

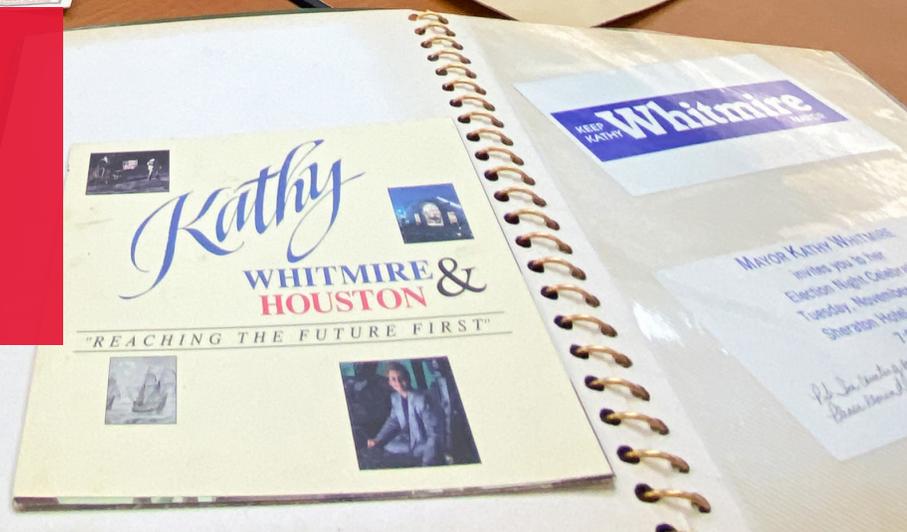
# UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LIBRARIES



## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Women's History Month,  
Nancy Sims Papers

NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2021



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**DEAN OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AND  
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UH LIBRARIES SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

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# LETTER FROM THE DEAN



*Athena N. Jackson  
Dean of Libraries  
Elizabeth D. Rockwell Chair*

I am so pleased to join University of Houston Libraries as your new dean and Elizabeth D. Rockwell chair. I'd like to thank all of you who support the Libraries, and I look forward to getting to know more about you and how you engage with our team, spaces, and services.

I was born in Galveston and grew up in Fort Bend County. The greater Houston area is my home and was my educational formative space. As an alumna of UH and native of the Houston region, I have a deep commitment to the advancement and success of the University within this vibrant city and on a national level. Previously, I served as director of University of California, Los Angeles Library Special Collections and have worked in academic libraries across the country. My return to Houston has revealed a city and institution that continues to grow as a font of diversity, innovation, and achievement. UH has strengthened its ties to the communities, built a thriving scholarship and learning enterprise, and remains committed to student success and research excellence.

I've spent my first 100 days at UH Libraries getting to know the team in half-hour 1-on-1 acquainting chats, meeting with my peer deans, talking with many others across the University, and learning more about the Libraries and those we serve, on-campus and in the community. As I continue my listening tour, much of my time will be dedicated to setting goals and a strategy for the Libraries that are meaningful to the many audiences with whom I engage and work. I believe effective communication is paramount to creating new partnerships and strengthening existing ones. I am a collaborator by nature and advocate for mutual

benefits for the Libraries and our varied and talented partners.

UH Libraries serves scholarship and learning daily. The talent and focus of our team toward increasing research at UH and enhancing student success was apparent the moment I arrived, and I will continue to nurture these values. I care deeply about the mission of the institution, research priorities, and student achievement. Each day, I continue to be inspired by this important work and the commitment all of my colleagues in the Libraries have in moving this mission forward.

This year, it's all about learning what's current, what's attainable, and what's aspirational, viewed through the lens of the new University strategic plan, *Together, We Rise. Together, We Soar*. I aim to form intentional connections across the UH community and within the Houston area that support our initiatives to develop transformative services for our stakeholders, particularly with diversity, equity, and inclusion approaches to how we work, how we preserve, how we share, and how we teach and assist others at the forefront. This is significant more so considering the social, health, and economic challenges the world has faced recently. What excites me most is how the entire institution is also dedicated to facing these challenges together.

On behalf of the Libraries, thank you for your partnership. I wish you all a happy and safe summer.

Go Coogs!  
Athena

## UH SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RECEIVES COLLAGE FROM THIRD WARD ARTIST

To commemorate the connection between George Floyd and DJ Screw, University of Houston Libraries Special Collections acquired an artwork by Robert L. Hodge, a notable artist from the Third Ward. His collage titled *8:46* will be displayed at the MD Anderson Library in Special Collections.

