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From the Director’s Desk

It is with a wide variety of emotions that I write my last column for Insight. First, I feel so honored and fortunate to have been granted the opportunity to lead an ARL library and work with such a terrific library staff. The experience has allowed me to encounter so many fabulous individuals, both inside and outside of the Libraries. However, I will sorely miss the daily camaraderie and interactions that have made (almost) every day of my 21+ years as director so engaging and invigorating. So, stepping aside is both happy and sad at the same time.

Stepping away is also a mixed bag in regard to where the library stands today. For almost my entire time with the MSU Libraries, including 15 years prior to being appointed director, additional space was simply not available. In fact, as more than 15 branch libraries closed, the Main Library facility became ever more cramped as branch materials were transferred back to the Main Library. This changed only a few short years ago with a substantial expansion of our Remote Storage Facility. As seldom used materials are transferred to that facility, followed by massive shifting to consolidate volumes remaining in the Main Library, space is eventually vacated for reassignment. The first direct result of this process was the recent opening of the Digital Scholarship Lab, which occupied space filled by book stacks less than a year ago. I will miss the fun of planning new and expanded service areas, while feeling gratified to know that the next head of the MSU Libraries will not have their options limited due to space concerns.

This leads directly to the last emotion, which is that I am 100% comfortable that this is an appropriate time for me to step away. The ongoing development of the Digital Scholarship Lab, and the things that will follow, require a leader who “grew up in the digital era,” which clearly I did not. One can learn a foreign language later in life, but one can never reach the level of a native speaker. It is time for the MSU Libraries to have leadership “born and raised” in the era of digital technology. There is great comfort in understanding this, and it will make passing the baton to my successor a pleasure.

Space won’t permit the listing of the hundreds of people who have supported (and endured) me along the way, but I must mention just a few very special individuals. Some encouraged and supported me (my parents and wife), some taught me (Larry Hillerdale, George Hopkins, Michael Gorman, Clive Emmanuel and Ken Mackenzie), some mentored me (Ellen Whitney, Jim Ranz, Beth Shapiro, Dick Chapin, and Terry Link), and so many have done endless work that made me look so much better than I ever endured. Many have made significant contributions to the Libraries and the Libraries will never be the same. There are too many to name and I’ve already thanked the majority of you. Thank you all of you.

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Best always,
State-of-the-Art Digital Scholarship Lab Enables Innovative Teaching and Learning

In February 2018, a brand new Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) opened on 2 West of the Main Library. A partnership between MSU Libraries and the College of Arts & Letters, the 10,000-square-foot lab features a 360-degree immersive visualization room, a Virtual Reality Room with VR headsets, instruction space, meeting rooms, and office space. There are also workstations throughout the lab with high-speed computers and 28 types of specialized software to support sophisticated design and data analysis.

The 360 Visualization Room, a large cylinder with a 360-degree projection screen inside, is the first of its kind at any university in the country. It offers a shared, immersive visualization experience, taking research, teaching, and learning to a new level.

The Digital Scholarship Lab is the only place on campus that offers such a comprehensive set of digital scholarship tools, and unlike labs at other places on campus where access requires being affiliated with a given college, it’s open to MSU students, faculty, and staff from every academic discipline on campus. It’s also open for extended hours as late as 11 p.m.

“Located at the heart of campus, our students and faculty now have access to a state-of-the-art facility that elevates our recognized strengths in the digital arts and humanities,” said Christopher P. Long, Dean of MSU’s College of Arts & Letters. “This unique space affords students and faculty access to equipment and experiences unavailable anywhere else in the country. It offers a shared, immersive visualization experience, taking research, teaching, and learning to a new level.”

Jon Frey, Associate Professor, joint appointment in the Department of Romance and Classical Studies, uses the 360 Visualization Room to immerse his students in an archaeological dig or virtually walk them through a museum.

“What’s nice about the DSL is that there are only so many students I can take to Greece in the summer, but now I can bring Greece, bring Italy, and bring the Mediterranean to the students here,” said Frey. “We can stand in the 360 space, and I can still talk about those physical relationships. I can point the students to the left, I can tell them to turn around and look.”

Conserving The Faerie Queene in Special Collections

In mid-February, we launched the Adopt-a-Book project, a crowdfunding initiative, with the goal of raising $3,500 in 40 days to conserve a rare, three-volume set of The Faerie Queene printed in 1897.

Like many of our invaluable resources in Special Collections, The Faerie Queene was worn and in need of special care. All three volumes are bound in vellum and suffered what many vellum books do—the covers were warped and the vellum was cracked at the hinges.

We spread the word about the Adopt-a-Book project through email messages and social media posts, and support from library donors began pouring in. In the first seven days, we had raised $276, and the project was 7% funded. By day 10, it was 59% funded!

Thanks to all 47 of our generous supporters who donated to the cause, we met (and exceeded) our goal ahead of schedule. With 17 days still remaining, the Adopt-a-Book project was already 101% funded with a total of $3,560 raised.

These funds will directly cover the cost of much-needed conservation treatment for The Faerie Queene. The entire three-volume set has already made its way to North Carolina to a special conservation center where the damaged covers are being repaired, the vellum bindings are being strengthened, and custom-fitted cloth boxes are being created to protect the books long into the future.

