

University Library Fall 2021 eNewsletter



Feature Article: History Speaks

Contributed by Elizabeth Altman

Special Collections & Archives launched its online exhibit, [Past / Personal: Examining Oral History Narratives](#), presenting a curated selection from oral histories of “individuals who lived through significant historical events, participated in social movements, or experienced cultural trends that have shaped modern sociocultural perspectives.” We asked the curators to give us an overview of the project.

Q: How did the decision to create an exhibit based on oral histories come about?

Ellen: It’s an idea we’ve talked about and played around with for several years, though in the past the challenges of installing an audio-based exhibit in the Library’s physical exhibit gallery felt insurmountable, largely due to the absence of the technology required for such a space. Since so much of the campus community is still working, teaching and attending class from home this year, and since audio is so much more easily delivered online, it seemed like a good opportunity to finally present an exhibit based on audio resources generally, and our oral history collections more specifically.

Q: How was the virtual exhibit created and what were the roles of the curators and others who put it together?

Julieta: The exhibit was a collaborative effort between Special Collections & Archives curators and the Library Systems Group Web Team. Ellen had a few ideas about the design of the exhibit and the other curators contributed to the concept of the overall flow. Collaboratively, we made selections and created themes for the exhibit. The Web Team made our final design come to life, inserting interactivity and keeping us aware of user experience and needs. As it stands now, the exhibit highlights only a small fraction of the oral histories that are held in Special Collections & Archives.

Q: How did you select the themes for each of the six sections, and how do you think they contribute to the overall flow of the exhibit? What subthemes didn’t make the cut?

Julieta: Each of the curators reviewed oral history recordings they believed bore witness to issues of importance to the CSUN community. Then we discussed their potential inclusion, and ultimately made selections based on subject matter, biases, and audio quality, both good and bad, to expose students and other exhibit viewers to all the varied characteristics of oral histories.

Older audio files, especially those first recorded onto physical cassettes or other outmoded media, can degrade over time and with each format transfer. Even the original recordings can be filled with static and white noise, making the audio difficult to understand. We encountered a few audio files that were not viable for these reasons. However, after collectively reviewing our tentative selections, we accepted or rejected interviews based on their quality and relation to one another. We wanted to present a balance of perspective in each theme. We settled on six themes: Remembering Childhood, Sharing Trauma, Witnessing History, Elevating Experiences, Differing Perspectives, and Creating Change.

Across all six themes, one of our overarching goals was to convey the personal, intimate nature of oral histories as resources—they're all “about” a larger theme, event, or idea, but are simultaneously intensely personal and narrow in focus since they're first-person. As a result, a single event can be presented in different ways by different interviewees, depending on their experience, where they were, or who they are.

Q: What collections are the oral history excerpts drawn from?

April: We pulled interviews from over a dozen collections. The majority are from oral history projects in which the goal was to record the stories and memories of individuals. Examples include the [World War II Survivors Oral History Project](#), [Jewish Family Services Oral History Project](#), and the African-American Life in Los Angeles oral history project located in the Tom and Ethel Bradley Center. Other interviews in the exhibit are from collections representing the life and work of those who donated them. We included interviews from author and journalist Tom Reilly, author and historian Catherine Mulholland, and historian and sexologist Vern Bullough.

Q: What do you think the excerpts show about role of oral history collections? What will people be surprised to find?

Mallory: The excerpts demonstrate the importance of preserving and considering many diverse and varied perspectives when documenting a particular event or moment in history. The wide-ranging voices in our oral history collections aim to accommodate this need to preserve viewpoints not usually found in official paper records. Exhibit viewers may be surprised to find that oral history interviewees' own lived experiences play such an important role in the remembering and recounting of a particular event or period of time.

Q: How do you hope faculty will integrate Past/Personal into their instruction?

Ellen: We create exhibitions in the Library in order to promote use of our unique collections in student research, instruction, and other pursuits across campus. Instructors in different disciplines



Helen Thomas

Hear Helen [speaking on her experience](#) covering the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

might use the exhibit in different ways, of course, but generally speaking we're pleased to hear about any assignment that draws on our exhibits, exposing students to rare and unique library resources that are available to them at CSUN within the context of their coursework.

Curators of the exhibit:

Ellen Jarosz, Head of Special Collections & Archives

Julieta Garcia, Archivist, International Guitar Research Archives

April Feldman, Archivist, University Archives

Mallory Furnier, Archivist, Urban Archives and Old China Hands Archives

[Past / Personal: Examining Oral History Narratives](#) will be a featured exhibit through July 15, 2022.

You can learn more about the CSUN University Library's oral history collections at the [Online Archive of California](#).