Houstonian George Floyd rapped on a handful of the underground mixtapes created by DJ Screw, whose archival collection is part of the Houston Hip Hop Research Collection at UH Special Collections. Following Floyd's death in 2020, Julie Grob, curator of the collection, invited Hodge to create one of his signature collages in a way that would honor Floyd. *8:46* is a vibrant layering of figures reclaimed from old record album covers, anchored by Floyd's gaze.

The faces in *8:46* represent the various perspectives and reactions to Floyd's death. What emerges from the work is a tale of two Americas, Hodge said, and how we are all interconnected. "It's the story of a flawed man who, no matter what you thought about him, is a human being who didn't deserve to die."

Like Floyd, Hodge was raised in the historic Third Ward neighborhood where UH is located. He has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including *Slowed and Throated: Records of the City Through Mutated Lenses*, an

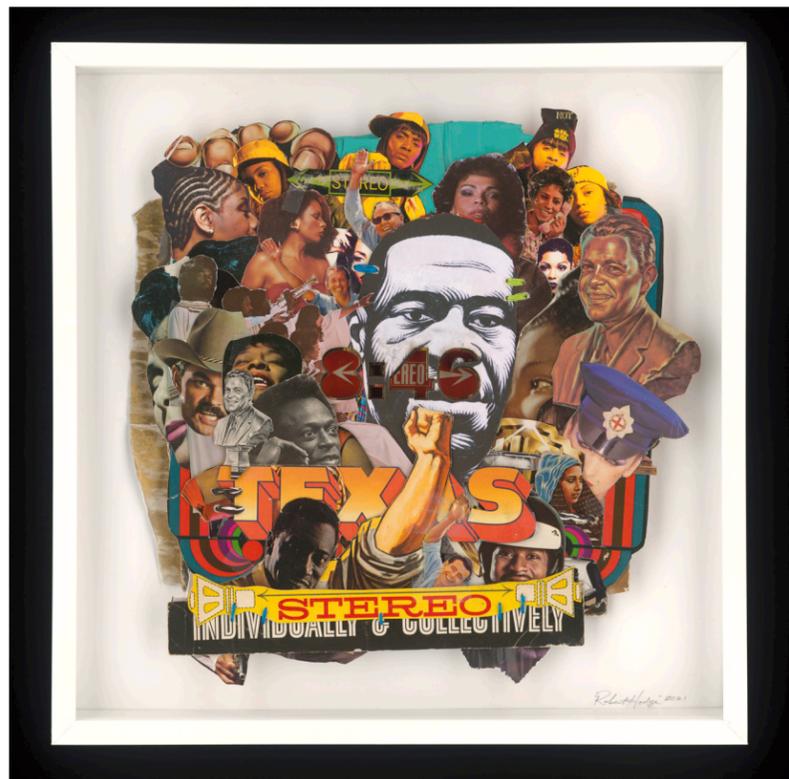
exhibition of artwork and archival material related to DJ Screw. Hodge also contributed label text to the UH Libraries exhibition *Brothers in Rhyme: Fat Pat, Big Hawk, and the Screwed Up Click*.

Of the Third Ward as inspiration to his work, Hodge said, "The people make the community, and the people are so diverse. From a jazz musician to a mailman to an addict, each has a story. This keeps me grounded in reality, in my work."

A few of Hodge's artistic influences include Romare Bearden, David Hammons, David McGee, Rick Lowe, Jesse Lott, Frida Kahlo, Robert Rauschenberg, The Art Guys, Otabenga Jones, Jabari Anderson, Jamal Cyrus, Kenya Evans, and Robert Pruitt.

Hodge has been doing collage work for many years and it is an art form for which he holds great respect. His technique is organic and involves finding older, lesser-known soul,

blues, and country records and using the album cover art to create a new image. "It's a stress breaker for me," Hodge said. "I love taking an existing narrative and making something new out of it. That's a lot like hip hop, sampling older records and making something new while honoring the past. The layers represent life in collage; there are a lot of things you see and a lot of things you don't see."



## LIBRARIANS SELECTED FOR PROVOST'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Two University of Houston librarians were chosen for the 2020-21 UH Cougar Chairs Leadership Academy (CCLA).

Rachel Helbing and Ariana Santiago are participating in the program launched by Paula Myrick Short, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at UH, to cultivate leadership talent that will engender student success by scaffolding faculty achievement.



