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# BOOKNOTES

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ARMACOST LIBRARY

## FEATURED ECKERD AUTHOR

Professor Carolyn Johnston

By Eddy Burns

Eckerd Professor Carolyn Johnston's soon-to-be-published new book, *My Father's War: Black and White—Fighting with the Buffalo*



*Soldiers in Italy*, begins with a scene at the World War II Memorial: "The bus pulled up to the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. on October 9, 2004. One by one the old soldiers of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division, the Buffalo Soldiers, stepped off

the bus. Some carried canes and walked slowly and painfully toward the memorial... On that crisp, sunny day in October the Buffalo Soldiers stood at the large marble stone with 'Po Valley' etched in it, as their minds went back to those days in Italy when they were sent into the front lines just hours after they landed. Standing with them was a white southern woman who was Captain Gene Johnston's daughter. Why were this white officer's daughter and the black soldiers of his Division sharing such an intimate moment, and why did they hold her father, and by extension, her, in such esteem?"

Thus begins a fascinating account of the only African-American division to engage in combat in Europe during the Second World War, as seen through the lens of one of the white officers assigned to the unit. Professor Johnston draws on extensive oral histories of her father, Eugene Johnston, and on governmental archives and interviews with many of the surviving black soldiers. She describes the parallel universes of the black and white soldiers as they faced

racism and violence at home and abroad.

Carolyn Johnston is the Elie Wiesel Professor of Humane Letters at Eckerd College where she has taught since 1978. She is also Professor of History and American Studies. Born in Georgia, she received her PhD in History from the University of California at Berkeley. She was instrumental in the creation of the Women's and Gender Studies major, the Ford program, and Environmental Studies major. She has been teaching in the Ford Apprentice Scholar's program since its inception over twenty years ago.

For many years she has been very fortunate to teach a Winter Term course with Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel. Professor Johnston served as the Chairperson of the Letters Collegium for ten years, and on virtually every major committee of the college. She has been a tireless activist in causes for social justice. Her courses include *Rebels with a Cause*; *Making History: The Sixties*, *Women in Modern America*; *History of Ideas I and II*; *Becoming Visible: Sex and Gender in America*; and *Introduction to American Civilization*.

Her books previously published include *Jack London: An American Radical?*; *Sexual Power: Feminism and the Family in America*; and *Cherokee Women in Crisis: The Trail of Tears, Civil War, and Allotment 1838-1907*. *My Father's War*, which is in the final stages of publication, offers a rare portrait of one of the last segregated units of the American military. This work is not a military history of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division; rather it seeks to illuminate the meaning and nature of the war for the Buffalo Soldiers, black and white.

## TREASURES AND CURIOSITIES: BROWSING THE SPECIAL COLLECTION

By Sandra Ripberger

The shelves of The Friends of the Library Room house some books so rare that visitors may feel the need for white gloves when browsing. The oldest book is the first English translation of John Calvin's *Institution of Christian Religion* published in 1587. A few volumes and centuries away is a first edition of *The Little Red Book* by Mao Tse-tung. Many of the books were gifts from ministers and professors involved with the college in the early years.

Among the richly illustrated spines is a verdant two-volume set of *Through the Dark Continent* (1878) by Henry M. Stanley and the first Irish edition of John Bartram's *Travels in North America* published in 1793. This classic early description of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, when Cherokees and Choctaws thrived in the region, was a gift by the Friends of the Library in honor of the dedication of the Armacost Library.

A recent focus for collecting is Florida's past and natural history. *DeSoto in Florida* (1866) was given by FOL in memory of Betty Williams. Chris and Don Eastman chose the lovely *Florida Days*, by Margaret Deland (1889) to commemorate Martha Wallace's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The cover seems wrapped with embossed palmettos that invite the reader to St. Augustine and Anastasia Island.

The collection has a number of distinguished early American history titles. Perhaps the most important American book published before 1800, Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the*

*state of Virginia* (1788) might well be read before *Dred; Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1856.)

A significant portion of the antiquarian treasures come from personal collections. John Phelps, a 1965 graduate of Florida Presbyterian and retired clerk to the Florida House of Representatives, contributed a number of titles that focus on the parliamentary process, including the English perspective in 1663 and the a manual for the Senate of the United States published by Jefferson in 1801. Founding FPC history professor and Friend of the Library Bill Wilbur's name can be found in a number of books including *Personal reminiscences... of General Robert E. Lee*.

