



THE GOTLIEB GAZETTE

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE HOWARD GOTLIEB ARCHIVAL RESEARCH CENTER
AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Since its founding in 1963, the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center has matured into a unique resource. Our 45th anniversary has been an occasion for reckoning with the proud legacy Howard bequeathed us as one of the first archives devoted to collecting history as it happens.

This has provided ample incentive for meaningful reflections—leading to the mounting of centenary exhibits of two immortals of the stage and screen, Bette Davis and Rex Harrison, as well as “A View from the Vault,” the broadest retrospective we’ve ever assembled from the more than 2,000 individuals and organizations archived at the Center.

As time does not stand still, neither can HGARC. We are in a new century, confronting issues and technologies that were hardly imaginable four decades ago when Howard obtained the papers of the leader of the then controversial Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., just months before he became the first Boston University graduate honored with a Nobel Prize.

In this, the 40th year since Dr. King was assassinated, HGARC commemorated his enduring presence in ways designed to keep his legacy fresh in a very different era. The Center, in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America, hosted a two-day event around the anniversary of King’s assassination that assembled three generations of leading African-American poets, including Sonia Sanchez and Nikki Giovanni, hip hop stars Chuck D and Talib Kweli, Pulitzer Prize winner Yusef Komunyakaa, and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott.

We also worked with 83 student organizations to stage a “Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Concert” fundraiser in commemoration of the King anniversary. This concert was an outgrowth of our newly established student advisory

council that is enabling us to harness the enormous energy and creativity of the 25,000 young people on our campus. In the same vein, our summer interns collaborated in the design of the anniversary and Davis centenary exhibits, bringing their generation’s distinctive visual sensibility to the display.

To encourage the young to follow the examples of not only Dr. King but our other collectees, who distinguished themselves in the public sphere, the Center presented a lecture series, “Ready to Vote,” that drew large audiences for noted figures in politics and journalism, including Ralph Nader, Dan Rather, Jonathan Alter, and Ida E. Lewis.

These programs are part of a concerted effort we have launched in the past three years to make HGARC a hub for cultural activities in the fields represented in our holdings. This effort has brought a number of our collectees—such as Tyne Daly, Mary-Louise Parker, and BD Wong—to the campus for events at which, in the presence of carefully curated exhibits from their archives, they have spoken to students, faculty, and Friends of the Libraries.



State of the Art: African-American Poetry Today, April 2, 2008
Top row, left to right: Cornelius Eady, Yusef Komunyakaa, Carl Phillips, Sam Cornish, Afaa Michael Weaver, Elizabeth Alexander, Quincy Troupe.
Bottom row, left to right: Toi Derricotte, Dawn Lundy Martin, Sonia Sanchez, Major Jackson, Nikki Giovanni. *

“One of the great things about Howard’s vision that has been passed on quite elegantly to Vita is that you never know what’s going to happen to a person’s career, their life, their world, how it evolves and changes.”

Actor and author BD Wong

In this effort, the Center has, in collaboration with the College of Fine Arts, sponsored a series of master classes in opera involving such celebrated performers as Frederica von Stade, Denyce Graves, Deborah Voigt, and Renée Fleming.

Similarly, consistent with our being the repository for the archives of dance legends such as Alicia Markova, Fred Astaire, and Gene Kelly, the Center has hosted lecture-demonstrations by the Boston Ballet in an arrangement that also provides students with discounted tickets to the ballet’s productions. This effort underscores our belief that every student at so cosmopolitan a campus as Boston University must be given a compelling enticement to explore the pleasures of these venerated arts as part of a truly liberal education.

At the same time, HGARC continues to be a technological innovator in the archival industry. With support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we are engaged in collaboration among institutions with an interest in the papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. to create an online finding aid that will enable researchers to review the archives of this singular figure electronically. In an archival profession better known for jealous competition than collegial cooperation, this project is a welcome departure of such import that we are documenting it in a forthcoming video in hope of promoting similar alliances among our colleagues.

