

# WINDOWS

The Official Newsletter of the Mary Couets Burnett Library | Spring 2026



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TCU Mary Couts Burnett Library

# WINDOWS

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Dear Friends, Colleagues and Supporters,

As I prepare to step away from my role as Dean of the Library at the end of May, I find myself reflecting on a journey that has been far more meaningful and rewarding than I ever imagined.

In my 30-year career, I often said I would never become a dean. Yet 19 years ago, I arrived here as Associate Dean, and six years ago, I stepped into the role I once thought I would avoid. I also never expected to remain at any one library for more than five years, but this library changed that. What I thought would be a brief chapter became a deeply fulfilling and lasting part of my life.

The reason is simple: the people.

This library is extraordinary not just because of its collections or spaces, but because of the dedicated staff who bring it to life every day, and the remarkable community that surrounds it. I am profoundly grateful for the unwavering support of the Friends of the Library, as well as our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Your belief in the library's mission has made all the difference.

My time as Dean was not without its challenges. Together, we navigated the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, adapted to budget reallocations, built a medical library in an extraordinarily short timeframe, and responded to the devastating flood in our book stacks following the February 2021 winter freeze. In each of these moments, I witnessed resilience, creativity, and an unshakable commitment to service.

And there were also moments of great joy—none more memorable than celebrating the library's 100th anniversary. That milestone offered a powerful reminder of the enduring importance of this institution and the many people who have shaped it over the past century.

It has been an honor to serve as your Dean. I leave with deep appreciation, pride in what we have accomplished together, and confidence in the library's future.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this remarkable community.

With sincere gratitude,

Tracy L. Hull

# LEAVING A *legacy*

## As She Concludes 19 Years, Dean of the Library Tracy Hull Reflects on Leadership, Innovation and the Library's Enduring Role at TCU.

As it goes in life, one story ends and another begins. This spring, the TCU community says farewell and best wishes to our very own Tracy Hull, dean of the TCU Mary Coats Burnett Library.

Dean Hull devoted 19 years of service to TCU, first as associate dean and then as dean beginning in 2020. During her tenure, she led the library through seasons of growth, innovation and unexpected challenges, always with steady resolve and deep care for the people the library serves.

One of the most defining moments of her leadership came in February 2021, when a historic winter storm caused extensive damage to the library building and portions of its collections. In the face of freezing temperatures, burst pipes, and water-damaged materials, Dean Hull helped develop and execute a comprehensive recovery plan. The goal was not only to restore the physical building and preserve affected materials, but also to ensure uninterrupted access to library services and support students and faculty.

For months, staff worked tirelessly in temporary conditions as restoration efforts continued. When the library fully reopened later that year, it stood as a testament to resilience, teamwork, and thoughtful leadership. Remaining positive through such a long and complex recovery required extraordinary patience and mental stamina — qualities Dean Hull modeled every step of the way.



Dean Hull celebrates the library's centennial at the 2025 *Evening of Great Conversation* gala.

# Looking back & moving forward

When she first joined TCU as associate dean 19 years ago, Tracy Hull's primary goal was to ensure the library was organized and positioned to advance its profile across campus.

"The library is the heart of the university, but I wanted to ensure we were up to speed on giving people access to library services and support, no matter the challenge," Dean Hull said. "And I think we succeeded at that."

Those who have worked alongside her agree. Kristin Barnes, associate dean of the library, notes that Hull's leadership style emphasized collaboration, transparency, and empowerment.

"She has been a phenomenal colleague, mentor, and advocate for the library," Barnes said. "She leads with a collaborative spirit, always balancing innovation with careful stewardship of the library's collection and budget."

Provost Floyd L. Wormley, Jr. echoed that sentiment, praising Dean Hull's steady leadership and her commitment to aligning the library's mission with the broader goals of the university.

"Library deans don't always get due recognition, but Dean Hull definitely deserves it," Wormley said. "Her vision for the library strengthened its role as an academic partner. She led the library's mission to support the goals of the University. Everything she does, she does with a keen eye on excellence, a deep understanding of what students and faculty need, and an unwavering commitment to TCU."

In addition to serving as a role model for others, Dean Hull has long championed professional development, encouraging library staff to pursue their career aspirations. She modeled that commitment through her own active involvement in the American Library Association and the Texas Library Association, including her time on the Conference Programming Committee.