What's New: Campus Unrest Process Committee Recordings Collection

Contributed by David Morck

Since the days when CSUN was known as San Fernando Valley State College, the campus has been the birthplace of political movements and protest pushing toward a culture of inclusiveness and social justice for students, staff and faculty. One early flashpoint in the struggle for racial equity at CSUN has come to be known as the "November 4th Incident." Its aftermath led to the creation of new cultural studies departments, and in more recent days, to the renaming of the Oviatt Library to the University Library.

The crisis arose following a physical confrontation between an African-American football player and the Freshman Football Coach, who was white. Students from the Black Student Union (BSU) met with the Athletics Director Glenn Arnett and demanded that the coach, Don Markham, be fired. On November 4th, BSU students entered the administration building (now Bayramian Hall) and proceeded to the University President's Office to further their demands. What resulted was a four-hour "takeover" of three floors of the administration building, while the students met with Arnett, acting campus president Paul Blomgren, Delmar Oviatt, and others. While the discussions culminated in an agreement between Blomgren and BSU representatives that included educational reforms, the administrators were shaken and pressed for the prosecution of several of the student protestors.

The Campus Unrest Process Committee Recordings Collection consists of eight audio recordings of negotiations between students and campus administration, with input from community members, following the events of the Black Student Union (BSU) takeover of the Administration Building on November 4, 1968. The collection has been digitized and is available as part of [CSUN Digital Collections](#). Among topics discussed are amnesty for CSUN student protestors and the creation of the first ethnic studies programs on campus, then called Afro-American Studies (now African Studies) and Mexican-American Studies (now Chicana/o Studies).

We spoke with April Feldman, Project Archivist for the University Library's Special Collections & Archives about the curation of the Campus Unrest Process Committee Recordings Collection.



Students get a helping hand on to Administration Building roof. Daily Sundial November 5, 1968.

Q: Have these recordings always been part of the University Archives? If not, what precipitated their acquisition, and who or what authority stored them before the Library received them?

April: Records indicate the tapes were donated to the archives by William Huling from CSUN Counseling Services and Gene Soyster from the CSUN Dept. of Education in 1988. Past standard practices in the archives lead me to believe the tapes were donated to the Urban Archives Center first and subsequently transferred to University Archives and Campus History collections in 2014.

Q: What challenges did you face getting them digitized and making them available to the public? Were there any political difficulties?

April: There were no political difficulties in getting them digitized - quite the opposite, actually.

Faculty/staff time and other resources are always at a premium when planning projects and setting priorities, especially when coordinating multiple units within the library. The impetus for digitization and public access came while the Oviatt Library Advisory Working Group, formed by the university president and headed by the provost, was in their research phase. Since we were processing the materials to give the working group access, we decided to take the extra steps to make them accessible to the public at that time as well.

Q: What big personalities stand out to you in these discussions?

April: 1968-1969, when the political tensions on campus were at their height, we see several names appear regularly. These include Delmar Oviatt, former Dean of Students, VP of Academic Affairs, and interim President; Stan Charnofsky, the first head of the SFVSC EOP; Archie Chapman, first president of the BSU; Bill Burwell, founding member of the BSU and first director of the then Afro-American Studies department.

Q: When you were processing this acquisition, what did you learn about CSUN administrative procedures that you didn't know before?

April: Not too much to be honest. I believe I learned more about social mores and the ethnic climate of the San Fernando Valley in the 1960s.

Q: What do you think people who listen to these recordings will be surprised to learn about the political change at CSUN in the late 1960s?

April: How little things have actually changed. While there are significantly more BIPOC students, faculty, and staff on campus the conversations we're having are still the same 50+ years later.

I don't think most people realize how politically active students on this campus were (and often are), especially in the 1960s. I know it surprised me the first time I heard about it. And sometimes they faced serious consequences. According to the Report of the Oviatt Library Working Advisory Group (2020), "Of the students arrested between November 1968 and January 1969, 20 were convicted of felonies, with three sentenced to serve 1-25 years in state prison. Eight other students were placed

on probation for five years, and sentenced to 1-12 months in county jail." The University Archives contains many documents and images that bear witness to the repeated conflict between student protestors and campus authorities. One of the most striking is [a photo documenting a clash between demonstrators and police in January of 1969](#).

Q: How do you think scholars, students or the public will use these recordings, now that they're available?

April: That's always difficult to predict. There are so many ways to approach research. For instance, I come from a background in history and therefore tend to think about it in those terms.

One could use the recordings for traditional historiography. Someone else could be researching the history of race relations. Another could be more interested in social mores, the negotiation process, or the presence of women in the movement or the negotiation process. Those are just a couple of research questions off the top of my head. I'm sure there would be a lot more coming from different perspectives and disciplines.