Video also plays a role in our plans for a redesign of HGARC’s website (www.bu.edu/archives). We trust the new design will prove not only useful to researchers but also rewarding to you, our dear friends and institutional family, in keeping abreast of our adventures in capturing history and promoting culture at its most extraordinary.

What continues to inspire and gratify us most is what has always been the core of what we do—archiving the best troves of those contributing to the culture of our times; serving them and their families by preserving these achievements, and working with those who will chronicle and celebrate this history in articles, books, and films researched at HGARC.

Thus, let me close by noting that, even in these challenging times, we are adding to that roster of accomplished men and women who have chosen to place their papers at HGARC with the likes of the actor-directors Willem Dafoe, Terry Gilliam

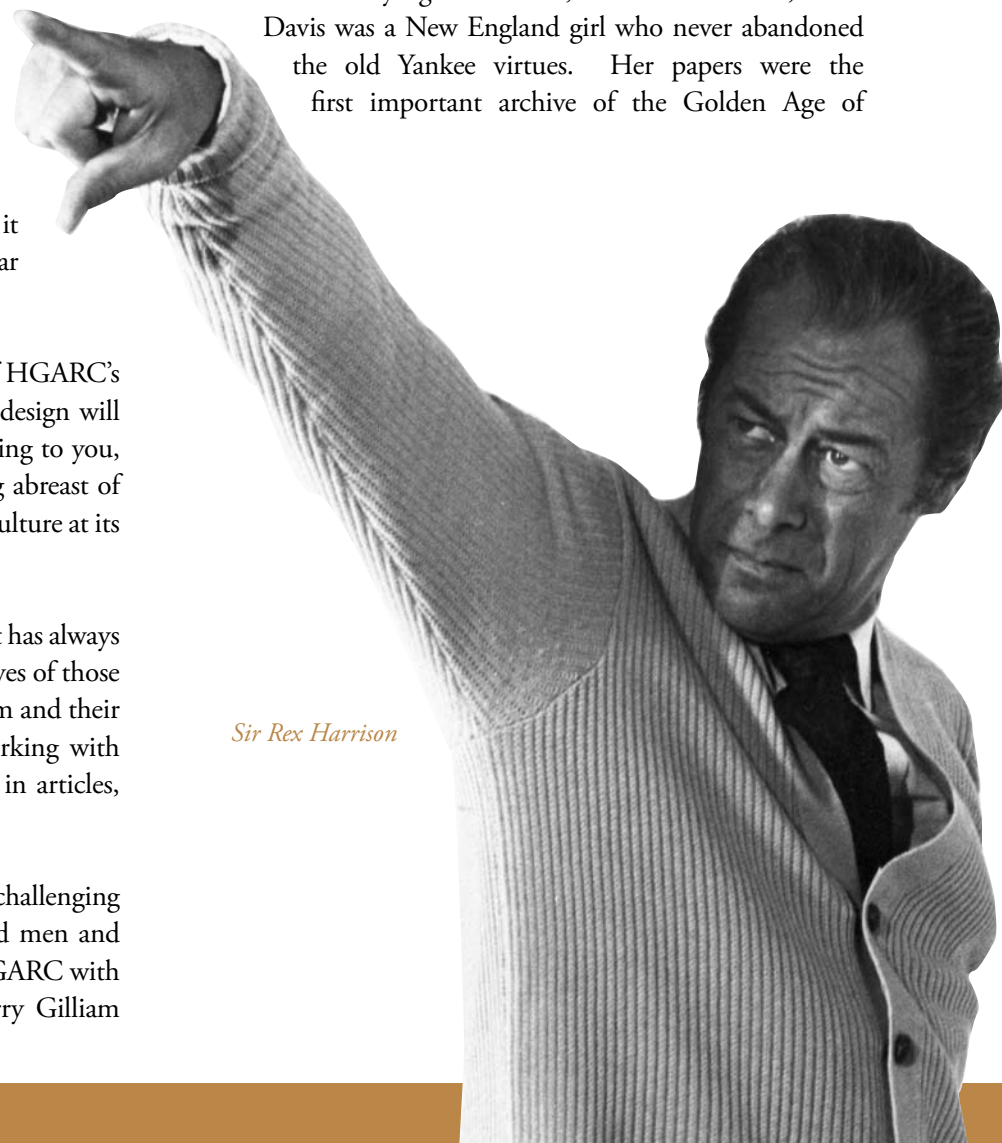
and Forest Whitaker and journalist Ann Curry. The excitement of adding these and forthcoming collections to the Center’s archives is encouraging to me and the dedicated staff it is my privilege to lead.