Her philosophy is simple: when you invest in your people, the entire organization thrives.

"Tracy deeply cares about staff, encouraging professional development and empowering us to bring our ideas

to life," Barnes said. "Her support helped lead to successful initiatives like the Library Workshops that address campus-wide information literacy needs. She treats the library as the academic heart of campus, supporting research and fostering a culture where librarians can grow and thrive. We are incredibly fortunate to have benefited from her leadership and commitment for so many years."

Today, the library's strength lies in its talented and forward-thinking staff — archivists, librarians, technologists, student workers, and support teams — who continue to evolve services to meet the needs of modern scholarship. From expanding digital resources to enhancing research consultations and classroom partnerships, the staff stands ready to carry the library into its next chapter.

Throughout her tenure, Dean Hull demonstrated a deep and abiding commitment to Special Collections, recognizing its role in preserving history while inspiring new scholarship and discovery.

"Tracy has been an incredible leader for the library," said Mary Saffell director of Special Collections. "She has always been a strong champion for

Special Collections, emphasizing our unique role and helping us secure key equipment, software, and remarkable new materials. Her guidance and confidence made a huge difference when I stepped into my role as director."



Part of Dean Hull's mission has been to advance the library's profile across campus.

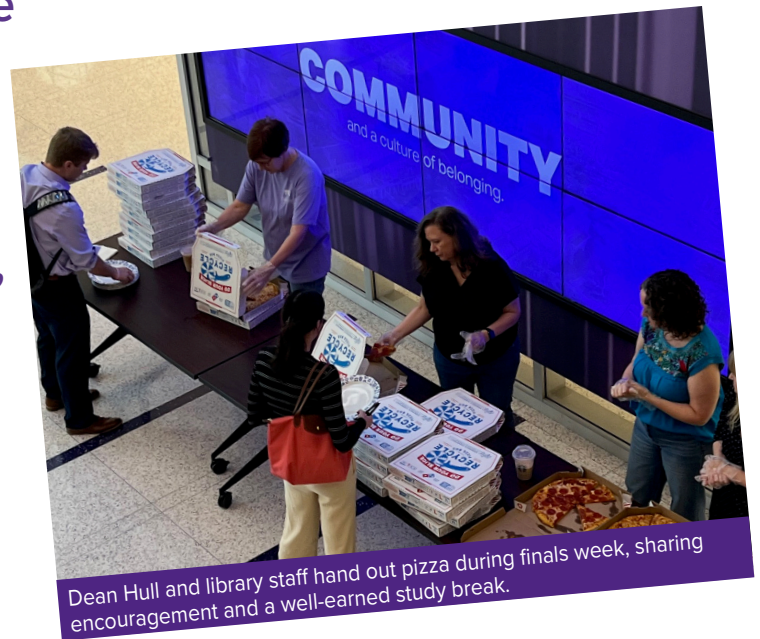
She prioritized growth in rare books, archives, and distinctive materials that elevate TCU's research profile and preserve cultural heritage. Through donor engagement and strategic acquisitions, the library strengthened its unique holdings and established additional endowment support to ensure its treasures remain accessible for

generations of students and researchers. "Tracy's time at the TCU Library has been one full of scheduled and unscheduled changes," said Cari Alexander, Head of the Music/Media Library. "In a profession where change is usually met with anxiety and trepidation, Tracy was generally a calming influence to steady the ship and

keep it moving. She always supported the Music/Media Library needs for transitional and transformative upgrades while understanding that we must keep a foot in the past to preserve and maintain seemingly obsolete formats and technologies. It's a delicate balance and she danced well with us."

**"Tracy has been a phenomenal colleague, mentor, and advocate for the library. She leads with a collaborative spirit, always balancing innovation with careful stewardship of the Library's collection and budget."**

— Kristen Barnes  
Associate Dean of the Library



Dean Hull and library staff hand out pizza during finals week, sharing encouragement and a well-earned study break.



Dean Hull presents award to Ron Tyler, 2024 Texas Book Award Honoree.



Chancellor Victor J. Boschini, Jr. celebrates the library's centennial alongside leaders past and present: Dean Hull, June Koelker and Bob Seal, April 2025

One of the most memorable milestones during Dean Hull's leadership was the 100th anniversary celebration, which highlighted a century of scholarship, service, and community at the Mary Coats Burnett Library.

