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Promoting the Law Library as a Gathering Place

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Promoting the Law Library as a Gathering Place

Mary Ann Neary and Filippa Marullo Anzalone, Boston College Law School

The Boston College Law Library recently hosted an exhibit that marks the 10th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq entitled, “*Invasion: Diaries and Memories of War in Iraq*.” The multimedia exhibit was on display from October 28-November 26 and it consisted of 36 panels of enlarged selected pages from Lt. Tim McLaughlin’s (BC Law ’09) hauntingly honest and raw war diaries. The exhibit also included photographs taken by photographer Gary Knight and text and photos from Peter Maass’s articles in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Outside* magazine. The three men’s paths crossed when they met in Iraq in 2003; McLaughlin was a Marine tank operator and Knight and Maass were caught in the Iraqi desert as it devolved into a war zone. In addition, the exhibit included two personal computers equipped with headphones where people could watch videos of McLaughlin reading segments of his diary and review news clips from the time of the invasion. The films were generously lent by documentary film maker Fiona Turner.



The opening event for the exhibit was a November 5 panel discussion at the BC Law School featuring the three men and moderated by Professor David Olson, a former Marine. There was a cocktail reception preceding the panel in the Law Library’s Daniel R. Coquillette Rare Book Room before the program and a dessert reception after the event in the Law School for attendees. Holland & Knight, the law firm where McLaughlin is

an associate, generously underwrote some of the expenses of the exhibit. The War Diaries exhibit had previously been displayed at The Bronx Documentary Center in New York City and at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

The month-long exhibit was a success, the receptions were very well attended, and the panel discussion was standing room only in an auditorium with seating for 150 people. What were some of the elements that contributed to the success of these events? We think that while some of it was timing – the 10th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq; the law school’s alumni weekend in early November; and Veterans Day in the second week of November - the most important ingredient was the conscious attempt to include a wide range of law school departments and personnel on the planning team. Here is what we did. We called together a group of likely suspects from the law school which included staff from alumni relations, publicity, administration and finance, event planning, student services, and, of course, the law library and technology. We formed a rich mix of law school colleagues who, combined together, were able to communicate with alumni, the larger university, the local community, and diverse constituencies within the law school itself.

This working group of twelve then worked with an exhibit mounting company to design an exhibit layout and to bring the multi-media exhibit to life. After the exhibit was over, we saved funds by disassembling the exhibit ourselves and we enlisted the help of university carpenters in dismantling the movable walls constructed for the display.

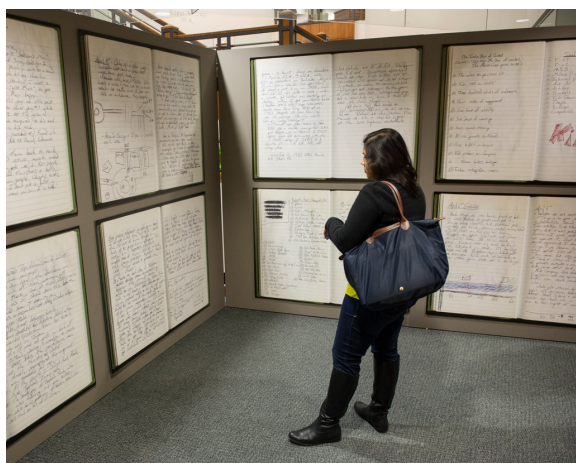
We used media effectively to publicize the event to the University and to the wider community. Having the law school’s public relations person as a member of the planning team was a great way to get information about the exhibit and panel dis-

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Gathering Place (cont'd)

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cussion featured in local media outlets and publications. Additionally, the Boston College Law School Magazine had featured our alum, Tim McLaughlin, and his war diaries as a cover story in its Spring/Summer 2013 issue: <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/acc6f46f#/acc6f46f/1>



We were conscious of the historic value of this event and ensured its preservation. The panel discussion was filmed for inclusion in the University's Front Row series (<http://frontrow.bc.edu/program/wardiaries/>). Front Row is a multimedia arm of the Boston College Magazine. The War Diaries documents have been scanned and will reside in the BC Law School's institutional repository along with the multimedia part of the exhibit.

What did we learn from hosting this exhibit? Unlike our past specialized exhibits and presentations devoted to strictly scholarly topics, this event generated lots of excitement and conversation from multiple constituencies. Having Tim McLaughlin as a focus drew in the alumni community, the veterans' community, and his law firm. Peter Maass and Gary Knight drew heightened media interest due to their high profiles in their respective fields. Involving the various law school constituencies was a way to connect the law library with other departments in the law school. We learned that this outreach and involvement in the planning process

helped bring a larger audience to the exhibit and the panel. Basically, a good time was had by all and this initiative was an excellent way to promote the Law Library space as a gathering place and as a showcase for alumni-related activity.

Member News

**Nina Scholtz, Cornell Law Library and
Marlene Harmon, UC Berkeley Law Library**

Vanderbilt University Law Library has hired **Carolyn Hamilton** as Research Services Librarian and Lecturer in Law. Carolyn earned her J.D. and Master of Information Science and Learning Technologies at the University of Columbia, Missouri.

Virginia Templeton, Reference Librarian at the University of Miami Law Library, retired December 31, 2013, after 22 years. Before moving to Miami, Virginia was a reference librarian at the Underwood Law Library at Southern Methodist University and at two Dallas law firms. Virginia will be moving to Claremore, Oklahoma, to be closer to her daughter and her family.

Patrick Butler from the University of Connecticut School of Law has won a grant in the sum of \$750 to attend the Leadership Academy in April, 2014. Patrick is the Electronic Resources and Reference Librarian at the Meskill Law Library. He graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2011. Although he is rather new to law librarianship, Patrick has been a librarian for many years during which he worked at Yale University as an academic librarian. Patrick is currently the chair of the Emerging Technologies Subcommittee of CS-SIS. He helped coordinate the Cool Tools Café program for the 2013 Annual Meeting and will coordinate the program again this year. Congratulations Patrick!

Debbie Shrager, Reference and Outreach Services Librarian at George Mason University School

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