



## Fondren's Official Reopening in August

This summer, Rice University invited each campus department to make plans for reopening safely in time for the start of the academic year. Fondren Library began planning its back to campus plan for submission in time for active in-building preparations Aug. 3 and opening to the Rice community Aug. 28.

After closing in mid-March, Fondren added walk-up delivery of Fondren, LSC and ILL materials outside the library by May, while continuing expanded electronic resources support, online courses and online consultations. Library staff prepared guides for working remotely and finding open access articles as well as launching a new chat service. Also starting in May, mail received through the period of closure was more thoroughly unpacked and organized and processing of physical materials accelerated. Throughout the period, Woodson Research Center (WRC) staff consulted online, expanded capacity to display rare materials virtually, supported the university's Task Force on Slavery, Segregation and Social Injustice and made advances both in digitization and transcription of manuscripts.

Rice's back to campus plan included requests for supplies, equipment and modifications to keep staff and users safe. Plexiglass shields were installed at each service point. Every library staff member submitted an individual work plan so that supervisors could plan social distancing and cleaning routines. *(continued p. 2)*

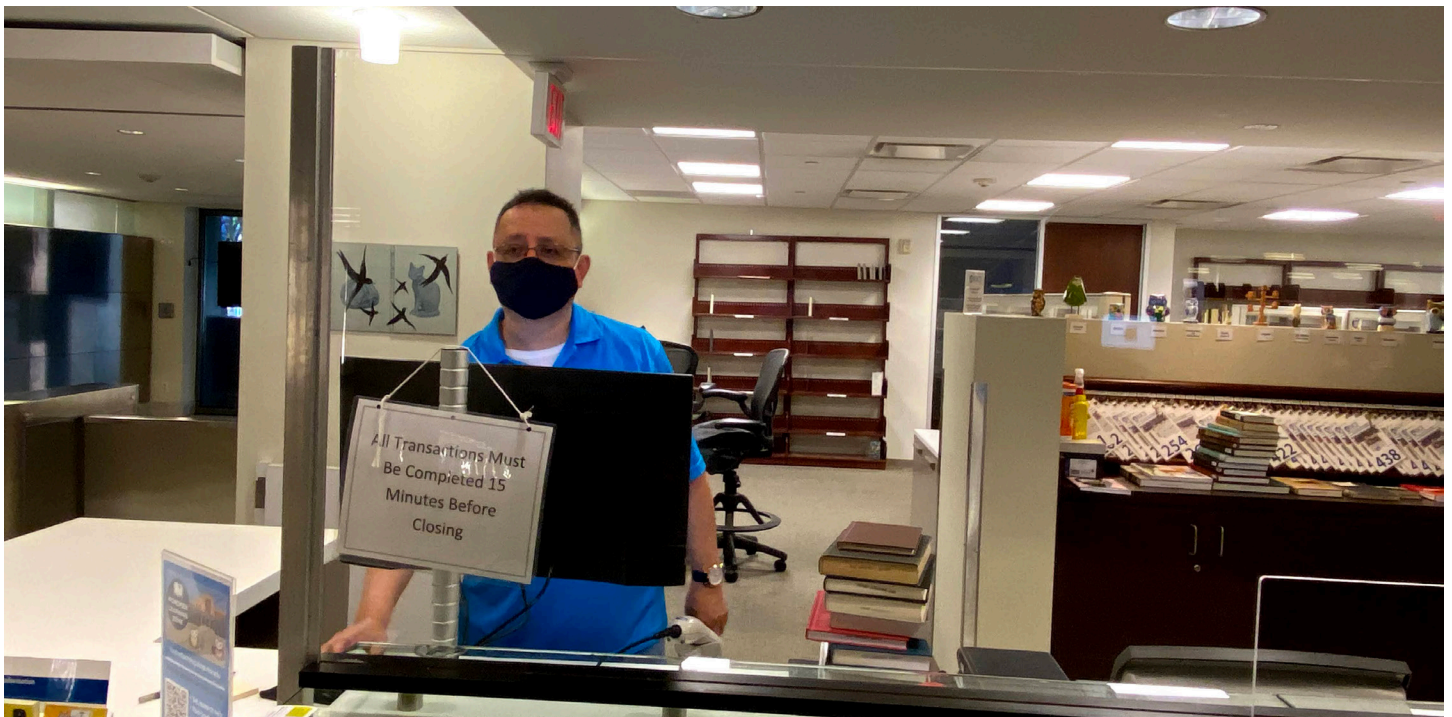
## CHECK IT OUT!