Through special programs, exhibits, and events, Dean Hull helped guide the celebration in a way that honored the library's legacy while emphasizing its future. The milestone brought together alumni, faculty, students, and donors to recognize the lasting impact of the library as the intellectual heart of the university.

Signature events such as the library's *Evening of Great Conversation* fundraiser brought the community together in celebration of intellectual exchange and philanthropy. The biennial event highlights the importance of libraries as places where ideas, dialogue, and discovery flourish while raising support for the growth of library collections, services and space.

Proceeds from the event directly benefit students and faculty by expanding research resources, strengthening Special Collections, and supporting innovative library initiatives. Under Dean Hull's leadership, the *Evening of Great Conversation* grew into one of the library's most meaningful traditions, connecting alumni, donors, and the broader Fort Worth community with the intellectual life of the university.

These gatherings not only celebrate scholarship but also reinforce the library's role as a cultural and academic hub for the campus and broader TCU community.

"The library under Dean Hull's leadership has been an essential partner in scholarship," said history professor Rebecca Sharpless. "She has done a great job working with faculty to strengthen the library's holdings and services. We have excellent access to print and digital materials because of her diligence and care."

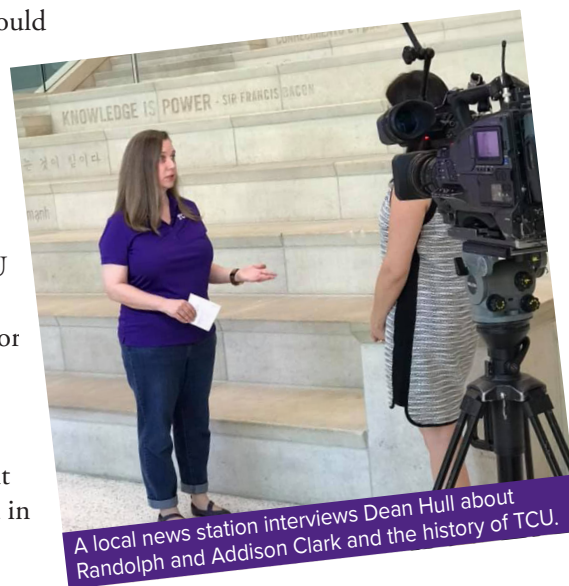
Dean Hull's gift for relationship-building helped cultivate lasting partnerships with donors and the Friends of the Library. Their generosity has enhanced collections, funded programming, and expanded opportunities for students and scholars to engage with rare and meaningful materials. These relationships are essential to sustaining the library's mission.

When asked what advice she would offer the next dean of the library, Dean Hull didn't hesitate.

"I would tell them to leverage their excellent staff and to enjoy the community that TCU and FortWorth have to offer," she said. "It's important to explore and become a part of this amazing community."

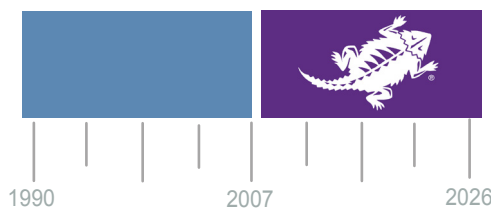
That sentiment reflects the spirit of her tenure: leadership rooted in collaboration, optimism, and a deep appreciation for place.

While one chapter closes, Dean Hull leaves behind a library strengthened by challenge, energized by innovation, and supported by an extraordinary staff poised to shape the future. Her legacy lives not only in restored walls and expanded collections, but in the people and programs that will continue to serve TCU for generations to come.



A local news station interviews Dean Hull about Randolph and Addison Clark and the history of TCU.

## DEAN TRACY HULL FUN FACTS



**36** years in the library profession

**19** years at TCU

**13** years as associate dean of tcu library

**6** years as dean of tcu library

**FAVORITE SPOT IN THE LIBRARY**  
Academic Heritage Room

**FAVORITE MEMORY**  
In 2015, hosting a special lunch for the Board of Trustees' spouses in the Map Room, highlighting the library's new east-side renovations, with guest Bob Schieffer in attendance.

**FAVORITE EXHIBIT**  
The 2025 Special Collections Open House

# TCU TEXAS BOOK AWARD

Celebrating award-winning scholarship and the stories that shape Texas history



Tracy Hull, dean of the TCU Library, presents Holly Karibo with a \$5,000 check and plaque.

