



Margaret Adeogun

James White Library Celebrates Its

85th Anniversary

The 85th anniversary of the James White Library (JWL) and the current building's 60th are significant achievements and milestones for the Andrews University community (Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.) and the Seventh-day Adventist higher-education system. The celebration was planned to coincide with the alumni homecoming weekend of September 22 to 25, 2022, to get alumni involved and encourage them to reminisce about their experiences in the James White Library. The celebration offered alumni the opportunity to promote the library among their social and professional networks, spreading the word about the library and making

connections that was hoped would lead to lasting friendships and support for the library. The library anniversary committee organized programs to celebrate its extensive past and exciting future through events that captured the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community and the history of education within the global Seventh-day Adventist Church.

One such event featured Meredith Jones Gray, professor of English at Andrews University. A prolific writer and researcher of Andrews University history, Jones Gray's research activities have given her a comprehensive knowledge of the library's development timeline, as evidenced in her work *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek Col-*



Audience attending the James White Library's 85th anniversary celebration.

lege and Emmanuel Missionary College.¹ At this opening event on Friday, September 23, 2022, Jones Gray presented her historical research under the title “The James White Library: A History” at the library’s gallery. In the presence of campus community members, friends, patrons, retired and current library staff, and leaders of Adventist education, Jones Gray presented a description of the evolution of the James White Library. Her compelling description of the library’s development using graphics, photographs of the construction, library floor plans, and photographs of patrons, students, and workers of all ages from 1937 to the present evoked joyful memories of the past and how the Lord has led the library.² It was a time for reminiscing, especially for those who witnessed the early days of library services and the development of its resources. This presentation will be included in a forthcoming book on the story of Andrews University that follows Jones Gray’s previous work.

The event’s venue was memory-provoking: The professionally crafted historical timeline exhibits in the gallery highlighted photographs, milestones, pioneering library staff, and founders of the institution, all of which communicated values and memorialized the library’s history. All the eye-catching and thought-provoking wall graphics complemented Jones Gray’s presentation, heightened the occasion’s significance, and reminded participants of God’s faithfulness.

The reception that followed the presentation allowed time for more reminiscences as alumni, retired library staff, and current students and employees shared their memories of the library. A few even recalled the library’s beginnings in the current building, of moving loads of books in carts from the old library to the new one, and how impressed they had been with the size of the building.

The library anniversary committee organized more programs for the year to celebrate its achievements and exciting future through events that capture the essence of the library and its place in the Andrews University learning community.

The Stafford Collection

This celebration also showcased the Stafford Collection, recently acquired from Atlantic Union College in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Thus, on September 24, 2022, the library organized a guided tour for alumni, guests, and campus community members to explore the James White Library and browse the Stafford Collection. The Stafford Collection comprises approximately 1,400 works of literature, previously housed at Atlantic Union College’s G. Eric Jones Library. Some American poets, including A. R. Ammons, Langston Hughes, and Carlos Williams, and British poets, W. H. Auden, Gerard

Manley Hopkins, and William Butler Yeats, are featured. The poets’ works (some signed editions), biographies, criticisms, theses, dissertations, bibliographies, and other reference sources make up this unique collection.

The collection is named in honor of the late Otilie Frank Stafford (1921-2006), a distinguished professor of English who served at Atlantic Union College for 50 years. The collection, focused on 20th-century American and British poets, was established in 1991. Dr. Stafford’s husband of 58 years, Homer Stafford, and friends of the Staffords contributed financially to the growth of this special collection that memorializes her exceptional teaching and outstanding leadership at Atlantic



Guest presenter, Meredith Jones Gray, professor of English and author of *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College*.

Union College and elsewhere. The JWML is fortunate to inherit this rare and highly valuable collection. Its addition to other special collections will enhance students’ learning experience and boost the teaching, learning, and research activities of the Andrews University teaching and learning community.

A Brief History of the James White Library

In 1937, the first brick academic building on the Andrews University campus was built to house the James White Memorial Library (JWML). Previously housed in the administration building of what was Emmanuel Missionary College for some 30 years, the library collection had grown and expanded from its small start in Battle Creek College. By 1956, the JWML had outgrown its facility.³ Designed to accommodate some 30,000 books, it then housed 50,000! When students left for

summer breaks, books were stacked on the floor, in the hallways, and overflowed into staff offices—wherever there was space.

A new facility was built in 1962.⁴ Its 45,000 square feet were intended to house up to 280,000 volumes. Construction of an additional section was completed in 1976. Today, the extension houses most book stacks, while the older part holds most of the administrative offices, doctoral carrels, and reference areas. When the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary moved from Washington, D.C., to Berrien Springs in 1962, the James White Memorial Library merged with the seminary collection and was reborn as the James White Library.

In 1992, the card catalogue was replaced by the on-



Paulette McLean Johnson, Andrews University dean of libraries, presents a gift of appreciation to Meredith Jones Gray.

line computer catalog called JeWeL. Books began to be barcoded, making circulation and inventory functions much easier. Several renovations were completed, including the Center for Adventist Research (CAR) in 2000, the Lobby (2010), and the Multimedia Center (2012). Also, compact shelving was installed for the university archives housed in CAR.

During the past decade, investments in information technology and JWEL digital initiatives have advanced knowledge creation and discovery at Andrews University. For example, the Andrews University Digital Commons (officially named Digital Commons @ Andrews University), launched in 2015 and hosts publications by Andrews University faculty and students, making the university's scholarship accessible globally. To date, it has more than five million downloads worldwide. The integrated Discovery platform (2020) simplifies search-

ing for resources, and the chat reference service provides ready communication between patrons and library personnel. Future plans include a library renovation that would provide varied modern spaces for current and emerging library services.

Community members can register at the James White Library and borrow library books. The Adventist worldwide educational and theological community can access digital and print library resources through interlibrary loans. Libraries within North America may also request print resources through interlibrary loan. Library staff scan articles in print journals from library holdings and email the copies to Adventist libraries worldwide. In addition, a wealth of digital content is freely available online through the Digital Commons. This content includes dissertations, theses, and the online archives of journals published by the university, making the work of our students and faculty a helpful resource for the worldwide Adventist educational community. The James White Library is a jewel of Andrews University, where global scholars are made. Supporters and others are invited to make it their home away from home. ✍

Margaret Adeogun, PhD, is Professor of Library Science at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A., and currently serves as the Head of Patron Services and Marketing Librarian at the James White Library. Dr. Adeogun has more than 30 years of experience as a librarian, previously serving as library director at the University of Eastern Africa in Baraton, Kenya. She is the author of several articles in national and international peer-reviewed journals with presentations at many international conferences. She has also contributed chapters to international monographs on library science. Dr. Adeogun has expertise in library management, open education resources, and public services in academic libraries.

Recommended citation:

Margaret Adeogun, "James White Library Celebrates Its 85th Anniversary," *The Journal of Adventist Education* 85:1 (2023): 40-42. <https://doi.org/10.55668/IGPF-6697>.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Meredith Jones Gray, *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2002).
2. Construction Drawings, Trend Associates, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1973.
3. Annual Report of the Librarian to the President, 1956.
4. Official Press Release, November 1962.