**Stay up to date with Fondren:**  
[library.rice.edu/service-updates](http://library.rice.edu/service-updates)

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RICE UNIVERSITY  
 Fondren Library



Top: Mauricio Prado

(continued from p. 1) Regular COVID-19 testing began for staff working partially remote and fully on campus. HVAC systems were adapted for circulation frequency and sanitizing ultraviolet elements were provided. Housekeeping routines were intensified in public areas and adjusted accordingly in staff spaces. Cleaning supplies were distributed for users and staff to sanitize surfaces between uses. Branded masks for staff were distributed and mask policies were developed and shared. Signs were posted, including reduced COVID-19 occupancy limits for smaller rooms. Providing and maintaining safe, fully functioning library services involved literally every staff member.

Aug. 3 marked the opening of Fondren's first floor to Rice faculty, students and staff. Unpacking of new materials further expanded and bibliographic records were loaded to support requests. All rush/notify materials were processed and expedited to users. Books were mailed to remote users on demand and electronic course reserves were processed. The first-floor circulation desk opened and study rooms were prepared.

When the semester began Aug. 28, the library opened fully to Rice faculty, students and staff. Service desks in the Digital Media Commons, GIS/Data Center and Kelley Center for Government Information, Data Services and Geospatial Information held hours and provided services by appointment. WRC staff took rare books to classes on request and engaged the community more fully in preparing and mounting topical exhibits.

With the university's required measures for preventing spread of COVID-19 normalized on campus and great effort from all the staff, the library's in-person functions are resuming relatively smoothly. For the time being, staffing continues to be partially remote to support social distancing and acknowledge that some tasks do not require coming to the building. Welcoming public users into the building is still pending. Services begun or expanded in response to the pandemic are sure to have a significant impact on how Fondren develops going forward.

Melinda Reagor Flannery  
Assistant University Librarian for Technical Services

# Powerful Art on View at Fondren

Two recent art installations at Fondren offered visitors intriguing ways to engage with our new normal as the library began to reopen. “Faces in the Pandemic,” the inaugural exhibition of the Houston Asian American Archive, showcased the multimedia works of primarily Houston-based Asian American artists. The 10-panel photo mural of 120 volunteers, half wearing masks. Their gaze questions “their place in this country that discriminates by skin color, as they remind us of our shared humanity.”

Antonious Tin Bui challenged stereotypes with their intricately cut paper pieces that reclaimed racial insults and other invectives directed toward Asian Americans. A large face mask by Brandon Tho Harris reconstructed from brightly colored traditional Vietnamese garments and titled “Not Your Virus” connected the larger themes of identity and trauma. The exhibition also included “Random Walker Dripping,” an interactive photography installation by Chang Liu that invited visitors to participate in a photo contest.

Additionally, Fondren’s South Reading Room served as a satellite location for one of Catherine Opie’s “Political Collage” works. Three others in the series were part of the “States of Mind: Art and American Democracy” exhibition at the Moody Center. Opie presented a digital collage on a vertical monitor that resembled a large cell phone. The three-minute looped animation recalled the physical, tactile process of creating a dialogue by pasting images together. In particular, the piece on view at Fondren referenced the recent challenges faced by immigrants and asylum seekers at the border with Mexico. A white truck careened around the monitor as images of families, the border wall, migrant detention facilities and the Statue of Liberty, among others, appeared in sequence. The collage closed with an image of President Trump staring down at a small child amid a swath of red as the truck ended its journey.

Both exhibitions brought contemporary meaning to the adage “the personal is political” by providing powerful visuals and timely social commentary.