Helbing, who is the director of library services for the health sciences, said the knowledge learned in CCLA has helped her to better know herself and will ultimately lead to a more dynamic and service-oriented library that meets the needs of UH students in new and improved ways.

**"One key takeaway for me is that we can lead with our strengths," Helbing said. "Everyone has existing strengths that enable them to be leaders. We should find and nurture the complementary strengths in our colleagues in order to have a well-rounded organization."**

Rachel Helbing

Santiago, open educational resources coordinator, said that CCLA has strengthened her understanding of leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and teamwork.

**"Applying these lessons to my work with open educational resources, and throughout the Libraries, helps us continually support students and the UH community," she said. "It's important to think about what people need from leaders—qualities like trust, compassion, stability, and hope. This has really resonated with me throughout CCLA and led me to reflect on how I meet those needs."**



Ariana Santiago

## REMEMBERING LARRY MCMURTRY

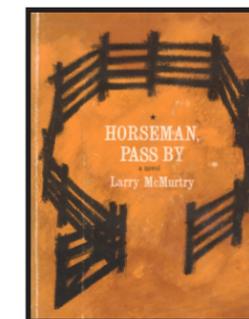
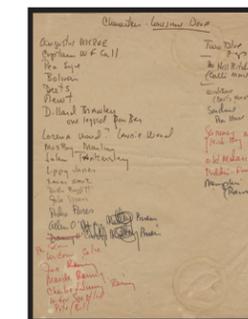
The Contemporary Literature Research Collection at UH Special Collections preserves and makes accessible the personal papers of notable writers with connections to Houston and Texas, including Larry McMurtry (1936 – 2021). The Pulitzer Prize-winning author, who passed away in March at the age of 84, leaves a legacy of creative acclaim as sweeping as the sagas and settings portrayed in his writing.



"Larry McMurtry was one of Texas's great literary figures: a novelist, screenwriter, and also notably a bookstore owner," said Christian Kelleher, head of Special Collections. "There's a lot that can be discovered in his extensive body of work. For me there's a kind of ambition or yearning that may be particularly Texan. McMurtry's personal archives at UH offer students and scholars many opportunities to better understand his work and what is unique about Texas literature."

McMurtry was a Houston resident in the late 1950s and 60s. He completed graduate work at Rice University, later teaching creative writing there, and wrote book reviews for

the *Houston Post*. In addition to early correspondence, short prose and poetry, and literary reviews from the period prior to the author's success, the Larry McMurtry Papers includes an extensive collection of primary materials documenting his writing life, including handwritten notes and typewritten manuscript drafts of the novels *Leaving Cheyenne*, *Moving On*, *Somebody's Darling*, *Cadillac Jack*, *The Desert Rose*, *Lonesome Dove*, and *Texasville*.



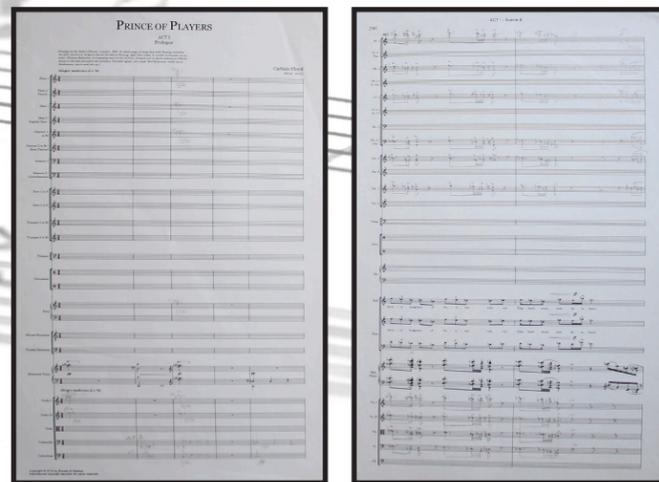
Items of particular interest are the first draft of *The Last Picture Show*, including handwritten notes, a character list, and synopsis, as well as a copy of the first printing of the 1967 Dell paperback; and a screenplay for *Hud* (the film adaptation of *Horseman, Pass By*).

*The Larry McMurtry Papers are accessible to view on-site in Special Collections by appointment. Visitors may contact Christian Kelleher for more information.*

# UH SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RECEIVES 'PRINCE OF PLAYERS' GIFT

University of Houston Libraries is pleased to announce a gift from opera composer Carlisle Floyd to UH Special Collections.