Many of the illustrated texts invite display. A rare and important collection of Chinese and Japanese scrolls dates to the 1700's. The 100,000<sup>th</sup> volume of *The Tale of Genji*, a gift of FOL, is lavishly illustrated. *Treasures of illumination; English manuscripts of the fourteenth century* (1937), *The Art of Florence*, and *Georgia O'Keeffe in the West* are available for study in the library and are just a few of the works that could be exhibited to advantage.

In the coming months the Friends of the Library will browse further in the special collections and look at ways to make them more accessible to library users.

### Booknotes Profile: Director Jamie Gill

By Eddy Burns



Many changes have occurred at Eckerd College since Jamie Gill began work in the library in 1982. Then the student body numbered around 800, there were about 75 faculty members, and some of the current largest majors did not exist yet - no marine science, international business, or

communications majors - and the library was housed in the William Luther Cobb building. It sounds like truly ancient history to say that in 1982 the only "computer" in the library was a dedicated terminal used for cataloging books. By 1985, the four librarians were thrilled when they got to share a single workstation for word processing. The library world has certainly changed.

Jamie managed a busy public library in the Buffalo, N.Y., area before moving to St. Petersburg, trading cross-

country skiing for year-round tennis, sailing, and gardening. Loving to travel, she is always happiest when planning a trip, especially to ancient historical sites. Her trips to Stonehenge, Machu Picchu, Ephesus, and Akrotiri were particularly fascinating.

Jamie was initially hired as a Reference/Serials Librarian. She later became the supervisor of Technical Services, the area where books are ordered, cataloged and processed. She devoted two hexennial leaves to evaluating automated library systems. Her first report was used to get grant funding to begin automating our library catalog. The next led to purchase of the system used by the Armacost Library today. Jamie became Acting Library Director upon the retirement of David Henderson, and was appointed Library Director in May 2010. After all her years working in the library, Jamie continues to find it a fun, evolving career. She loves to chat with library visitors. Stop and see her in her office on the second floor.

**WELCOME AND GOODBYE:** **wewelcomewelcome** Help us welcome Stephanie Henderson to the library staff as the Electronic Services and Visiting Instructional Librarian. Stephanie comes to us from Northern Kentucky University, where she was an Instructional Services and Reference Librarian. Prior to that, she was at Eastern Kentucky University and Vanderbilt University's Biomedical Library. Stephanie earned her B.A. in Biology from Berea College and her M.L.S. from the University of South Florida. Stephanie's hometown is Somerset Kentucky. She enjoys scrapbooking, cooking and spending time with her family.

**CHAIR'S CORNER: PLAN YOUR FIFTIETH**  
**by Shari Watson-Wardrum**

Last year I reported on my being on the planning committee for my 50<sup>th</sup> college reunion at DePauw University which was to take place in June of 2010. I can now report on the event itself. My husband, Earl, and I spent four very busy, very enjoyable days in Greencastle, IN visiting with many literally old friends and making some new friends.

Fifty years brought many and varied changes in our once youthful eagerness and vitality. Some of us were still working; especially those in the professions, but many of us were enjoying retirement, traveling, grandchildren and social, recreational and community activities. Although many of us walked more slowly, we talked with voices of

experience and confidence. We laughed a lot and remembered the good times and the not so good.

We shared experiences and stories of our pasts and were impressed by the scope of involvement and achievements of our classmates, and we looked forward to many more good years and reunions to come. We parted with the promise to keep in touch and to get together again in the future. Some of us left the campus with a tear or two in our eyes, but all of us left with joyful hearts.

Eckerd alums: Imagine your 50<sup>th</sup> at Eckerd College and plan to attend. It'll be here before you know it.



**Eckerd students in Armacost Library.**  
**Photo courtesy Bill Stickley.**

**Invitation to Membership:** To join The Friends, contact Connie Pearson at 727-864-8336 or email [pearsoc@eckerd.edu](mailto:pearsoc@eckerd.edu). The many benefits include a library card granting access to world-wide resources, interlibrary loans, staff assistance, and spe-

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