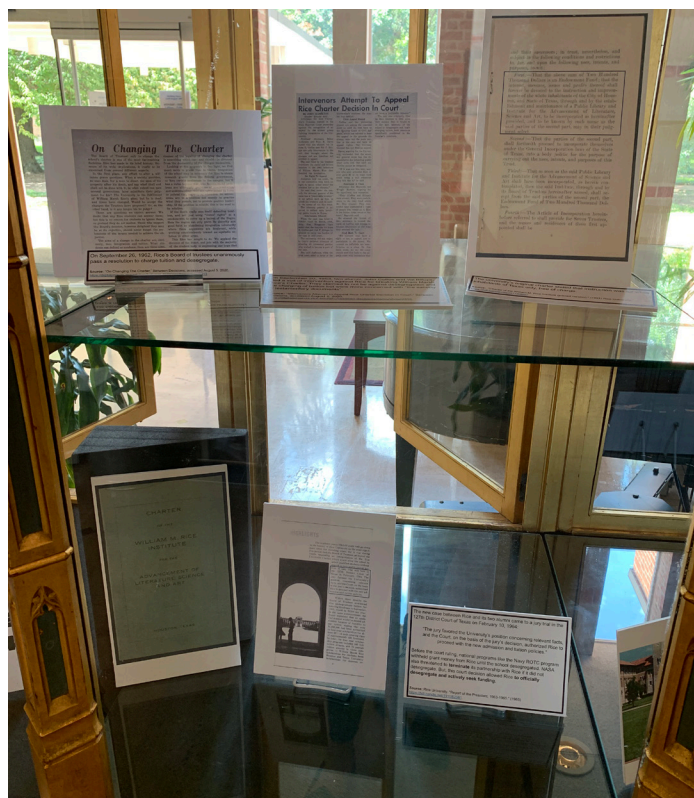
*Jeanette Sewell*  
Database and Metadata Management Coordinator



“Faces in the Pandemic” photo mural



Top: “Faces in the Pandemic” artwork by Antonious Tin Bui  
Bottom: Face mask by Brandon Tho Harris



## Student Exhibits Explore Black Life on Campus

As the Rice University community continues to explore the campus experience of Black students, faculty and staff over time, Rice students have engaged with Fondren Library to develop exhibits on this topic. During the fall 2020 semester, staff at the Woodson Research Center collaborated with students representing the student group, Rice for Black Life. The students created an exhibit, “Black at Rice,” which has been on display in the Rice Memorial Center lobby. The exhibit features details about the original Rice charter limiting the student body to “white inhabitants of the city,” the charter trial in 1962 desegregating the university and the experience of early Black students, staff and faculty.

Students Anu Ayeni '21, Sana Mohamed '21 and Taylor Crain '21 are among those planning to expand this work into an online representation of the exhibit, beginning in spring 2021. These students have also begun an oral history program interviewing current students and alumni about their experience at Rice, which will be presented online alongside their exhibit. As protests and student communications continue, such as those related to the William Marsh Rice statue and other campus policies and resources, the students plan to collaborate with the library to ensure these activities are included in the Rice University archives for current and future research.

“We created this exhibit to highlight the history of the Black experience at Rice. As we are currently engaging in efforts for social justice, it’s important to remember these issues don’t exist in a vacuum and have a long-rooted, historically designed precedent,” Mohamed said. “We believe Rice needs to reckon with the ways it has historically marginalized Black community members. As we push to improve the current Black experience at Rice, we draw inspiration from the experiences of the Black students, staff, faculty and administrators who paved the way for us to be here, often at a significant personal cost. Check out the exhibit in the RMC if you would like to learn more.”

Community members are encouraged to submit ideas for physical exhibits using this form <http://library.rice.edu/requests/request-exhibit-space> or by contacting [woodson@rice.edu](mailto:woodson@rice.edu).

Amanda Focke  
Head, Woodson Research Center

## Green Team Wins ALA Grant and Hosts Environmental Justice Panel Discussion

Fondren's newly formed Green Team met for the first time in April 2020 to focus on implementing the library's sustainability plan. In July, the Green Team became intrigued by the American Library Association (ALA) pilot grant program, Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change. Despite the fact that only five academic libraries would be chosen, Green Team members Lisa Spiro, Julia Kress and Ashley Fitzpatrick '22, with help from Shannon Kipphut-Smith and Andrew Vieira, reached out to community members and planned multiple events for the academic year, submitting their proposal to ALA in Sept. The Green Team was elated to learn that Fondren was awarded the programming grant.

The Green Team's first grant event, Justice and Transformation: Houston Women on Climate Action, was held virtually Oct. 28 during Owl Week. It featured four Houston women whose work addresses climate justice: Denae King (Texas Southern University), Cymene Howe (Rice), Amy Catherine Dinn (Lone Star Legal Aid) and Iris Gonzalez (Coalition for Environment, Equity & Resilience), with Ashley Fitzpatrick as the moderator. A primary takeaway was that Houston's lack of zoning is a huge problem that needs to be changed. In addition, underserved communities affected by hazardous toxins are on the front lines and already experiencing climate change in their neighborhoods, including flooding. These communities must be involved in developing and managing solutions to help their communities respond to climate change. The panel wrapped up with Dinn proclaiming, "The future is green jobs!"

