50 and Forward: Sandor Teszler Library since 1969

Phillip Stone
Luke Meagher
Melissa Clapp

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50 AND FORWARD
SANDOR TESZLER LIBRARY
SINCE 1969

MARTHA CLOUD CHAPMAN GALLERY
October 1 through December 20
Wofford’s first library was in a second-floor room on the east side of Main Building. A faculty member served as college librarian, and many faculty members gave books to the collection.

The two college literary societies also had their own libraries until merging with the college library in 1894. By 1910, the collection had outgrown its rooms in Main Building. A gift of $10,000 from Julia Smith in honor of her father, Whitefoord Smith, the college’s first English professor, and an additional $10,000 from trustees led to the construction of a new library building. The Whitefoord Smith Library remained in use until August 1969, with one expansion in the late 1940s.

Two librarians — Mary Sydnor DuPré (1905-53) and Herbert Hucks Jr. ’34 (1953-66), pictured above — guided the Whitefoord Smith Library for most of its existence.
Even after an expansion in 1948 increased the library’s size, by the 1960s the college had outgrown the space. Students, led by the staff of the Old Gold and Black student newspaper, took up the campaign for a new library.

Frank J. Anderson was named college librarian in 1966 with the task of planning for a new building. The college selected Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle and Wolff, an experienced architectural firm in Columbia, S.C., to design the library. In addition, the Ruscon Construction Company in Charleston, S.C., was chosen to build. The college broke ground on Founder’s Day, October 19, 1967, during a ceremony led by President Charles Marsh and other college leaders.
CONSTRUCTION
1968-1969

These photos show plans and stages of the new library's construction.
These photos show the library after construction prior to moving in and just after opening. Moving Day was August 4, 1969.
MONUMENTAL STAIRCASE

The library’s central staircase is an architectural point of pride of Wofford College.
Monday August 4th has officially been designated as Library Moving Day.

Sorry for the inconvenience! It has been a rough summer for all of us!
The library staff began moving to the new building on August 4, 1969. Moving the entire book collection took almost two weeks. The formal opening of the new Wofford College Library took place during Family Weekend in 1969. Included here is the program from the ceremony. After joining the Board of Trustees in 1970, Sandor Teszler’s son, Andrew, announced a capital gift to the college in February 1971. In recognition, the trustees voted to name the library for his father. On March 27, 1971, the library was dedicated in honor of Sandor Teszler.
Sandor Teszler (1903-2000) was born in Hungary and studied textile engineering at the University of Chemnitz, Germany. He built and ran a textile factory in Yugoslavia before World War II. Teszler, along with his wife and sons, survived the Holocaust. After World War II, the family relocated to Great Britain and then to the United States. Coming to the textile-rich South, he founded one of the first racially integrated textile mills in the region. In his later years, Teszler became a beloved presence on campus, auditing classes nearly every semester. In 1987, the college awarded him an honorary degree, and in 1996, the faculty voted to make Teszler a member of the faculty.
USING THE LIBRARY

1970s

Students quickly made themselves at home in the new library.
Students quickly made themselves at home in the new library.
Librarian Frank J. Anderson made use of the library’s printing press, even teaching Interims on printing. In his 18 years as library director, Anderson and his colleagues grew the collection to over 200,000 volumes. A signed copy of James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* became the library’s 200,000th volume in 1984. Anderson is pictured showing the book to students Elizabeth Caldwell ’85 and Stacey Day ’90.
These images represent some of the many exhibits shown in the Sandor Teszler Library in the 1990s and 2000s, most of which were curated by Oakley Coburn. In 2019, the gallery was christened as the Martha Cloud Chapman Gallery.
Frank J. Anderson retired as library director in the summer of 1984, and Oakley H. Coburn was named to succeed him. During his 30-year tenure, Coburn oversaw several significant transformations in the library, including moving to an online catalog for the library’s book collection and adding several electronic periodical databases. Student access to information increased exponentially, particularly after the campus network was installed in 1999.

At the same time, the library became an important place for the arts on campus. In 1990, Sandor Teszler donated his collection of Hungarian art and the library began hosting numerous exhibits each year, often including student artwork, paintings from the college’s permanent collection or the works of local and regional artists. The Teszler gift and collection of college portraits became the cornerstone of a growing art collection.