Warm wishes,
Vita Paladino

HGARC EXHIBITS

A century after his birth and 19 years after he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II, Rex Harrison was honored by a retrospective at the Gotlieb Center. Both his widow, the former Mercia Tinker, and his younger son, the novelist and playwright Carey Harrison, attended the opening of the exhibition at which the distinguished critic, Jeffrey Lyons, assessed Sir Rex’s accomplishments on stage and screen.

Born a century ago in Lowell, reared in Newton, Bette Davis was a New England girl who never abandoned the old Yankee virtues. Her papers were the first important archive of the Golden Age of



Sir Rex Harrison

Hollywood Dr. Gotlieb obtained, inaugurating a relationship between her family and Boston University that would see her son, Michael Merrill, not only take his law degree from BU, but also become a loyal supporter of the Center. So, in selecting a forum for the most important events honoring his mother on her centenary, Michael chose the Center. It hosted both the unveiling of the United States Postal Service’s Bette Davis stamp and the conferring of achievement awards from the Bette Davis Foundation on Lauren Bacall and Susan Sarandon.

In November, the Center opened *The Indelible Italian Spirit: Profiles of Max Ascoli, Danilo Dolci, Oriana Fallaci, and Niccolò Tucci*, an exhibition drawn from the archives of these influential thinkers and reformers.

“When I was asked whether Barack Obama could possibly be elected by a country where 80% of the electorate are whites, I was the last person to say it couldn’t be done because we did it in 1962 and again in 1964, and again in 1966, and again in 1972 because the great majority of voters in Massachusetts were white and they voted for me because they believed in me.”

The Hon. Edward W. Brooke, III, former Attorney General and U.S. Senator from Massachusetts

HGARC EVENTS

Among the events the Center has recently presented are a conversation among actress and former Director of the National Endowment of the Arts, Jane Alexander; Edwin Sherin, the accomplished actor and director, who has also been her husband since 1975; and Robert Brustein, the founding Director of both the Yale Repertory and the Harvard-based American Repertory Theatres. Other events included an evening with the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Franz Wright and a discourse by Lloyd Schwartz, Pulitzer Prize-winning music critic for the *Boston Phoenix*, poet, and professor at Brandeis University.

In the wake of the resurgence of the Taliban and the assassination of Pakistan’s Benazir Bhutto, the Center sought to raise awareness of the situation in Afghanistan by staging a reading of collectee William Mastrosimone’s play *The Afghan Women* by a cast of students, followed by a panel discussion on the issues facing that embattled country.

FACULTY PROGRAMS

Since 2007, the Center has collaborated with distinguished members of the faculty in a series of Student Discovery Seminars. Taking items from our collections selected by the archival staff as their texts, senior professors from a wide range of disciplines have made 25 presentations on topics varying



Film critic Rex Reed with actresses Susan Sarandon and Lauren Bacall at the Bette Davis Centenary Tribute, September 18, 2008. *

from “Women of the Press” and “Criminals and Assassins” to “America at War” and “From Shaw to Shepard.”