Fondren Library has recently become a Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) designated climate resilience hub for the Greater Houston area. As a hub, Fondren will serve as a center to educate the public about climate events that impact Houston — primarily hurricanes, flooding and extreme heat — and how to respond to these impacts. The Green Team's next grant event was held Dec. 2 and featured Vernon K. Walker, CREW's program manager, virtually presenting "Finding Hope in Extreme Weather." Walker focused on how social resiliency is climate resiliency and how climate change is part of social justice.

In March 2021, the Green Team will host a public screening of "Fire + Flood: Queer Resilience in the Era of Climate Change." Fondren also received the following DVDs to add to its collection as part of the grant: "How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change," "Decoding the Weather Machine" and "Chasing Ice."

In spring 2021, the Green Team, along with community partners, will run a workshop on the local impacts of air quality for science students at Holland Middle School in Pleasantville, an underserved Houston neighborhood. This workshop will help these students gain data analysis and presentation skills as well as to bolster their confidence to facilitate change in their communities.

Be on the lookout for upcoming Green Team events. The team's webpage is <https://library.rice.edu/sustainability>. We hope you can join us in working with our larger community to become sustainable and resilient in responding to climate change.

*Julia Kress*  
Senior Electronic Resources Assistant  
ALA Resilient Communities Project Grant Director



Top to Bottom:  
Denae King  
Cymene Howe  
Iris Gonzalez

## Fondren Library Staff and Rice Volunteers Promote Civic Engagement on Campus

Despite the pandemic, Fondren's volunteer deputy voter registrar (VDVR) community came together as usual to register Rice voters. There were certainly new challenges this year — when lockdown orders began, in-person events were called into question. With the Rice campus having a 40–50% occupancy on any given day during the fall semester, would anyone show up?

Reasons to persist were compelling. The pandemic made voting more confusing, especially for new students who had just arrived on campus. There might well be questions or concerns that would be best addressed by talking to VDVRs, volunteers who play a key, non-partisan role in helping Texans register to vote in national, state and local elections.

A series of events was planned, starting with the annual Fondren Library U.S. Constitution Day celebration Sept. 17, organized by the Kelley Center for Government Information, Data and Geospatial Services. There could be no better occasion to educate, encourage and assist U.S. citizens to execute their constitutional voting rights. Based on experiences registering voters and interacting with attendees that day, the Fondren VDVR group created an event guide and supply cart (on one of the library's rolling carts, of course) so they could easily and safely volunteer at Fondren voter registration drives.



Left to Right: Amanda Thomas and Anna Xiong

The collaboration made a breakthrough this year by making successful contact with students, staff and faculty across campus who were Harris County-certified VDVRs. Many at Rice helped to spread the word about library VDVR events and volunteer opportunities. Soon, enough volunteers were available not only to staff all the original event time slots but also to expand event hours significantly in the final week.

To celebrate National Voter Registration Day Sept. 22, the library hosted a registration drive co-sponsored by Civic Duty Rice, Rice College Republicans and Rice Young Democrats. Student VDVRs were able to register more than 20 people to vote and helped many more with voting information, despite inclement weather. A total of 174 voters were registered at Fondren Sept. 17–Oct. 5, a turnout well beyond expectations. Hundreds more received information from VDVRs on-site, via our social media, website or the Fondren VDVR listserv ([fondrenvdvr@rice.edu](mailto:fondrenvdvr@rice.edu)).

Kudos are due to these members of the Fondren Library VDVR group: Mary Brower, Melinda Flannery, Mary Lowery, Jeanette Sewell and Lisa Spiro. Shared experiences and advice make our events successful. The group stayed in regular contact through the registration push at events and over email, Google Chat, phone and text.