On April 14, 2026, Friends of the TCU Library presented the twelfth TCU Texas Book Award at a special dinner hosted by the library and TCU Press. The evening brought together friends, scholars and supporters for great food, lively conversation and a shared appreciation for outstanding scholarship on Texas.

This year's award honored author Holly M. Karibo for her book *Rehab on the Range: A History of Addiction and Incarceration in the American West*. The highly acclaimed study examines the federal Narcotic Farm in Fort Worth — the first federally funded drug treatment center west of the Mississippi. Karibo received a \$5,000 award and commemorative plaque sponsored by the Friends of the TCU Library.

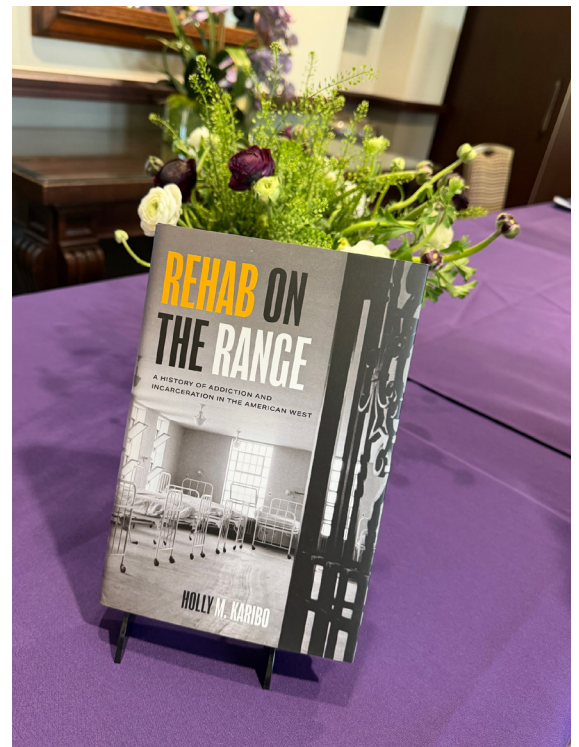
Presented every two years, the TCU Texas Book Award recognizes an author whose work makes a significant contribution to the understanding of Texas history. Past recipients have included authors of scholarly histories, historical and contemporary fiction, and memoirs.

“It was a wonderful event and always is a pleasure to honor authors who publish strong works highlighting Texas’s cultural heritage,” said Dean of the Library Tracy Hull.

Karibo is an associate professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of History at Oklahoma State University. Her research explores the history of vice, labor and sexuality in transnational urban spaces from the late 19th century to the present. She is also the author of the award-winning book *Sin City North: Sex, Drugs, and Citizenship in the Detroit-Windsor Borderland*, and co-editor of *Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America*.

During the evening, Karibo shared insights from her research and the historical context behind *Rehab on the Range*, offering guests a deeper look into the complicated legacy of the Fort Worth Narcotic Farm.

“Holly Karibo shared her work with the audience and provided insight into her research and the inspiration behind the book,” says Hull. “What made this presentation even more interesting is that it focused on the local history of Fort Worth by documenting a facility that had not really been studied previously.”





Aerial view of the Fort Worth Narcotic Farm, 1935-1975

## ABOUT THE BOOK

*Rehab on the Range* is the first comprehensive study of the Fort Worth Narcotic Farm, an institution that played a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between addiction treatment, criminal justice policy, and public health in the American West.