We are so grateful that future classes at MSU will be able to visit Special Collections to learn about this famous work of English literature for many years to come.

Like The Faerie Queene, many of our rare books are worn and in desperate need of conservation treatment to ensure that they are available for research long into the future. Help conserve our most precious resources by making a gift to the Florence G. Wallace Conservation Lab.
Cliff Haka Retires After 21 Years as Director of Libraries

Cliff Haka joined MSU Libraries in 1982 as an Information Librarian and later became the Head of the Information/Reference Department from 1985-1987. He went on to become the Assistant Director for Access Services from 1987-1990 and then the Assistant Director for Administrative Services from 1990-1997 before taking on the role as Director of Libraries in 1997.

Taking charge at a time when all campus dorms were being wired for the Internet, the Libraries were experiencing a sharp falloff in use. To counter this, Haka committed to an aggressive program to encourage students to return. This effort included physical upgrades of study space, the introduction of the Cyber Cafe, expanded hours of operation to 24 hours a day, five days a week, and the addition of hundreds of public access computers.

A second early initiative was to invest in librarians. Haka increased funding to support librarian efforts in professional and scholarly activities, and beginning librarian salaries were increased to continue to attract “the best and the brightest.” A library faculty evaluation system that directly parallels the system utilized by the teaching/research faculty was also implemented.

In 2000, Haka played an instrumental role in the development of MeLCat, the State of Michigan’s e-library catalog and resource-sharing system that now includes over 450 libraries across the state. Inspired by the land-grant mission of MSU, he brought the right people together and invested the funds to make it happen.

“Without Cliff, there would be no MeLCat,” said Colleen Hyslop, Associate Director for Systems and Technical Services during the early days of MeLCat who worked closely with Haka throughout her career before retiring as Senior Associate Director of Libraries in 2014. “He had the vision. While there were many people who contributed to the success of the pilot project that eventually led to MeLCat, it never would have happened without his leadership.”

Ten years into his role as Director of Libraries, in 2007, Haka pushed for more librarian positions, pointing to the significant impact of the work that librarians were doing to carry out the academic mission of the university, particularly in the areas of instruction and big data. Thanks to his advocacy, the Provost committed to twenty new librarian positions which entailed four new hires each year over five years.

While the library that he grew up in doesn’t really exist anymore (there were no personal computers when he attended college), he has successfully led the Libraries into the future during a time of exponential growth in technology and considerable transformation in libraries.

During his career, libraries have become so much more than a place to go and get information. Increasingly, libraries are helping people with what to do once they find the information, providing software and consultation services to help library users make sense of complex information resources such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Haka prioritized and supported the construction of new, inspiring spaces for collaboration and learning such the creation of Hollander MakeCentral, the relocation of the Special Collections Reading Room to the first floor, and the construction of the new Digital Scholarship Lab. Many of these and other enhancements required outside funding, and his work with Development is noteworthy.

Haka noted that, “MSU does not have a long tradition of fundraising, so when I become director, the library had less than half a million dollars in endowments. Things got off to a great start with a million-dollar gift from the United States Golf Association for the Turfgrass Information Center in 1999, and we are now in the neighborhood of 16 million dollars in endowments. That helps a great deal. But in the end, it is the staff that makes things happen, with or without funding, and in that regard, the staff we have built here has never disappointed.”

While he will miss the daily activities as Director of Libraries, he looks forward to joining his wife, Sue Haka, in retirement and will enjoy spending time with family and friends, especially his grandchildren. He also looks forward to spending more time working in his vegetable garden, traveling, and of course, golfing.

Clifford H. Haka’s Celebration Reception and Dinner on Friday, July 13, 2018.

Details and registration at go.msu.edu/haka

For more information, contact Lisa Boyer at events@msu.edu or 517-884-1058.

Make plans now to attend
The Library Environmental Committee presents
BEAL BOTANICAL GARDEN TOURS
with Beal Garden Assistant Curator
Peter Carrington

**History of American Indian Agriculture**
Thursday, June 21 • 12:10–12:50 p.m.
Review the important history of the agriculture of the first Americans. These accomplished agronomists developed many of the most important crops grown today.

**Plant Pigments: What They Do for Plants; What They Do for Us**
Thursday, July 12 • 12:10–12:50 p.m.
We will look at what services plant pigments provide for the world of plants, and why many of them count as nutrients for us humans.

**Dermatologically Important Plants**
Thursday, August 16 • 12:10–12:50 p.m.
Join in an exploration of the many plants and their chemicals that can make itches, burns, and rashes if we fail to respect their potential.

Tours begin near the shed in the garden. In case of inclement weather, virtual tours will be hosted in a Main Library classroom.

Beal Garden photos courtesy of MSU Communications and Brand Strategy.
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Classical Beauty (1993) was created by Laura Davidson, an accomplished artist and former MSU student from Michigan. This artist's book is made of woodblock prints mounted on folded leaves that are bound with wooden covers joined with three brass hinges. It is the sixth of only ten copies ever created. The cover depicts a sculpture of Aphrodite of Menophantos. The title, Classical Beauty, comes from the "abundance of beauty" she witnessed in Italy. Visit Special Collections to see this and other inspiring works of art in person.

Classical Beauty (1993) was created by Laura Davidson.