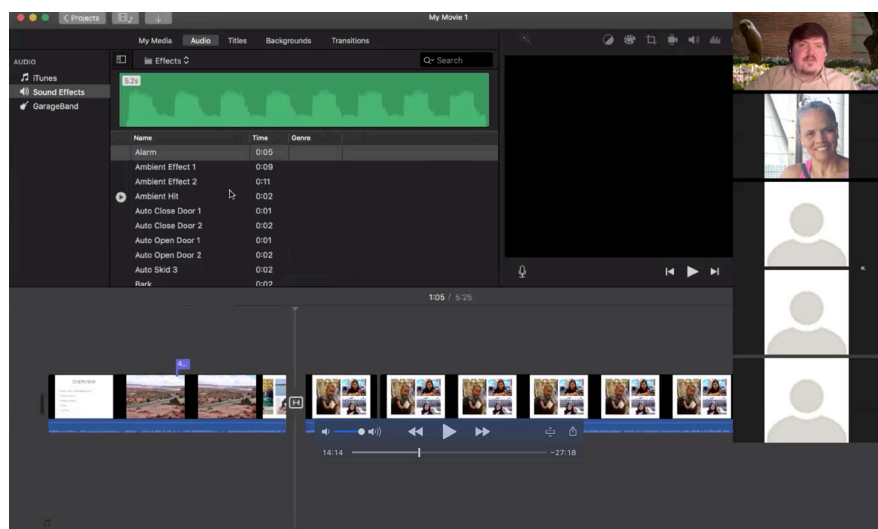
In addition to administration, the RICEngaged group and VDVR volunteers from around campus, many students, staff members and groups also made these events successful by enthusiastically spreading the word. If a voter registration drive can be successful under these conditions, we are confident of being ready to register voters and encourage civic participation despite any future obstacles.

Please contact the Fondren VDVR group at [fondrenvdvr@rice.edu](mailto:fondrenvdvr@rice.edu) with any questions or registration requests or to volunteer, or consult Fondren Library's LibGuide on elections and voting at [https://libguides.rice.edu/elections\\_voting](https://libguides.rice.edu/elections_voting).

*Amanda Thomas*  
User Experience/Public Services Librarian

*Anna Xiong*  
Government Information Coordinator

*Co-organizers of the Fondren Library VDVR Group*



## Classes and Reference Assistance Pivot Online

Fondren Library has a longstanding history of delivering training on GIS and digital media and has recently added classes in Python, GitHub and R. When the library closed in March because of COVID-19, library staff quickly pivoted to online for training. The Digital Media Center (DMC) has offered 66 online short courses since April, with a total attendance of 550 Rice community members. Jane Zhao, director of the DMC, shared that the DMC “had never offered remote workshops before the pandemic. Teaching during the pandemic has helped up gain insight into different instructional modalities. Looking forward, we will continue to offer some remote workshops as a new normal way of teaching and learning.”

Current classes offered can be found at <https://library.rice.edu/classes-events>.

In addition to online workshops, reference assistance transitioned online. Reference librarians now support a new “Ask Us” chat service, available Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The service is located on the blue slide-out tab at <https://library.rice.edu>.

Staff from multiple areas of the library are helping to support the chat service, including reference and technical and access services. With the evening hours, this service has enabled the Rice community to gain expert assistance more conveniently. Additionally, questions can be submitted via email to [ask@rice.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@rice.libanswers.com).

Debra Kolah  
Head, User Experience

# Fondren 101 Goes Online

Since fall 2016, Rice students have had the opportunity to take Fondren 101, a library tour and workshop introducing them to the library's spaces, services and search tools. This fall, with in-person tours out of the question, the library released a new, self-guided Fondren 101 tour on the Canvas learning management system. Following the practice of previous years, library staff used collaboration and student input to develop this online library orientation and learning resource.

Graduate student Anqi Li '21 and Raiya Myren '23, both of Fondren's user experience (UX) office, helped shape criteria for the new version of Fondren 101. Members of the Fondren Library Instruction Committee then took on the development of the online tour, contributing learning materials for their areas.

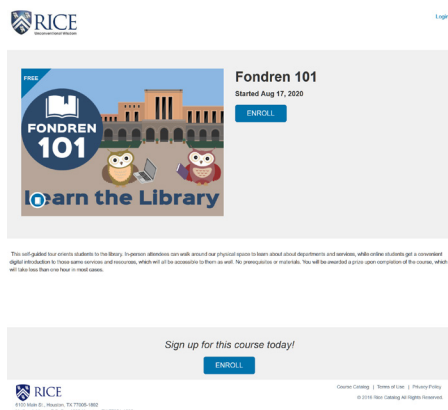
Amanda Barnett, instructional technologist with Rice's learning environments department, informed the library's selection of the Canvas platform and set up the new course's online structure there. This structure was relatively complicated because the library wanted two separate versions of Fondren 101, one for undergraduates and another expanded version for graduate students. The need for this graduate edition of the orientation was made evident in a discussion between library staff and English graduate student and Graduate Student Library Advisory Board member Els Woudstra.