The former Moores School of Music professor's gift of the *Prince of Players* score and accompanying materials coincided with two 2021 Grammy nominations for Best Opera Recording and Best Contemporary Classical Composition. Floyd debuted *Prince of Players* at Houston Grand Opera in 2016.



Mary Manning, archivist for the Performing and Visual Arts Research Collection, said the materials, including opera piano, vocal, and full scores, original character background, libretto, arias, and programs, will be added to the Carlisle Floyd Manuscript Scores collection donated in 1999.

"The *Prince of Players* archives capture Floyd's creative process and document the steps involved in making the opera—from early notes recording the birth of the idea to multiple versions of the score (handwritten and printed) to costume sketches and stage designs," Manning said.

"It is a rare opportunity to document the birth of an opera," said Jane Matheny, Floyd's niece and assistant. "Every week, from its inception in 2012 until its opening night in 2016, my

videographer and I checked in with Carlisle to learn where he was in his creative process. It was fascinating to learn how a musical idea evolves into an aria, to see how a character's role develops, and to watch drawings become actual costumes and sets. My aim in putting together the collection was to offer students this same glimpse into the many aspects of creating an opera."

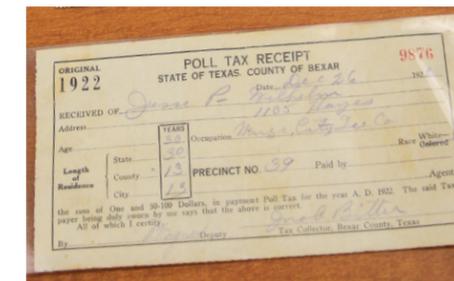
"This generous gift will be invaluable to scholars conducting research on contemporary American Opera and practitioners seeking to hone their craft in opera audio engineering and production," added Madelyn Shackelford Washington, coordinator of the UH Music Library.



## NANCY SIMS PAPERS

In honor of Women's History Month (March 1 - 31), University of Houston Libraries featured a recorded conversation with Nancy Sims. A native Texan, Sims is a well-known public relations professional and pundit who grew her career in Texas business and politics. She is the owner of Nancy Sims LLC, a PR agency that specializes in government relations, media relations, crisis communications, and community relations. Prior to starting her own firm, Sims spent sixteen years with Pierpont Communications as senior vice president of public affairs. Sims also serves as a lecturer in political science at UH.

In 2019, Sims donated her papers to UH Special Collections, which include photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, personal journals, news clippings, political surveys and reports, files on political strategy and communications for clients, reference books on politics and strategy, awards and certificates, campaign posters and signs, and political ephemera. The interview, conducted by Polina Kharmats, a political science PhD candidate and lecturer, features notable items from Sims' collection and covers her enduring career in politics and business, memorable campaigns, teaching, and the inspiration to gift her papers to UH Special Collections.



The following are excerpts from the interview which can be viewed in full at UH Libraries YouTube.

**Kharmats:** You began your career as a political consultant in a time when women were not traditionally involved or even welcome in this line of work. What obstacles did you face and how did you overcome them?

what the life of a woman who started her career in the eighties, in a male-dominated field was like, and how she made it through.

**Sims:** I began my life as a staffer. I worked for elected officials, the steelworkers' union, I worked on the staff for a state rep, and on the staff for Kathy Whitmire, one of the top women mayors at the time. I had a good experience as a staffer, but I worked on campaigns in between the legislative sessions. One day, I was bemoaning the state of the political consulting industry in Houston. There were two gentlemen who were very prominent and who everybody hired on the Democratic side. My friend said to me, 'you're smarter than those guys; why don't you just go do it?' So with a two-week paycheck and gumption, I quit the mayor's office. Even Kathy laughed at me and said 'if it doesn't work out you can come back to City Hall.'

**Kharmats:** What message do you have for women today, particularly those who are interested in getting into politics, political consulting, and public relations?

**Sims:** Just go for it. Pursue your dream. I had a sticker that I picked up at the International Women's Convention in 1977 and it sat on my desk for decades. It said 'only she who attempts the absurd can achieve the impossible.'

The collection is currently being processed. For questions about materials in this collection or to request access, contact curator Vince Lee at [velee@uh.edu](mailto:velee@uh.edu).