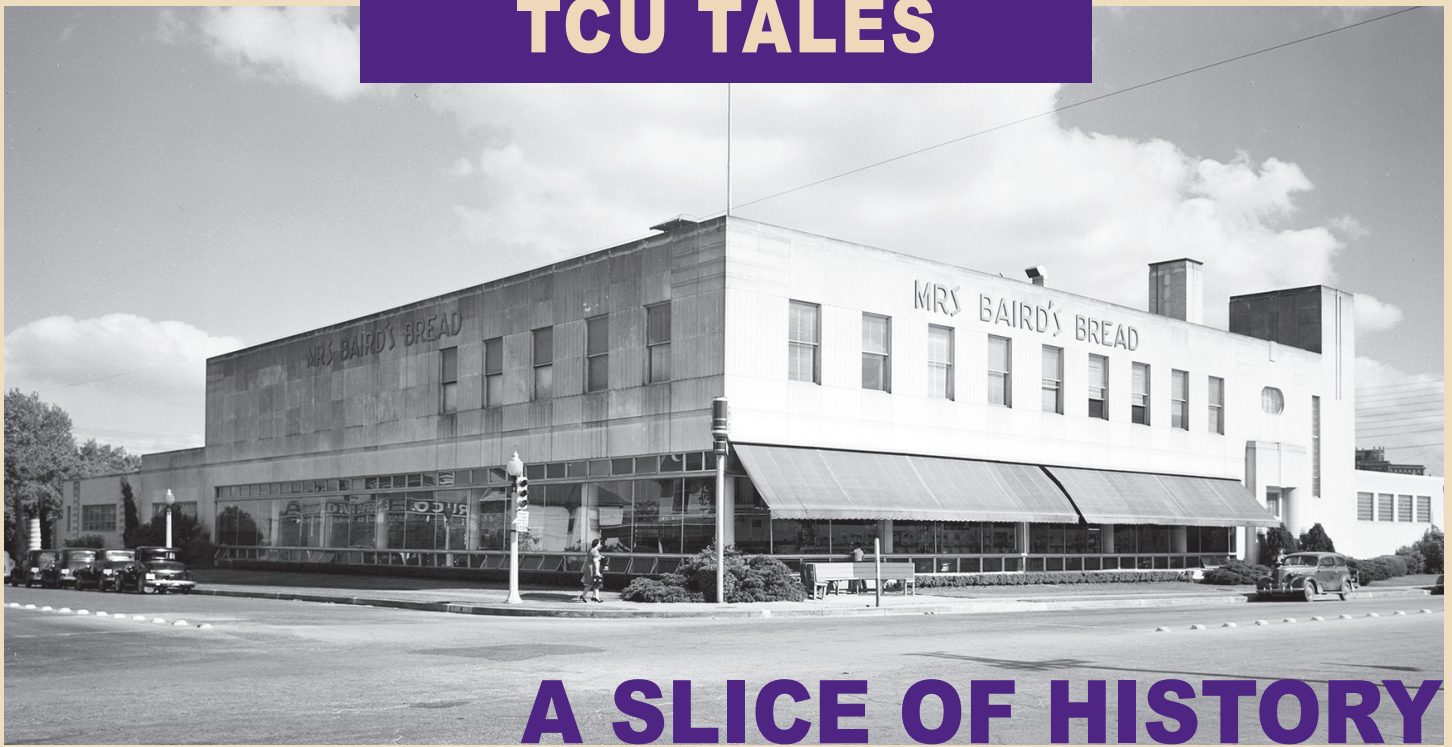
In 1929, the United States government approved two groundbreaking treatment facilities known as “narcotic farms,” located in Fort Worth, Texas, and Lexington, Kentucky. At a time when public anxiety about drug use was rising, these institutions represented a new approach to addiction treatment.

Operating from the 1930s through the 1970s, the Fort Worth facility was the only federally funded drug treatment center west of the Mississippi River. Designed to combine psychiatric treatment, physical rehabilitation, and vocational training, the Narcotic Farm was intended to transform national approaches to American addiction treatment. The reality, however, proved far more complex.

Through extensive research, Karibo examines how the institution—once envisioned as a progressive response to addiction—ultimately contributed to the growing reliance on incarceration in American drug policy. By blending intellectual history with the lived experiences of patients, *Rehab on the Range* offers an important perspective on addiction, drug policy, and the origins of mass incarceration.

*Exhaustively researched...Rehab on the Range intelligently describes one of the nation's first and largest experiments in federally funded drug treatment, examining it within a century-long context of public and legal attitudes toward addiction. Karibo looks critically at all stages of the experiment: conception, execution, patient experience, external challenges...Fundamentally, this book reveals how the United States—and Texas—has long struggled to understand its own attitudes about drug addiction...These questions were already being asked 100 years ago, and we're still waiting for answers.* — Texas Observer

*Karibo's work provides important insights...[She] overcomes significant archival challenges—including the apparent loss or destruction of nearly all patient intake narrative files, save for a small batch from 1943—to construct a rich and nuanced account of daily life at the facility.* — American Historical Review



## A SLICE OF HISTORY

*A Texas legacy that began in Fort Worth*

**Above:** Mrs. Baird's Bakery on Summit and I-30, Fort Worth, Texas (1945). The smell of freshly baked bread captivated passersby.