Over the last two years, the Center has also presented 34 Faculty Forum Chats. In these programs, leading professors and administrators have been invited to address a topic of their choice with students from throughout the University. Among the chats have been Professor Tom Barfield addressing the question *Can Afghanistan Be Saved?*; Professor Charles Dellheim on *Nazi Art*



Dan Rather speaking at the Center’s 45th anniversary celebration, September 23, 2008. *

* Photo credit: Alan E. Dines/Northstar Photography

Looting: Stolen, Bought or Bartered; Professor Christopher Ricks on Bob Dylan: “*Train Wheels Running Through the Back of My Memory*,” Professor Rosina Georgiadis on *Life-Sciences: Gene Machines, Lasers, and New Tricks*; and Professor Michael Grodin on *Mad, Bad or Evil: How Physicians Turn to Torture and Murder From the Nazi Doctors to Abu Ghraib*.

HGARC STAFF PROFILE

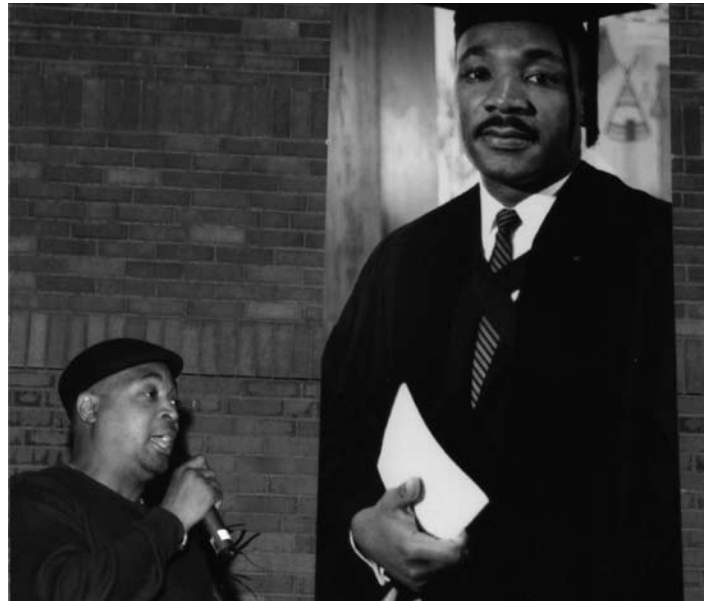
In September 2007, Diane Shugrue Gallagher, our Nursing History and University Archivist, was honored by President Bush with the President’s Call to Service Award, the nation’s highest recognition for volunteerism, for her mid-life decision to spend three years in the Peace Corps, from 1990 through 1993, working in the Republic of Cape Verde, the island nation 380 miles off the coast of West Africa. The award also recognized the continued efforts by Diane to find opportunities for Cape Verdeans to study in the United States.



Diane Gallagher training in Guinea Bissau, 1990.

“My first day, when I walked in and saw MLK’s briefcase in the room and one of the supervisors let me touch it and I was just smiling and I couldn’t believe it. And he was like, ‘Let’s get this out of your system on the first day.’”

Amber Moore, graduate student intern on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Archival Collaborative



*Hip-hop artist Chuck D performing on the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination, April 4, 2008. **

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PAPERS

As the *primus inter pares* of our holdings, the papers that Boston University’s most eminent alumnus entrusted to the Center deserve the highest and most creative custodianship. Thus, we were truly enthused when, in the winter of 2007, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation agreed to fund a pioneering collaboration among HGARC, the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute at Stanford University. This collaboration is designed to enable HGARC to revise the catalogue of the over 80,000 items in its King collection at the same time that the Woodruff Library is making its inventory of the 10,000 items that Morehouse College, King’s undergraduate alma mater, received in 2006.

The goal of the collaboration is the creation of an online database that will allow researchers to search by subject and name the King collections in Boston and Atlanta from the comfort of their offices or living rooms. While this will certainly make their work easier, its more important benefit may be reducing the wear and tear on the collection itself, as the online finding aid will minimize the need for researchers to ferret through boxes of fragile material to locate the documents they require.

