Take a walk through VCU Libraries at this time of the year — high season for exams and end-of-the-semester projects — and you'll see for yourself how hard students are working to build their futures. When you make a gift to VCU Libraries you help every one of these hard-working students. Please invest in them. Your gift of $100 or more to the Friends of the Library sponsors compelling programs and lectures open to all and provides top-notch research assistance and outstanding collections. Your annual gift matters to every student every day at VCU. Thank you for your support of the VCU Libraries.

A second act

The same semester that Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences marked 80 years of operations on 12th Street, the building underwent a handsome update. Renovations to the second
floor are now complete (see the new floor plan below). Students are filling the space — to use custom-made booths, the 180° desktops with privacy panels, movable lounge seating and improved access to electrical power. Natural light pours in from the front windows. Students from across the MCV Campus signed an oversized card to express appreciation to Dr. Sheldon Retchin, vice president for Health Sciences and CEO, VCU Health System, for funding the improvements.

The classroom of the future on 12th Street

The new classroom at Tompkins-McCaw Library is the next generation of smart learning spaces. It is designed for today’s active, hands-on, team-centered learning styles. Four tables seat six people in pods. Each person has a screen. Instructors use a high-tech teaching podium to demonstrate and teach effective use of library resources or evidence-based practice to students on four large LCD panels located at the end of each table and two larger LCD panels mounted at the front of the classroom. Students can work collaboratively with their small group or share with the larger group with the push of a button. This space offers a preview of the sort of classrooms that will be deployed in the new medical school building set to open next fall.
The scholarship behind the story

Behind every historic marker is a story. The week of Thanksgiving, a marker was dedicated to the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, which led the movement for women’s right to vote. The league first met at the 919 W. Franklin St. home of Anne Clay Crenshaw in 1909. Read the whole story.

Inside the Libraries

- **New “chat” service fields research questions in real time.**
- **Photographs of renovations to fourth floor, Cabell Library.** New, modern furniture provides more outlets for power-starved students. A glass divider is being installed that will provide a higher level of quiet on the Silent floor.

Treasures from the collection

Nov. 16 marked the 20th year for an annual Symposium on Architecture and Decorative Arts, organized by Charles E. Brownell, Ph.D., the head of VCU's Architectural History Program. In the words of Brownell, the conference was created "to air valuable work by current and recent VCU graduate students, as well as important research by other members of the VCU family circle." Ray Bonis, archives coordinator at Cabell Library, was a presenter and University Librarian John E. Ulmschneider chaired a session on "Twenty Years of Research at VCU."

For 20 years, Brownell, professor in VCU's Art History Department, has deposited copies of his graduate students' research papers on architectural history topics to Special Collections and Archives at James Branch Cabell Library. More than 300 of these papers exist and they offer a deep scholarly imprint on Richmond's architectural history. About the papers.
Some of the most architecturally significant buildings of 19th-and 20th-century Richmond are located on, or adjacent to, the campuses of Virginia Commonwealth University. A focus has been on documenting the architecture of what is known today as Richmond's Fan District and especially the buildings of VCU's Monroe Park Campus.

- More about the collection
- Richmond Commission of Architectural Review Slide Collection
- The Jackson Ward Historic District Collection documents this historic neighborhood.
- Collection of rare books in architectural history

Libraries professor co-teaches innovative course: Projects on view at Anderson Gallery

A collection of student multimedia projects documenting communities in and around Richmond runs through Dec. 9 at the Anderson Gallery. The exhibition, "Portrait as Community," is the culmination of a special course taught by Yuki Hibben, assistant head, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, and Michael Lease, head of exhibitions and design, Anderson Gallery. The course was inspired by a project on documenting Civil Rights-era memories organized by the Anderson Gallery working with South African photographer Zwelethu Mthethwa and American Studies scholar Laura Browder. Students in photography, film and art education examined historical examples, research methodologies, ethical concerns and artistic strategies related to the representation of communities. They selected and worked with Richmond communities over the fall semester to create their projects. More.

You're Invited: President Emeritus Trani lectures on his new book Dec. 12

Friends of VCU Libraries are cordially invited to attend a lecture by Eugene P. Trani, president emeritus and university distinguished professor. He will speak about his new book, "The Reporter Who Knew Too Much: Harrison Salisbury and The New York Times" that details the political times and career of the influential, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who was the Times' man in Moscow after World War II. The talk is 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12 at the VCU Welcome Center, 1111 W. Broad St. A reception and book signing immediately follow. About the book.

Events and photographs

- Scenes from the Cabell First Novelist reading and reception
- Save the dates: Feb. 5 for the 11th Annual Black History Month Lecture and April 4 for the 28th Annual Brown-Lyons Lecture.
- Tompkins-McCaw Library hosts the traveling National Library of Medicine exhibit "Life and Limb: The Toll of the Civil War" in the Special Collections and Archives Reading Room.
• Artifacts tied to the great English poet Robert Browning are on display in Cabell Library’s Special Collections and Archives department through Dec. 7.

Thanks and more

Update your information: Do you have a new email address or address? Please update your information by contacting Antonia FD Vassar (B.A. ’05/A), assistant director of development, at (804) 827-1165.

Stay in touch: Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter, too.

Thank you for your support: Thanks to our Friends of the Library donors for their support of the VCU Libraries. Please consider making your annual gift today.

Happy Holidays from VCU Libraries
Here, nurses at West Hospital mark the season with a carol, circa 1955.

This photo is from Special Collections and Archives, Tompkins-McCaw Library.