**Below:** Delivery trucks outside the first Fort Worth bakery at Sixth Avenue and Terrell Street, circa 1920s.

**For many Texans, Mrs. Baird's is more than a brand — it's a memory. From school lunches to family dinners, its familiar packaging has long been part of everyday life.** Behind that legacy is a story rooted in resilience, necessity and a Fort Worth kitchen.

In 1908, Ninnie Baird began baking bread from her home to support her eight children as her husband's health declined. After his death in 1911, what began as a means of survival became something more. With determination and the help of her children, she turned her baking into a business that would grow far beyond its humble beginnings.

In those early years, the operation was truly a family effort. Her children helped bake and deliver bread first on foot, then by bicycle, as demand steadily increased. What Ninnie created was not just a product, but a reputation built on quality, consistency and care.

By 1919, the small kitchen on Washington Street could no longer keep up with the demand. Ninnie purchased a lot on Sixth Avenue and Terrell Street and built a brick bakery to support the company's rapid growth. The new facility marked a turning point. Equipped with a Peterson Peel gas-fired oven capable of producing 400 one-pound loaves at a time, along with a bread-wrapping machine, the bakery brought new efficiency and scale to the operation.

As production increased, so did distribution. A second Ford truck was added to expand delivery routes across Fort Worth's growing neighborhoods. Between 1919 and 1928, the bakery was enlarged nine times. What began as a one-horse delivery system evolved into a fleet of

trucks serving multiple bakeries across Texas.

Over the decades, Mrs. Baird's became a staple in Texas kitchens. From breads and rolls to cakes and pies, the company expanded across the state and beyond. Its branding and advertising became as recognizable to Texans as those of other beloved household names, firmly cementing its place in regional culture.



After periods of challenge during the Great Depression and World War II, a postwar boom ushered in renewed growth. Ninnie Baird remained closely involved in the company until her health declined. She died on June 3, 1961, at the age of 92, leaving behind a business and a legacy that would endure for generations.

Today, that story is preserved in the Ninnie L. Baird & Mrs. Baird's Bakeries Papers held in TCU's Special Collections. The collection includes photographs, advertisements, correspondence, scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials documenting both Ninnie's life and the evolution of the company from 1887 to 2002.



These materials offer more than a business history. They tell the story of a woman who built something lasting out of necessity, and of a family enterprise that grew alongside the city of Fort Worth.



Mrs. Baird's Fort Worth Bakery employees, circa 1920. Fifty-two men and women helped build a Texas legacy.



**Above:** Mrs. Baird's bread plant in Dallas, Texas (1953), then the largest in the nation.

**Above Left:** Ninnie L. Baird, kept her business going with the help of her family, and it grew to become a Texas institution.



**Left:** Interior of Abilene Bakery, 1940. Employees work along the bread packaging line.

**Bottom Left:** A replica horse-and-buggy delivery wagon, created in the 1970s, frequently appeared in grocery stores carrying Mrs. Baird's products.

