

THE PORTAL

News from the Armstrong Browning Library

*"A wondrous
portal opened
wide..."*

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December Visit in London a Huge Success

ABL STAFF

Rita S. Patteson
Director &
Associate Professor/
Curator of Manuscripts

Dr. Avery T. Sharp
Professor/Museum
Coordinator and
Research Librarian

Cynthia A. Burgess
Associate Librarian/
Curator of Books and
Printed Materials

Christi Klempnauer
Administrative Coordinator

Kathryn Brogdon
Public Relations and
Facilities Supervisor/
Newsletter Editor

Melvin H. Schuetz
Assistant to the Curators

Martha Ervin
Gertrude Kousz
Mary Rodriguez
Library Hosts

Pattie Orr, Vice President for Information Technology and Dean of Baylor University Libraries, and Rita Patteson, Director of the Armstrong Browning Library, traveled to London in December to attend the annual memorial service honoring Robert Browning at Westminster Abbey. Their week was filled with Browning-related activities, library-related excursions, and even moments of relaxation.



Dean Orr had the honor of placing a laurel wreath decorated with bells and pomegranates on Browning's grave in Poets' Corner, and the reception that followed gave both her and Rita a chance to visit with Barrett and Browning relatives and members and guests of The Browning Society (London), which organizes the annual ceremony. Other memorial wreaths were placed by The Browning Settlement, The Friends of Casa Guidi, and The London Browning Society. Josephine Hart, a distinguished English theatre producer and novelist, who has been hosting her "Poetry Hour" at the British Library since 2004,



was the guest speaker for the occasion. Her words of tribute, mingled with memorable Browning quotations, celebrated the life and works of the poet and were well received by one of the largest gatherings of Browning devotees in recent years.

There were opportunities to tour the book shop of Maggs Bros. Ltd., to travel to Eton College and actually *turn the pages* of a Gutenberg Bible, and—to end the week—a visit to Cambridge University that included a private tour of their library. The weather was cold, but the generosity and warm graciousness of old and new friends made the visit a wonderful experience.



Top right: Pattie Orr, Michael Meredith of Eton College, and Rita Patteson with a portrait of Robert Browning by Frederick Sandys. *Top left:* Rita Patteson and Pattie Orr enjoy tea together in Cambridge. *Bottom right:* Audrey and Robert Browning, Pattie Orr, Scott Lewis, and Rita Patteson at the reception following the ceremony.

My foot is on the threshold

*Of boundless life—
the doors unopened yet,*

*All preparations not
complete within—*

*I turn new knowledge
upon old events,*

*And the effect is...
but I must not tell;*

*It is not lawful. Your
own turn will come*

One day.

Paracelsus—RB



A long-time member of the Baylor Family, Rita Patteson is the new Director of the Armstrong Browning Library.

Greetings from Your New Director

It is with pleasure and extreme honor that I am able to address this column to you today as Director of the Armstrong Browning Library. I have been part of the Baylor “family” since 1966 when I began working full time in the Development Office with Tom Parrish. Before that I was lucky enough to have my first student assistant job in President Abner McCall’s office between my freshman and sophomore years (receiving my BBA from Baylor in 1968). That position led me to the Development Department and there I met Daphne Herring (wife of Dr. Jack Herring, Director of the ABL from 1959 to 1984).

Amazingly, luck came into the picture again—in 1971 I transferred to the Armstrong Browning Library, to be Dr. Herring’s secretary, and quickly became immersed in the lives and works of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. After Dr. Herring’s retirement, Dr. Roger Brooks arrived in 1987, and through his encouragement, I pursued a library degree at Texas Woman’s University in Denton and gained the title of Curator of Manuscripts.

After receiving the MLS degree in 1995 and adding a few crucial publications to my resume (thanks to Allan Dooley, Paul Turner, Michael Meredith, Cyndie Burgess, and Philip Kelley), I received tenure during the directorship of Dr. Mairi Rennie. Then, following the departure of Dr. Stephen Prickett in 2008, I was asked to serve as Interim Director, and now here we are in 2010. I hold the rank of Associate Professor as a member of the library faculty and have been appointed Director of the world-renowned Armstrong Browning Library of Baylor University.

