



BOOK BEAT

By Doug Partusch



The special collections in the Ohio University Libraries represent an impressive breadth and depth of unique materials that have been acquired and cultivated for nearly two hundred years.

Patrick Traylor

The Donald L. Swaim Collection is one of those collections. It features thousands of hours of audio interviews with authors that were recorded and broadcast by OHIO graduate, Don Swaim. The collection includes the entire run of a radio program called "**Book Beat**," a daily feature about books and writers, heard on **WCBS-AM** in New York from 1982 through 1993. The program was also distributed nationally by the CBS Radio Stations News Service.



Don Swaim and author Jayne Anne Phillips share a chuckle on "Book Beat" in 1985 as he interviews her about her debut novel, "Machine Dreams."

Courtesy of Don Swaim

"Book Beat" featured the actual voices of over 700 prominent writers that were interviewed by Don at CBS studios in New York. He also edited those sessions and added his own commentary. The list of writers includes Ray Bradbury, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates and many, many others. While "Book Beat" was a shorter feature, the original interviews were often much longer, and Don's insightful questioning really brought out the personalities of those he talked to.

When asked about identifying his favorite author, Don replied, "Selecting the most memorable author out of the hundreds I've interviewed isn't as easy

as selecting a favorite color. All the writers I've spoken to are unique, and often inspiring, in their own ways. How does one choose from, say, John Updike, Norman Mailer, John Irving, Kurt Vonnegut, William Styron, Ray Bradbury, James Jones [or] James Michener? You get the idea."



Courtesy of Don Swaim

Stanley Elkin, author of "The Magic Kingdom" and "The Dick Gibson Show," listens intently to Swaim's questions on WCBS' radio program "Book Beat" in 1985.



Author John Irving discusses his newest book, "A Prayer for Owen Meany," on Swaim's radio broadcast of "Book Beat" in 1989.

Courtesy of Don Swaim

Those original full-length interviews and the "Book Beat" shows are stored in both analog (tape) and digital forms in Alden Library thanks to Don's generosity to his alma mater. A former member of the Ohio University National Alumni Board of Directors, Don has kept in close contact with the University over the years. After his retirement from WCBS, he realized what a treasure trove of historically significant material that he had in his possession. He felt that the recordings would provide rich primary-source material for creative writing students at the University.

Still a very active writer himself, Don formed the Bucks County Writers Workshop near his home in Pennsylvania to help aspiring writers refine their craft. He published two books in 2011, and he was also the recipient of the 2011 Pearl S. Buck National Fiction Award for his short story, "Dearest Friend, Annie."

You can currently hear the full-length interviews on the website Wiredforbooks.org. The "Book Beat" programs are on Don's website, <http://donswaim.com/bookbeatpodcast.html>



Ohio University alumnus, Don Swaim, interviews well-known travel author, Paul Theroux, for WCBS' "Book Beat."

Courtesy of Don Swaim

Librarians as Teachers

By Doug Partusch

I don't know if you've noticed, but one of the most important roles of librarians today is that of teacher. Like other teachers, their goal is to help and to show students, faculty, staff and community members how to become self-sufficient in their intellectual and creative pursuits.



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Alden Library's Instruction Coordinator Lorraine Wochna teaches an English 151 class about library resources and strategies on Monday afternoon, August 1, 2011.

Today, we are virtually bombarded with information. It is all around us and easily accessible. Now, the challenge is trying to find quality information and using critical analysis to distinguish what information is correct, authoritative and reliable. Keep in mind that these days not all information is "created equal." This realization and the ability to sort out the "wheat from the chaff" is called "information literacy."

Our librarians at Alden are actively involved in teaching the skills necessary to find reliable information for their classes and research. In fact, last year they taught over 540 classes that dealt with information literacy. Over half of our entire student body, nearly 12,000 students, participated in those sessions. Library class instruction ranged from first-year dance, to introduction to

mechanical engineering, to graduate research seminars in contemporary history.

Alden Library has over 20 subject librarians who act as liaisons to departments and colleges across campus, and their instruction revolves around finding quality information as a learning outcome. They also work to incorporate new teaching-delivery methods into their library instruction, such as using YouTube, blogs, wikis and general web resources.

"The subject librarians are increasingly spending their time collaborating with teaching faculty in order to develop the most effective information literacy instruction for the students," says Kelly Broughton, assistant dean for research and education at Alden Library.

With your support, our librarians can continue to teach information skills that can benefit an entire campus of faculty and students.



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Senior Library Associate Jason Whited helps Ohio University freshmen football players (from left) Devin Jones, Ben Russell, Josiah Yazdani and Tony Davis research the NFL lockout during a special class for the players at Alden Library. Librarians worked with the players in the exercise using electronic library resources to find trustworthy and original source material.