**Kharmats:** What inspired you to donate? What stories come out of your collection?

**Sims:** My whole career has been about telling stories of others. I hope people get from the collection



C R C H I V E S

As the coronavirus outbreak gripped the world in early 2020, University of Houston archivist Mary Manning launched a project to capture student perspectives of the pandemic. **UH Students Respond to Covid-19** seeks to preserve personal stories, both artistic and documentary, from UH students relating to their experiences of this challenging time.

“The UH student contributors have shared with me how much it has meant to them to express what has been going on in their hearts and minds,” Manning said. “It is essential to preserve the photos, audio and video files, journal entries, and creative writing for researchers studying the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on college students, and just as important that these students’ children, and their children’s children, will find their family member’s story in the archives and understand what life was like for them as a UH student during the pandemic.”

The digital exhibit featuring student submissions is set to launch this summer.

“I took these photos to remember,” said Chandler Skinner, a senior music education major who is graduating in May. “There will be a time in my life when the “new normal” is a distant memory in my mind, but the pandemic is shaping what the future will look like for both my life and the world as a whole. I want to remember the deep, panging isolation and the bombardment of signage; I want to be able to express to others how that felt through my photos. The preservation of images from this time is vital for future generations to understand why the world is the way that it is.



“Isolation is the primary theme that appears in my submitted works, and I think that’s fairly reflective of how most people would define their experience right now. I captured the Moores School of Music in the weeks leading up to the start of the fall semester at a time when the building would normally be full of sound. My photos show the changes made to the environment while the building is empty.”



Xinyue Wu, a junior health major, submitted an animated video about the process of a family member receiving healthcare during the pandemic.

“When the pause button is pressed in our lives, everything becomes special and difficult,” said Wu. “Recording this experience will become an unforgettable and special memory in my life. During the pandemic, I experienced the painful and sad things of my grandfather’s death, my mother’s illness, and my grandma’s heart bypass surgery. Because of the pandemic, I couldn’t go to see my grandfather, nor could I take care of my grandma. I could only stay at home, attend class every day, watch the news, and pray that our country could reopen as soon as possible. I miss my family very much. If I have the opportunity, I will definitely choose to spend more time with them.”



“I have been writing poetry since I was sixteen, and write about everything,” said Samantha Portele, a freshman majoring in psychology. “When the pandemic began, I was under the impression it would be gone within a couple weeks or so. No one could have predicted what was to come. I felt it was important to document those moments where I felt both infinite and defeated. My poem stands to represent the uncertainty that was to come, but looking back 2020 helped me in a lot of ways I can forever be grateful for.”

A poem I wrote during quarantine (4/10/2020):

*The Hill*

we all sat there in silence because we all knew,  
 we all knew this would be the last time for a long time. things seemed to be getting worse,  
 more social distancing, more isolation orders,  
 yet all we wanted to do was to sit up on the hill.  
 it was quiet, it was dark,  
 no words were spoken for in our hearts we knew this would be the last time we could do this freely,  
 this pandemic has stripped away every last ounce of normalcy in an already saddened world. the very essence of living is  
 something that we must wait to be allowed to do.  
 it is horrible and demeaning and it makes you wonder,  
 what is really going on?

Something about that night felt melancholic, Maybe it was the words that went unspoken,  
 The sway of the grass as it danced underneath the moonlight, Or maybe it was the gentle breeze passing through,  
 almost as if it were a peace offering from the moon,  
 Letting us know it was right here with us, In hopes of calming our delirious minds.

none of this feels real,  
 we all just want normalcy back, “Do your part!”  
 “Stop the spread!”  
 when will the truth come to light?  
 so many questions going softly into the night, yet all we could do was sit and wonder, nothing left to do but to succumb under,  
 oh, how I would give anything to be on the hill again.

## 2021 SPONSORED PROJECTS

University of Houston Libraries Digital Research Services (DRS) and Digital Research Commons (DRC) are pleased to announce the 2021 sponsored digital research projects. DRS offers grants to UH faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows for projects involving digital techniques across the humanities, social sciences, and experimental sciences.

**A Multilingual Database of Digital News in 54 African Countries**

Dani Madrid-Morales, PhD, Journalism, Jack J. Valenti School of Communication

This project seeks to develop a multilingual database of African online news content and to create a custom-built R package to interact with the database, implement basic text analysis, and create relevant data visualizations.