Thanks to all of you who have been staunch supporters and mentors over the years. I could never name everyone—they range from colleagues to former student workers to friends and family. What I can do is affirm that, to the best of my ability, I will promote the Library in this digital age as a world center for Browning studies while supporting its tradition as a cultural and educational center on campus. Thank you for this marvelous opportunity!

*Rita S. Patteson
Director*

ABL Hires New Curators’ Assistant

On October 1, the ABL welcomed Melvin H. Schuetz as its new Assistant to the Curators. Schuetz worked at Baylor’s Central Libraries for over fifteen years, beginning as the person responsible for lending operations in the Interlibrary Loan Department and ending up as a Night/Weekend Assistant in Access Services.

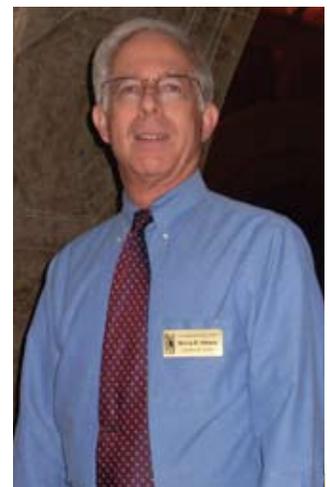
Schuetz grew up nearby in Elm Mott. However, in 1967 his father moved the family to Pasadena, California. Schuetz graduated from high school there, went off to college in England, and returned a year later because of his mother’s terminal illness. He also attended Pasadena City College and Florida Institute of Technology, making the dean’s list in both places. He left school to join the U.S. Air Force in 1976.

“I had been interested in the space program since elementary school,” he said, “and while I had no aspirations of becoming an astronaut, I hoped to someday work in aerospace.”

In 1984, Schuetz entered the private aerospace industry with Hughes Space and Communications in Los Angeles. From 1989-91, he worked in the Millikan Library at the California Institute of Technology, the Space Center Museum in Alamogordo, New Mexico, and finally the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

Schuetz later moved back to Waco where he worked for two years at the Waco-McLennan County Library before landing a staff position at Baylor’s Central Libraries in 1994. There he met his wife, Carol, in the Science & Engineering Reference Department at Jones Library.

It is a pleasure to have Melvin join the staff of the Armstrong Browning Library as he continues to provide outstanding service to students, faculty, and visiting scholars for the Baylor libraries.



Melvin H. Schuetz is the new Assistant to the Curators at the Armstrong Browning Library.

Wedgwood Collection More Than Mere Decoration



Until recently, the Armstrong Browning Library's Dotson Wedgwood Collection existed purely as decoration—a mere footnote amidst the other Browning memorabilia. In previous years, the Library's stained glass windows had always attracted the less Browning-savvy visitors; but after the Wedgwood was donated for public viewing in late 1997 by Mrs. Sue Dotson of Dallas, a few connoisseurs began coming expressly to see it. Because of the size and scope of the collection—

and growing popularity with general visitors—it seemed that something needed to be said on its behalf. By the summer of 2006, the story of Josiah Wedgwood and the varied pieces in the collection appeared on small labels in the cases and on the walls of the Cox Reception Hall.

Gertrude Kousz, part-time Library host, began researching the Wedgwood pieces in 2001 while she accessioned, catalogued, and photographed them. Traveling to the Wedgwood factory in Stoke-on-Trent, England, and to the



Dwight and Lucille Beeson Collection at the Birmingham

Museum of Art in Alabama, she contacted numerous pottery specialists. During this time, she began to realize the significance of the Library's collection.

While the Library does not own the oldest Wedgwood pieces, it does own many different types of Wedgwood produced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, notably jasper ware of various colors along with other styles such as Queen's ware, cane ware, lustre ware, and