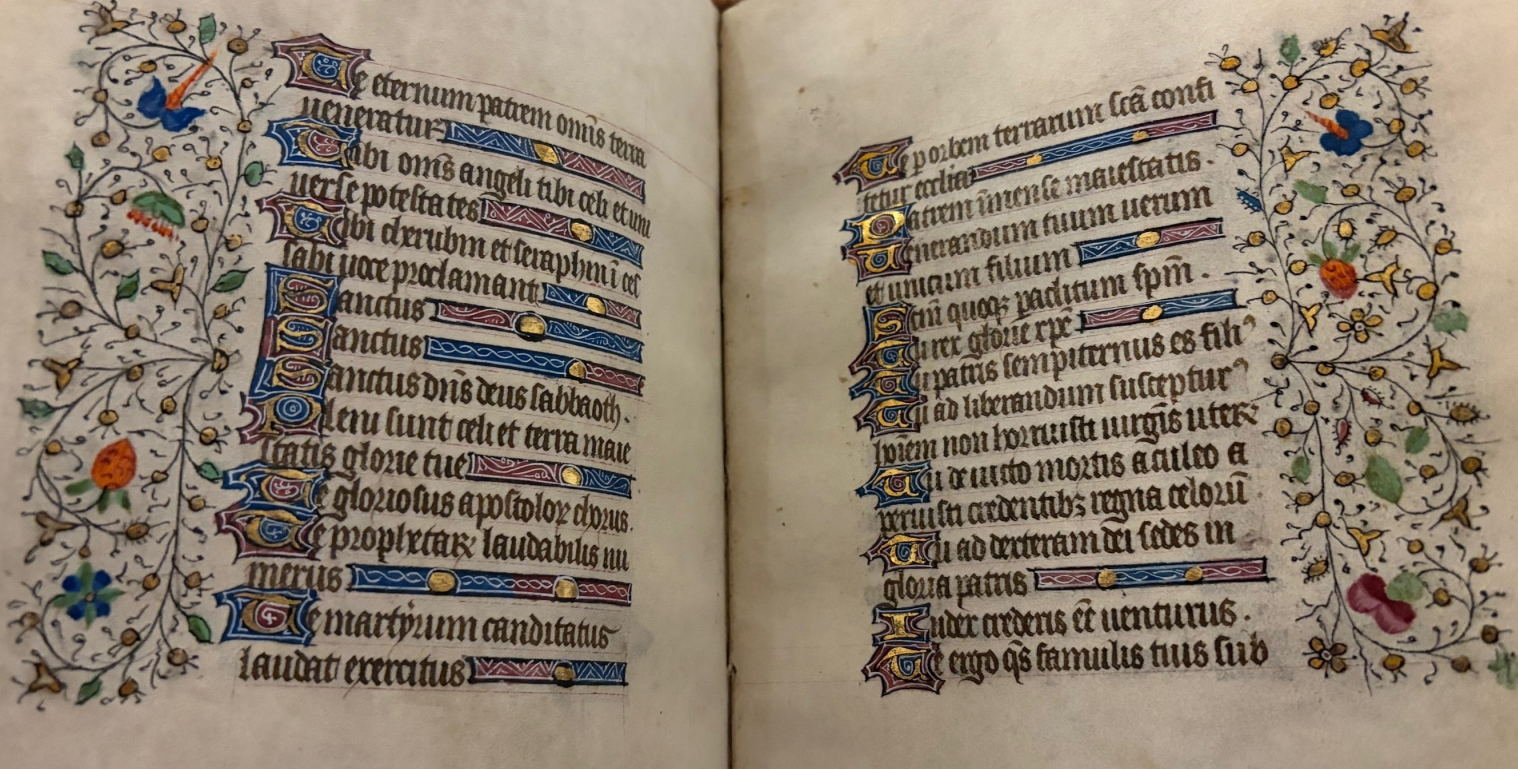
**Bottom:** Mrs. Baird's bread delivery truck, 1941



To explore the Ninnie L. Baird and Mrs. Baird's Bakeries online, visit: [exhibits.tcu.edu/s/baird/page/bairdintro](http://exhibits.tcu.edu/s/baird/page/bairdintro) or plan a visit to Special Collections.



The Special Collections department collects and preserves rare and unique materials including rare books, oral histories, university archives historical manuscripts, maps, photographs, art and artifacts. TCU Tales are compiled from photos, papers, memorabilia and documents in the University Archives.



# Library Acquires Rare Medieval Book of Hours

TCU Library Special Collections is pleased to announce a significant new acquisition: a medieval *Book of Hours*, one of the most widely used devotional books of the Middle Ages.

Books of Hours were prayer books created for laypeople, containing prayers to be recited at set times throughout the day. Popular from the 14th through the 16th centuries, they typically include a calendar of feast days, psalms, Gospel readings, and other devotional texts. Many were lavishly decorated by hand, illuminated with gold leaf, and embellished with vibrant miniature paintings depicting biblical stories from the New Testament with scenes like the Crucifixion, Life of the Virgin Mary, Christ on the Tree of Life, and Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross. Beyond their spiritual function, Books of Hours often served as personal objects of devotion and markers of social status.

The Book of Hours acquired by TCU

Library was produced in Paris in the 1420s or 1430s, during the height of manuscript production in the city. Several of its illuminations are attributed to an anonymous but well-known artist identified by scholars as the *Master of the Harvard Hannibal*, a highly skilled French manuscript illuminator active in early fifteenth-century Paris. The manuscript is believed to have been owned by a woman named Anne Seurot.

With generous support from the Lesley Foundation, TCU Library purchased the manuscript from Les Enluminures, a Paris-based dealer specializing in medieval and Renaissance manuscripts.