More resources:

Report of the [Oviatt Library Working Advisory Group](#) (pdf), 2020. The advisory group met to consider the renaming of the Oviatt Library to University Library. The bibliography at the end of this document has a long list of other resources that can help with a further understanding of what spurred the "November 4th Incident" protests and occupation of the Administration Building, as well as details on the justification for removing Delmar T. Oviatt from the Library's name.

Browse the [Campus Unrest Committee Recordings Collection](#) on Digital Collections.

Explore the [Founding Africana and Chicana/o Studies at CSUN digital timeline](#), which includes links to coverage of the November 4th Incident by the *Daily Sundial*.



Library Spotlight: The University Library Reopens for Fall 2021

Contributed by Katherine Dabbour

In a recent survey of CSUN students that asked what having the University Library reopening this fall means to them, one commenter summarized the other respondents' sentiment.

It would mean that I could have a place away from home to study. During the pandemic, it was hard to concentrate at home. Having the option of a quiet area at the library would be a stress reliever for me. I would also get to feel like I am a part of my campus.



CSUN student studying in the Library's Learning Commons.

Certainly, quiet study space is no surprise, even in a Library as lively as ours where three out of four floors allow collaborative study, and 17 group study rooms are usually in constant use. However, what was poignant about this comment and others was the emphasis on community, of feeling part of a campus again. With only 30% of classes having an on-campus component, whether students are attending classes in-person, online, in a hybrid format, or a mix of all three, having the Library open again provides a sense of community that has been missing over the last year and a half.

So, what is the Library doing to provide quiet study space, that sense of community, and access to resources and services this fall?

Most importantly, the Library is back to being open to current CSUN students, faculty (including emeritus and adjuncts), and staff 79 out of the 84 hours per week that we were open prior to closing at the end of March 2020, when the campus pivoted to virtual instruction due to COVID. In addition, most service desks are open their usual hours, with Special Collections & Archives and the Creative Media Studio open by appointment only. The Library will also follow its usual extended hours schedule the days leading to and during December finals.

CSUN users are once again able to enter the Library, browse the books, DVDs/CDs, and other resources, and check out materials from the three circulating collections: "Main" (includes upper floor stacks, Stored/ASRS, and Bestsellers), Teacher Curriculum Center/Music & Media, and Course Reserves (mostly in-library use).



Library materials inside our Locker Pickup Service

For added safety and convenience, for both CSUN users and CSUN Library cardholders who are currently not allowed to enter the Library (Friends of the Library, Legacy/Lifetime Alumni Association members, and TCC Cardholders), the exterior [Locker Pickup Service](#) is available to pick up checked out materials, and CSUN users can also pick up their materials borrowed via [Interlibrary Loan/CSU+](#). See the [CSUN Library Locker Pickup Service You Tube video](#) for a glimpse of our lockers in action.

As usual, the Library's electronic books, articles, journals, and streaming media continue to receive high use. Since spring 2021, this includes remote online access to e-textbooks paid out of federal "CARES Act" funds to cover the costs to "rent" many electronic textbook titles on behalf of CSUN students through a product called [BibliU](#).

In addition to desktop computers, students can once again borrow laptops, tablets, hotspots, multimedia equipment from the [Creative Media Studio](#), and other devices from the Library Technology Services desk, located in the Learning Commons. Students can also make appointments for 3D printing and use of the CMS Recording Studio. In addition, Lab Printing @ CSUN and scanners are also available.

Librarians are providing reference and consultation services through our [Ask a Librarian](#) services, which now includes in-person help at the Learning Commons Reference desk. [Library instruction](#) is offered online, both synchronously and asynchronously, and face-to-face on campus is also an option. Additionally, general and specialized self-guided [tutorials](#) and [research guides](#) are always available.

Finally, another comment from the aforementioned survey nicely summarizes how Library employees feel about seeing our students, faculty, and staff in the Library, too:

The library opening means a lot! ... [We are] excited to see it open in all its glory!



We Would Like You to Meet: Mike Villalobos, Circulation Services Lead

Contributed by Joyclyn Dunham

In the Library's Guest Services department, Mike Villalobos is a champion for student success and access to resources. On staff with the Library since 2000, he loves his job and the opportunity to meet students from around the globe. During challenging pandemic times, Mike was steadfast in leading necessary pivots to ensure students' needs were met under critical safety guidelines.

Get to know Mike, a dedicated and courageous front-line staff member on our team.