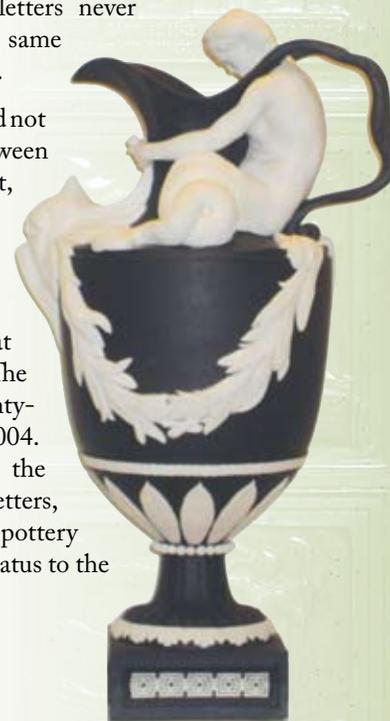


assorted specialty pieces. Josiah Wedgwood experimented with many techniques, sometimes creating multi-cultural themes with unusual motifs. The Dotson Wedgwood Collection includes styles inspired by Etruscan elegance, Roman and Greek mythology, and the King Tutankhamen Revival, in addition to pieces with motifs ranging from Chinese flower designs to various commemorative themes.

The fact that Robert Browning corresponded with Julia Wedgwood gives the pottery a tenuous connection to the rest of the Library's holdings. She was the great-granddaughter of Josiah Wedgwood and niece of Charles Darwin. It is generally believed that Julia Wedgwood, among Browning's female associations, came closest to becoming the second Mrs. Browning. However, Julia came to realize that Browning's heart was still reserved for Elizabeth. Understandably, she broke off correspondence with him in a letter dated 1 March 1865, in which she told him, "I have reason to know that my pleasure in your company has had an interpretation put upon it that I ought not to allow." Although they resumed their correspondence in 1867, their letters never returned to the same tone of familiarity.



Prior to 2004, the Library did not own any of the letters between Browning and Julia. In fact, their correspondence had dropped out of sight in the 1930s and did not reappear until the Halsted B. Vander Poel Sale at Christie's in London. The Library acquired the seventy-two letters on 3 March 2004. With the acquisition of the Browning-Wedgwood letters, the Library's Wedgwood pottery secured an official sidebar status to the narrative of the Brownings.



These are a few of the 300 pieces that form the Armstrong Browning Library's Dotson Wedgwood Collection housed on the first floor of the Library.



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ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY

One Bear Place #97152 Waco, TX 76798-7152

Location: 710 Speight Ave. Waco, TX 76706

Phone: (254) 710-3566 Fax: (254) 710-3552

Web site: www.browninglibrary.org

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Please Recycle

Become an ABL Guardian Angel

The Guardian Angel organization is open to anyone interested in supporting the Library and helping to build its collections, which are used by both Baylor students and Browning scholars from around the world. Your membership ensures the continued growth of the Armstrong Browning Library and its programs.

To become a member, visit the ABL Web site at www.browninglibrary.org and click on the "Support ABL" link, or call (254) 710-4968 for more details.

Save the Dates

February 13: Celebrate Valentine's Day with your loved one! Enjoy a medley of Hollywood love songs performed by Dave Tanner in the most romantic spot on the Baylor campus, and feast on dessert afterwards, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Last year's event was spectacular! Don't miss this one! For ticket information, see the ABL Web site.

March 25-27: Beall Poetry Festival. A three-day celebration of some of America's finest contemporary poets, with readings, a panel discussion, and the Virginia Beall Ball Lecture on Contemporary Poetry. All events are free and open to the public. For upcoming details, call the Baylor University Department of English at (254) 710-1768.

March 26: House of Poetry. Readings, lectures, and poetry workshops are free and open to the public. For upcoming details, call the Baylor University Department of English at (254) 710-1768.

April 8: Baylor Early Music Ensemble Concert, 5:30 p.m. Dr. Jann Cosart, associate professor of Musicology in Baylor's School of Music, will direct students performing music from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras. Free and open to the public.

May 1-2: Chamber Singers Spring Concerts, 4:00 p.m. Sunday and 7:30 p.m. Monday. For ticket information, contact the Baylor University School of Music box office at (254) 710-3571.

May 6-8: Browning Day Lecture and Music Festival. Times and details to be announced. Lecture by Dr. Scott Lewis, honoring the life and work of Dr. A. J. Armstrong, founder of the ABL. Performances by the Waco Children's Choir, China Spring High School Choir, and a special appearance by classical guitarist Richard Smith.

*For more information and updates, please visit www.browninglibrary.org
or contact Christi Klemptner at (254) 710-4968.*