**Sharing Stories from 1977: The National Women's Conference as a Window into Recent American History**

Nancy Beck Young, PhD, and Leandra Zarnow, PhD, History, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)

This grant will support the continued conceptualization and anticipated launch of a website that will announce a multi-institutional effort led by University of Houston to document and analyze the experience and impact of thousands of delegates and observers of the 1977 National Women's Conference.

**Building the Past: Memory-Making on the University of Houston Campus**

David Guzman and Caitlyn Jones, History, CLASS

This project will generate a dataset to build a digital map of the University of Houston campus that allows visitors to access biographies of the building namesakes and the history of the building's construction, as well as historical photos or documents related to the building or person.

**1771 in 3 Cities: Genre Boundaries and Dispersion**

David Mazella, PhD, English, CLASS

Using results from previous iterations of this project, this stage takes the 2000+ items published in the year 1771 in three cities, along with the 10 categories and 100+ genres established earlier, and examines the spatial and boundary relations between literary and extraliterary genres.

**SYRIOS**

Kristina Neumann, PhD History, CLASS; Elizabeth Rodwell, PhD, Comparative Culture Studies, CLASS; and Peggy Lindner, PhD, Information and Logistics Technology, College of Technology

In its final form, this online exhibit will guide a wide audience through the different coins and histories of Syrian cities within the Greco-Roman period.

**Black Migration Houston**

Rachel Afi Quinn, PhD, Comparative Culture Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, CLASS

Black Migration Houston (BMH) is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and community organizers who study the international migration of black people to the Texas Gulf Coast. This project's objective is to educate students, service providers, and the general public on the intersection of migration, sexuality, and blackness through its public facing website.

**Documentary and Oral History of the Foundation of the UH College of Medicine**

Ruth Bush, MD, JD, Medical Education, UH College of Medicine; and Helen Valier, PhD, Medicine and Society Program, The Honors College

This project intends to enhance existing plans to preserve the documentary and oral history of the UH College of Medicine. This project will begin focused collection work for the creation of an interactive digital timeline and visualized social network map, linked to layers of curated resources.

**From Digitizing to Mining, C.T. Bauer College Archives — A Practical Journey Through Our College's Public Records from 1947 to 2009**

Emese Felvegi, PhD, Decision and Information Sciences, C.T. Bauer College of Business

This project seeks to support the capture, categorization, analysis, and digital exhibition of historical College of Business administration/C.T. Bauer College records by C.T. Bauer College students. Select student groups enrolled in BCIS 1305 during the spring and fall 2021 semesters will participate in various phases of a hands-on project that aims to process the college's historical documents that are a part of the University of Houston Archives.

**Reid Boehm** was one of 15 international information professionals who received a National Information Standards Organization (NISO) Plus 2021 scholarship.

**Boehm and Taylor Davis-Van Atta** presented "Agile Skunks: Interdisciplinary collaboration in support of digital research outputs" at Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Digital Scholarship Section, Open Research Discussion Group Midwinter Meeting, Virtual Conference.

**Boehm** was part of a national group that updated the SPARC Data Sharing Policy Resource and co-presented on this with J. Petters at the Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Association 2021 Summit.

**Kerry Creelman, Veronica Arellano Douglas, Andrea Malone, and Lisa Martin** co-wrote "Cultivating liaison leadership: Unblocking the pipeline to management" which appeared in *New Approaches to Liaison Librarianship: Innovations in Organization and Development*.

**Taylor Davis-Van Atta** was appointed to a two-year term as chair of the ACRL Digital Scholarship Section Professional Development Committee, and a two-year term on the ACRL Digital Scholarship Section Advisory Committee.

**Veronica Arellano Douglas, Andrea Malone, and Lisa Martin** co-presented "You're going through that, too? Cultivating a community of practice for new supervisors" at Conference on Academic Library Management.

**Douglas** was named to the editorial board of *portal: Libraries and the Academy* published by Johns

Hopkins Univ. Press.

**Douglas** co-edited a book, *Deconstructing Service in Libraries: Intersections of Identities and Expectations*, with J. Gadsby.

**Douglas** wrote an article, "Moving from critical assessment to assessment as care," which appeared in *Communications in Information Literacy*.

**Douglas** wrote a book chapter, "University of Houston instruction program," which appeared in *Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs: Structures, Practices, and Contexts*.

**Douglas** presented "Relational cultural theory and reference work" for the New York University Libraries.

**Edward Gloor, Rachel Helbing, Stefanie Lapka, Erica Lopez, and Mea Warren** co-presented "STEM: Synergy takes environmental magic" (zine) at The Connection: The Library Collective Annual Gathering online.