Tell us about yourself

I came to CSUN in 1992 as a student and was later hired in 2000 as a full-time staff member in the Library, closing nights and weekends. I was promoted in 2007 to the position I am in now, the Circulation Services Lead. I never got a chance to finish my bachelor's degree, so I will be returning in Spring 2022 to restart my academic career. I hope to complete my Bachelor's in Liberal Studies in 2024, and then move on to working on my master's degree in Library Science. I hope to be a full-fledged librarian in the next 5 years.



Mike Villalobos

What is your role in the Library?

Ultimately, I am accountable for the daily operation of the Guest Services Desk, the shelving of over 300,000 items in the library, and the oversight of the first Automated Storage and Retrieval System in the United States, which currently holds over 800,000 items. My success is measured in terms of the way the Circulation Services area performs on a daily basis and how we manage challenges as a team. I have to make sure that the work gets done, costs are controlled, employees work as a group, and ultimately, students are satisfied with the services that we offer and responsibilities that we take on.

What do you love most about your job in the Library?

Helping people.

What are some of the most frequently asked questions from students?

"Why aren't there more study spaces in the library?" I'd like to say we are currently working on it, and will have more spaces very soon. Stay tuned!

What is the greatest challenge you overcame during the pandemic?

Overcoming my fear to contract COVID-19 by working with the public again. I simply had to educate myself by listening to the medical experts and taking personal responsibility for my safety and others by getting vaccinated.

What motivates you to work hard?

Knowing that my job has an impact on students, thus helping to create a more knowledgeable community.

What is your greatest accomplishment?

Overcoming my fear of public speaking. This was the catalyst in dealing with my anxiety disorder, as I was very shy growing up, and had difficulty socializing with others. I was so shy, I was awarded "Most Quiet" when I graduated high school. Thanks to CSUN Professor Annette Cardona, I was not only able to overcome my public speaking fear, but I was also finally able to speak up for myself, period. This led me to pursue supervisory and management positions that I had been avoiding in my career. To be clear, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in today or on my way to becoming a Librarian, if it wasn't for her. She was an amazing professor, but also a kind, thoughtful person who taught me the tools to finally be myself and be comfortable in my own skin.

What did you want to be when you were a child?

A police officer, but DJ is a close second.

What do you do for fun?

I like listening to new music and making mixtapes. I still DJ when I get a chance, so I need to stay sharp!

Who is your favorite author or musical artist?

Prince. I had the opportunity to see him live four times and of course, I have all of his records. I love the fact that he produced, wrote and performed on all of his music. He's a real musical genius in my opinion.

Favorite album of all time?

Purple Rain, of course. Every track on that album is a classic. Make sure to see the movie first though, it's just as good.

If you could eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?

Carnitas

If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?

Play with my dogs and BBQ.

What is something that most people don't know about you (but are willing to share)?

I'm a wrestling fanatic, and currently loving all the AEW shows.

Any nicknames you are willing to share?

I have my fair share of cool DJ names that I have used throughout the years, but "DJ Mike" seems to have stuck unfortunately. LOL.

Who is your hero?

My dad. He worked on the many ranches of the San Joaquin Valley for 3 decades, so my sister and I could have a better life. He never complained and was always grateful to be working and putting food on the tables of people all over the world. He was also a proud Marine who served in the Vietnam War and loved our country as much as his family.

Best thing about CSUN as a student?

I got more out of my education than I ever bargained for.

Best thing about CSUN as an employee?

I love the fact that I get to see new faces every year and meet new people from all around the world.

What was/is the hardest challenge you've overcome? Why are you proud of the outcome?

Moving from a small town of 6,000, McFarland, to a huge city of millions, Los Angeles, in 1992. It was the scariest thing I had ever done at 17 years old, but I am so glad I did it. It was hard, but well worth it. I consider myself an official Angeleno and proud of it!

What makes you stay at CSUN?

I am very fortunate to work at the Library, where I am supported as an employee and students are equally supported and listened to.



Thanks & Recognition: Yolanda and Jeff Heller

Contributed by Gina Flores

In February 2020, the University Library was honored to receive a considerable gift to enhance our collections. Among our beloved family of generous supporters, Yolanda and Jeff Heller have a special place in their hearts for education, as retired teachers and proud parents of a CSUN music graduate.

The Yolanda and Jeff Heller Endowment was established in memory of Yolanda's late cousin, Raul E. Aragon, Jr., an alumnus of CSUN and the University's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Assistant Director. This thoughtful tribute supports books and materials for three

University Library subjects: Music Performance and Composition, Child Abuse Studies, and Holocaust Studies.

