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Georgia Library Spotlight - Georgia Perimeter College Libraries

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GLA SPOTLIGHT

Georgia Perimeter College Libraries

Barbara Disney recalled that in 1964, as assistant to librarian Beulah Cleveland, she diligently typed cards for “a few thousand” books in the brand new DeKalb College Library. According to the 1964 *Bulletin of Dekalb College*, the library was one of five original buildings on the Clarkston campus, “air-conditioned [and] fully-equipped” to serve 1500 students. For fifty years the school now known as Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) and its libraries have been transforming lives by providing low-cost access to high-quality higher education. The 1997 name change to Georgia Perimeter College reflected GPC’s “expanding mission and its service throughout the metro Atlanta area.” Now one of the largest institutions in the University System of Georgia (USG), GPC has five campus locations, enrolls over 21,000 students, and is the largest associate degree-granting college in Georgia. From humble origins, GPC now enrolls more undergraduate students each fall semester, accepts more transfer students, and sends more students on to other institutions than any other USG school. Successful GPC students and graduates make up more than one-third of all USG transfer students (GPC Fact Book, 2013).

As the college has grown, so have GPC Libraries. From one library GPC now has five physical

libraries and an active online library program. From a staff of two, GPC Libraries have increased to thirty-six full-time staff members, nineteen of whom are fully credentialed librarians. From a few thousand books and a card catalog, GPC Libraries now have a collection of over 300,000 physical items plus electronic access to thousands of e-books and e-journals. GPC Libraries are a net lender of resources to other schools through GIL Express. In the last year alone, GPC Libraries taught 564



Barbara Disney, first library clerk at DeKalb College and retired Director of Human Resources at GPC, and Angiah Davis, one of GPC’s newest librarians. Photo by Collins Foster, used by permission.

instruction sessions reaching nearly 9,000 students, as well as logging over 26,000 interactions at the help desks and via chat. Beyond the numbers, GPC library faculty are involved in the academic life of the college by teaching courses, helping to write open-source

textbooks, serving on committees, and regularly presenting for and with other faculty.

GPC Libraries also play an integral role in the college’s activities and initiatives. GPC Reads, the college-wide book club, is one example. The libraries support the college community by loaning copies of the current selection, *Picking Cotton* by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino and Ronald Cotton, providing instruction classes on related topics, and welcoming the authors to signings and receptions.

GPC Libraries will play an active role in college-wide fiftieth anniversary celebrations and

programs. In support of the Sixties Symposium planned for February 2015, librarians collaborated with faculty members to create LibGuides and displays on both broad historical themes for that turbulent decade, as well as specific topics such as music, art, and films.

GPC Libraries and GPC Archives are also curating “throwback Thursday” Facebook posts and other social media messages to share fun

and poignant moments from our history using hashtags #GPC50 and #GPC1960s.

What a difference fifty years make. As GPC Libraries look back and celebrate its past, the libraries also look forward to future challenges, always with the goal of providing support for success to our students. To learn more about services and programs, visit GPC Libraries website at <http://depts.gpc.edu/library/>.