**Catherine Essinger** presented a paper, "How to tell stories with numbers: Tracking faculty research output in architecture," at Association of Architecture School Librarians Annual Conference.

**Rachel Helbing** co-presented with C. Tuell "Building a culture of advocacy through dissent and innovation leadership" at Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Advocacy Summit online.

**Andrea Malone** wrote a book chapter, "From liaison to coordinator: How digital humanities influenced a role change and restructure," which appeared in *The Academic Librarian in the Digital Age: Essays on Changing Roles and Responsibilities*.

**Malone** was the presider for "Impact metrics in the humanities" at Modern Language Association Convention.

**Mary Manning** began a three-year term as section convener for American Folklore Society Archives and Libraries Section.

**Manning** was recommended by UH Faculty Senate to a three-year term of the Office of Equal Opportunities Appellate Hearings Board.

**Manning** co-authored "Assessing power dynamics in multigenerational archives" which appeared in *Archival Outlook*.

**Leonard Martin** presented "Microgenres: Memory, community, and preserving the present" at the Music Online Users Group virtual conference.

**Ariana Santiago, R. Gong, and C. Orozco** co-presented "Opening a space and place for #WOCinOER: Stories, experiences, and narratives" at Open Education Conference.

**Santiago and Cherie Turner** presented "Strategies for assessing an OER incentive program" at Open Texas Conference.

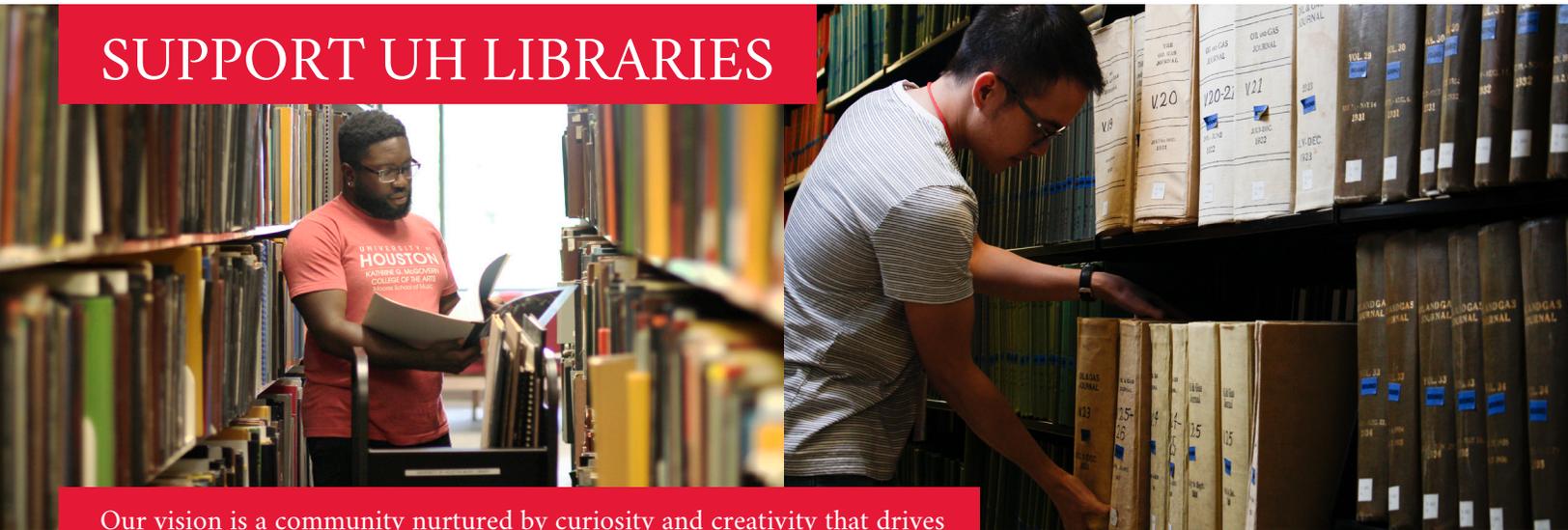
**Santiago, H. Blicher, and K. Essmiller** co-presented "Open educational resources and affordability: A three-part webcast series" for ACRL.

**Emily Vinson, Andrew Weidner, Crystal Cooper, and Nick Tripp** co-presented a paper, "Metadata works from home: How student workers continued to work while increasing collection accessibility" at Digital Library Forum.

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