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No truth or consequences for Kirk Murray
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MORE THAN WORDS
Hidden behind the shelves of the Wimberly Library’s Special Collections Department on the Boca campus are pieces that date back six centuries.
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Behind the Shelves

Words by Michele Boeot
Assistant Editor

Inside the Boca campus library, past noisy computers, up the main stairs and beyond rows of books, there's a room at the end of the long, dimly lit hallway. Opposite those shelves on the second floor of S.E. Wimberly Library lies the Special Collections & Archives Department. Most students don't even know this room exists, let alone the historic treasures hidden behind its doors. Some of these treasures include one-of-a-kind books, original historical documents, unique artifacts, musical collections and even some random furniture. For some people, the inherent value of these pieces makes them priceless. In dollar terms, items like a first-edition full score of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and a calligraphy book penned by hand in 18-carat gold ink (see page 11) don't have a price tag, either. Even if library officials could put a dollar value on them—which it can't since the value varies year to year—they won't, because the library doesn't intend to ever sell these collections.

"I've had the opportunity to see some amazing items..." - Dee Cael

Photography by James Fishera
Photo Manager

So how does FAU benefit from all these books and historical pieces? According to Cael, the collections are used for teaching and research, and many even go along with some of the college's curriculum. "We get inquiries all the time from professors writing their curriculum, requesting information about certain items and available materials," Cael said.

The department also has copies of works published by FAU faculty. There's something for nearly every field of study. The items in the Special Collections Department convey everything from history and literature to culture, art, sciences, mathematics and social science. FAU students and faculty—as well as researchers from around the world—come to FAU to use the items in these collections, Cael says. The collections are also open to any member of the community. In fact, she says that throughout the years, many graduate students have used materials from these special collections when writing their thesis.

"For more information or to make an appointment, contact Special Collections at (561) 297-3757 or lysca@fau.edu."

Dee Cael
Head of the Special Collections Department

Theodore Pratt Collection

Original artwork illustrated for the dust cover of The Barefoot Mailman, a novel by famous Florida author Theodore Pratt. This illustration is part of the Pratt Collection located in the Special Collections' Pratt Room. The collection includes original copies of first and foreign editions of his works, personal research notes for all of his novels and screenplays, as well as correspondence, original illustrations and several personal mementos—'11 on permanent display. The Pratt Room, dedicated to the Pratt family in January 1970, is the only place where this material resides.
Jaffe Collection

Left: "Jenah"
This is a one-of-a-kind book with handmade hand-papered and dyed paper made with "parched paper" incorporating techniques, with hand-drawn calligraphy.
Artist: Calligrapher Ginger Model

Above: "The Peacock Tale"
This handmade piece tells the story of a peacock in a park. The book is illustrated by real peacock feathers and is one-of-a-kind.
Artist: Story and design by author Monique Haycock

Left: "PSALM 23"
This hand-drawn calligraphy writing is in 18-karat gold ink. This one-of-a-kind book won first prize in a Florida calligraphy contest.
Artist: Calligrapher Ginger Model

Right: "Larousse Mensuel illustré"
This piece is an altered book - a process in which the artist takes an ordinary book and alters it by cutting into the pages and physically illustrating the story.
Artist: Altered by Jen Meister and Sherron Tan

While many of the collectibles in the collection are valuable because of their age or content, the items in the Arthur and Merta Jaffe Collection have aesthetic value. Many of the books in the Jaffe Collection are modern books, and several defy traditional bookworms.

"We have all kinds of items and books that you would never find in a regular library," says Rita Hogenboom, Jaffe Collections assistant. "Our books are very unusual, and most of them are one-of-a-kind."

Left: Arthur Jaffe, curator of the Arthur and Merta Jaffe Collection

The collection has more than doubled since the Jaffes originally donated it to FAU in 1994. It now includes 4,900 objects - mostly visual arts - created more for their artistic merit than content.

"Right now we're trying to focus on work by Florida artists," says Jaffe Collection Specialist Linda Thompson, "although we have artists from all around the world represented in this collection.

The library is building a new area, called the "Jaffe Center," to house the collection, which should be open by mid-October. The grand opening is tentatively scheduled for March 2007.

The new wing will be "about triple the amount of space Jaffe has now," says Joe Canal, head of the Special Collections Department.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact Special Collections at 1611297-3748, or e-mail LSRCAM@fau.edu or visit www.jaffecollection.org.
The newest addition to the Library's Special Collections Department, the Spirit of America Collection, features 13,000 books, manuscripts, and pamphlets—all printed in America before 1865. Boca Raton resident Martin Weiner made the donation in June 2006. An 89-year-old retired businessman, Weiner began collecting documentation in the early 1940s. This collection is by far the largest in FAU's archives, and according to university officials, it's currently worth an estimated $3.8 million and is one of only a kind in the southern region of the US.

"This collection is not just a gift to FAU—it's a gift to the whole region," said Dee Carol, head of the Special Collections Department.

A Look at the First Special Collection

The Special Collections Department of the S.E. Wimberly Library began to build its special collections in the mid-1960s. Beginning with the first Franklin collection in 1963, the department now houses more than 80 "special and unique" collections. Franklin, a personal rare-books collector, donated a large amount of rare and rare books and documents—dating back to the 18th century—to the Special Collections Department before FAU first opened its doors in 1964.

"The collection was massive," says Dee Carol, head of the Special Collections Department. "The [Wimberly] Library was still under-construction at the time, and there were no shelves in the library. So the collection was placed in areas on the third floor. Unluckily, Hurricane Celia hit Boca Raton before the library could finish construction.

"Chlorine, acid rain and damage much of the campus about a week before the campus was to open," Carol recalls. "In fact, the FAU dedication ceremony was done in front of a burned police car just weeks after the storm.

"Chlorine destroyed a few windows in the library, and flooding damaged some items from the Franklin collection. Although some of the original collection still exists, over the years, the collection dwindled due to damage, theft and a loss of interest.

"The Franklin collection is now scattered throughout the department. Every now and then, we find pieces from the collection with their little white paper inventory tag lying around," Carol says.

Left: The first newspaper printing of America's Declaration of Independence, printed in "The Pennsylvania Evening Post" on July 6, 1776. Also included in the collection is a compilation of original prints from the Pennsylvania newspaper.

Above: Included in the collection is a rare copy of Thomas Paine's 1776 book "The American Crisis," which begins with the famous, "These are the times that try men's souls." Also in the collection is a copy of Paine's famous essay "Common Sense," dated April 19, 1776.