Both Jeff and Yolanda grew up in Southern California. Jeff is a graduate of San Diego State University and Pepperdine University, and Yolanda attended Chapman University for both her undergraduate and graduate studies, along with Special Education courses completed at CSUN. Now retired, Jeff and Yolanda's careers were deeply rooted in a mission to educate and inspire budding young minds. Jeff taught math at Hale Charter Academy in Woodland Hills, while Yolanda taught at Westmark School in Encino, and also at West L.A. Baptist. They became a couple after spending time together at a faith-based event, where their interests united.

The Hellers were blessed with a son named Israel, who graduated from CSUN in 2005 with a Bachelor of Music degree. Israel is now an accomplished violinist and songwriter.

Residing in the San Fernando Valley, Yolanda and Jeff share an interest in opera and classical music, including attending events at The Soraya. They are also frequent guests at University Library events, where they enjoy the diverse programming.

The Library is forever grateful for the many ways that Yolanda and Jeff show their support through their acts of kindness and generous gifts, all for the benefit of our hardworking Matadors at CSUN!



Yolanda and Jeff Heller



Message from the Dean: Reopening the Library after the Apocalypse

After every natural disaster or pandemic there must be a transitional time of returning to “normal life.” When the 1994 Northridge earthquake occurred, it took years for the campus to recover, and I see the COVID-19 pandemic as being similar in some ways to the devastation wrought by a major earthquake. The 1994 earthquake lasted less than a minute, but its effects were felt for years afterward. The COVID-19 pandemic has been with us for 18 months, but just like the earthquake, we will be experiencing “aftershocks” for the indefinite future.

In another article in this edition of the Library eNews, Associate Dean Kathy Dabbour writes about the tangible effects of the full Library reopening (which took place on August 30, 2021), including the importance of quiet study space for student success, the need to rebuild a sense of community on campus, group study availability, borrowing physical materials, and many other facets of our building’s reopening. It has been thrilling for me to walk through the University Library and observe the hundreds of CSUN students, who every day are taking advantage of this critical campus resource that was physically closed for over a year. Almost every resource that was available pre-pandemic is again accessible to all CSUN students, faculty and staff. I do not think that the value of the Library’s physical building can be underestimated, with all of its nooks, crannies, study rooms, computers, and quiet spaces; with browsable access to the book stacks again reinstated; and with face-to-face communication with Library staff and faculty again restored.



University Library Dean Mark Stover

But there are still some differences that remind us that we are not living in the world of 2019 anymore. To ensure health and safety, access to the Library’s entrance is monitored and each person who comes to the Library is asked to provide certain information before entering the building. The Library’s Freudian Sip coffee shop is closed this semester, as is the Gohstand Reading Room and the Library Exhibit Gallery. The Creative Media Studio and Special Collections & Archives are open by appointment only. Many library staff and faculty continue to work a hybrid schedule. Life is not back to normal yet.

But these changes are temporary. We anticipate that most of the limitations mentioned above will be lifted by the spring semester 2022, if health and safety protocols permit us to do so. I can only speak for myself when it comes to my own emotional response to reopening, but the thought of “returning

to normal” brings joy to my heart and the removal of the darkness from a locked and empty building which formerly was bustling with palpable energy. I sense that we have finally arrived at that place of renewal, and by 2022 I hope that we can say that we have completed our journey to normalcy.

But the fact remains that we will never be the same again. The pandemic has affected all of us, in large ways but also in quiet moments. We at CSUN have learned many valuable lessons along the way that we will do well to remember, one of the most important being that we are a resilient university that can meet any challenge. The Library is a good example of this resiliency, in the ways that we continued to serve our students and meet their needs in the moment, and in the ways that we overcame the challenges of a worldwide pandemic and continued to grow, stretch, and improve. The Library’s services, staff, faculty, and resources are “sustainable” even in the face of a global event many of us never imagined could happen.

The great Irish poet W. B. Yeats composed his poem “The Second Coming” in the wake of multiple apocalyptic events including the 1918 influenza pandemic during which his wife nearly died. Yeats wrote that “things fall apart,” that “the center cannot hold,” and that “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.” I must admit that there were days during the COVID-19 pandemic when it seemed like Yeats’ imagery had come to life in the 21st century. Darkness, it seemed, had come across the land, and the “rough beast” was slouching toward an apocalyptic destination. But that is not the ending we appear to be destined to experience at CSUN. The University Library is already dispelling the gloom of the past 18 months and entering into a new era. We are welcoming students into our “home” with light and warmth. We are building on the strengths that we have been honing for many years. The Library’s digital resources and virtual services are once again reunited with our physical and tangible assets. Unlike Yeats, we can be optimistic about the future. Things did not fall apart. The center has indeed held.