cull (Acting), 1989-1990
- Linda Krikos, 1990-present.

This site maintained by Linda O'Brien and Valerie Rake
Site updated August 6, 2004 - Individual pages updated as needed

If you have any difficulty accessing any portion of this site due to incompatibility with adaptive technology or if you need information in an alternative format, please contact the Department of Women's Studies at womstd.info@osu.edu or (614) 292-1021

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