

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: *Ethan J. Allen, 54*

Library association leader lives life of many chapters

BY LADY HERFORD
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Seven years ago, a newly formed community of Benedictine monks in Norcia, Italy, wanted to establish a library. They turned to Palm Beach Gardens resident Ethan J. Allen for help.

Allen, then a library sciences graduate with a background in theology, learned about the monastery through a former roommate from seminary.

"He foresaw the need for a library," said Allen, 54, director of Florida Atlantic University's John D. MacArthur Campus Library.

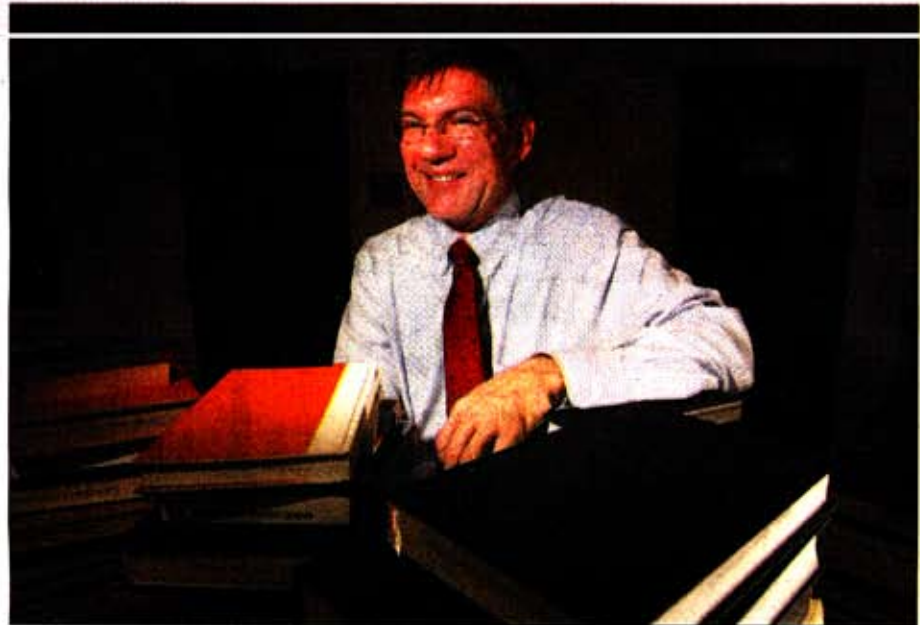
Allen has continued visiting the monastery once or twice a year ever since. It's one of many volunteer projects that Allen has adopted since becoming involved with libraries more than a decade ago.

For instance, he is in his 13th year as the archivist for the St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary Library in Boynton Beach. He also catalogs for the catechetical media center for the Diocese of Palm Beach.

This month, he began a two-year term as president of the 100-member Palm Beach County Library Association's board of directors. The association's members represent academic, public, school and special libraries county-wide.

The organization provides scholarships for students in graduate library school programs, and it provides professional development opportunities for its members.

"I would like to bring the association to the point where we can involve our members more directly into the various initiatives that support reading,



CYDNEY SCOTT/Staff Photographer

Ethan Allen, director of Florida Atlantic University's John D. MacArthur Campus Library, has just been elected to a two-year term as president of the Palm Beach County Library Association, which is made up of about 100 librarians from academic, public, school and special libraries. The organization provides professional development for members and scholarships for students.

libraries and librarians," Allen said.

Many of Allen's childhood memories revolve around books. As a youth, he spent much of his free time in the library of his prep school, he said.

The Evanston, Ill., native also recalls when his mother, Terry Allen, used to volunteer in the community library. Today, she volunteers in the MacArthur Campus Library on Saturdays, her son said.

In addition to books, Allen also had an affinity for music, studying piano from childhood through graduate school, he said.

He did his undergraduate studies at St. Meinrad School of Theology in southern Indiana, and he later attended St. John's University in Minnesota, where he earned a graduate degree in liturgical

theology.

Afterward, he taught at a girls' high school near Detroit for a year before moving to South Florida and teaching at Cardinal Newman High School.

The next year, Allen went to work for Microforms Management in Palm Beach Gardens, where he remained for 14 years. During that time, he volunteered in the media center of the then-brand-new William T. Dwyer High School.

He joined the school's media center staff soon afterward. Then in 1995, he went to work for FAU's north campus library as a library technician. A few years later, he enrolled in library school through the University of South Florida's east coast program, and he earned his library sciences degree in 2000.

In 2001, he became FAU's assistant university librarian with liaison responsibilities to the Harriet Wilkes Honors College. Four years later, he became the director of the library at the MacArthur campus.

Allen credits campus Vice President Kristen Murtaugh and Assistant Director of Libraries Connor Tjarks with helping him along the way. Those two "have shaped my approach to helping students, faculty and the staff here," he said.

What are your hobbies?

Genealogy, for one. Allen said he doesn't think he is a direct descendant of Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen, but "I think we may have common ancestors."