Known as the *Anne Seurot Book of Hours*, the volume remains in its original binding. Each parchment page was written and illustrated entirely by hand using iron gall ink and decorated with gold leaf illumination. The manuscript was created approximately 130 years before the invention of the

printing press, representing countless hours of skilled labor. The book also contains handwritten annotations added in 1664 and at later dates, offering insight into its continued use over time.

“We’re excited to add this landmark manuscript to our collection and look forward to sharing it through classes and exhibitions,” says Rare Books Librarian Zannah Bingham. “The Book of Hours is an indispensable resource for studying late medieval piety and prayer, as well as the art and craftsmanship of the period.”

Books of Hours typically open with a calendar marking the feast days of the Christian year. Days of particular importance were written in red or gold, giving rise to the phrase *red-letter day*, meaning a memorable or fortunate occasion. Each month was often accompanied by a zodiac sign and a miniature illustration representing seasonal labor. These calendars were usually followed by four short Gospel readings, presented in the order of John, Luke, Matthew, and Mark.

This remarkable manuscript strengthens TCU Library’s holdings in medieval studies, art history, and religious history, and will support teaching, research, and public engagement for years to come.

# TREASURES FROM THE VAULT

*Rare stories. Hidden gems.*



## NEW SPECIAL COLLECTIONS PODCAST

TCU Library is excited to introduce *Treasures from the Vault*, a new podcast that explores rare stories and hidden gems from Special Collections.

Hosted by TCU alum, artist, and educator DJ Perera, the series highlights remarkable materials preserved in the library's archives and the fascinating histories behind them. Launched in February 2026, the podcast offers listeners an engaging look at artifacts and texts that are rarely seen outside the vault.

Each episode focuses on a unique item from Special Collections and the story it tells about the past.

Episode 1 spotlights a Sumerian proto-cuneiform tablet and cylinder seal, offering a glimpse into some of the earliest forms of written communication. Episode 2 features *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, the powerful autobiography that helped shape the abolitionist movement and remains one of the most influential works in American history. Episode 3 talks about the Smith Lowry Green Collection, which includes journals, photographs and letters from Green's time as a prisoner of war in Hirohata, Japan during World War II. Episode 4 highlights the Amon Carter Guest Book and the remarkable stories behind its signatures.

"We wanted to create this podcast as a way to share the fascinating materials in Special Collections with a wider audience," said Mary Saffell, director of Special Collections. "These objects hold incredible stories, and this format allows us to bring them to life."

Through *Treasures from the Vault*, TCU Library invites the campus and broader community to discover the remarkable history preserved within its collections — one story at a time.

To watch *Treasures from the Vault*, go to the library's official YouTube Channel through [lib.tcu.edu](http://lib.tcu.edu) for video episodes.



Podcast host DJ Perera and rare books librarian Zannah Bingham film Episode 1.

# Friends of the TCU Library

One of the library's greatest strengths is its network of passionate advocates — the Friends of the TCU Library. Since 1972, this dedicated group has supported a strong and dynamic library system, contributing more than \$1,000,000 to enhance resources, services, and facilities or generations to come.

The Friends promote awareness of the library's vital role in the University's growth and development. Members enjoy benefits, including borrowing privileges, invitations to special events and a subscription to the library's newsletter, with additional perks available at select membership levels.

Becoming a Friend is a meaningful way to support the library's future. To learn more or join, [visit library.tcu.edu/friends](https://library.tcu.edu/friends).

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## *In Memoriam*

This year has marked the passing of TCU alumna Joan Hewatt Swaim '56, a woman whose life was deeply intertwined with Texas Christian University. Joan left an indelible mark on the institution and the community she loved. She grew up on campus, the daughter of a TCU professor for 42 years, and married TCU basketball standout Johnny Swaim. Joan dedicated 18 years of service as a librarian in the Mary Coats Burnett Library and remained a lifelong member of the Friends of the TCU Library. Joan published *Walking TCU* in 1992, the definitive historical account of the university, and recently collaborated on a second edition in 2023. The library stands as a lasting testament to the commitment, generosity, and community spirit that defined her life. Her passion for the library and the TCU community will be deeply missed, but her enduring legacy lives on.



*Friends of the*  
**TCU** LIBRARY

**TCU**  
MARY COUTS BURNETT  
**LIBRARY**  
THE PLACE FOR GREAT MINDS