In the new online format, students in Fondren 101 could take the workshop completely online or visit the library for a self-guided tour. In aid of the in-person tour, Digital Media Commons supervisor Mario Norton created tour maps; physical signs were provided by library web/graphic designer Jeff Koffler. By walking around the library and opening web content on their mobile devices, or simply by proceeding through the course from home, Fondren 101 students can get an overview of services like book circulation, interlibrary loan, renting digital media equipment and getting help with data management. Then, in an interactive exercise, students look up a book using the OneSearch tool and write about their choice in an online discussion board.

After the OneSearch exercise, graduate students are introduced to subject librarians, who frequently consult one-on-one with graduate students in their departments. Graduate students also see customized introductions to departments such as the Center for Academic and Professional Communication (CAPC) and Woodson Research Center. Finally, all students are directed to further learning resources and a feedback survey, which they complete to become eligible for a prize package of library-themed goodies.

More than 130 students have enrolled in the Fondren 101 Canvas course. Student feedback will help further develop and improve the online tour. Even when in-person tours can resume, this web-based learning resource is likely to continue benefiting our students and researchers. As with the library's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fondren 101 represents the efforts of students and staff to create the best and safest library experience for our users.

Joe Goetz  
Instruction Librarian





# Black Lives Matter Research Guide and DEI Initiatives at Fondren

As the world mourned the killing of George Floyd this past summer, Fondren Library sought small ways to make a difference.

Early efforts included purchasing relevant library materials and checking existing library holdings against anti-racist reading lists published after Black Lives Matter (BLM) marches around the world in summer 2020. Many e-book copies were purchased, some for key print titles already in the collection, extending virtual access to anyone with a Rice NetID.

Many Fondren colleagues were thinking about and working on similar initiatives, along with faculty, staff, alumni and students. Students took action to form organizations such as Rice for Black Life (<https://www.facebook.com/riceforblacklife>). Based on feedback from that organization, Fondren Library staff gathered resources into a BLM LibGuide (<https://libguides.rice.edu/black-lives-matter/>).

Amanda Focke, the head of Woodson Research Center, also worked with Rice for Black Life to create an exhibit, "Rice Black Lives." "We are working with students as well as community members to try to build the archives to be more inclusive and to fill the gaps and silences in the historical record. Oral history will be a key tool in this effort," Focke said.

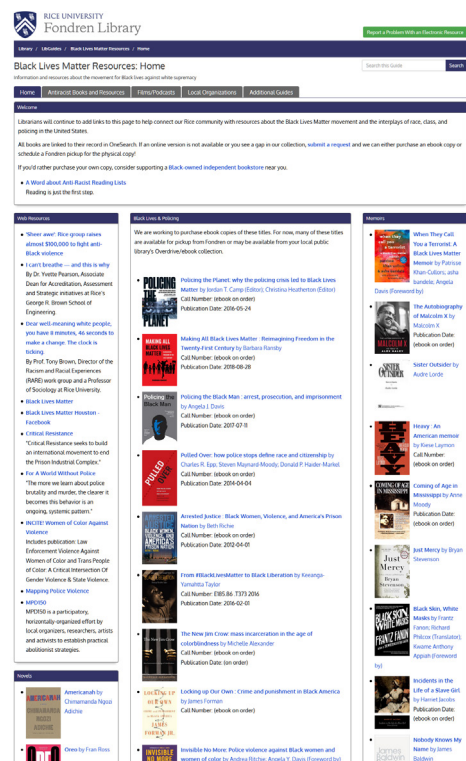
Sandi Edwards, assistant university librarian for research services, provided support through access to general humanities and social science funds. Technical services staff ensured materials were quickly ordered and made available to users. Reviewing interlibrary loan requests on relevant topics produced additional suggestions for improving our collections.

Jeanette Sewell, database and metadata management coordinator, partnered with Raiya Myren '23 from the user experience office to compile and organize the content while continuing to identify additional resources and local organizations to enrich the guide. "This was one of the first research projects I contributed to that felt not only timely but capable of making positive change," Myren said. "Educating yourself about these tough issues must be a conscious, genuine effort. Everyone deserves to feel like they belong, and hopefully, by spreading knowledge and awareness we can make our communities more inviting to people of all backgrounds."

Library collections can play an important role in documenting and analyzing racism and efforts to dismantle it. Fondren staff will continue to add to the collections and to the BLM research guide as well as participate in future collaborations. Long past the events of summer 2020, we can support the efforts of individuals and institutions both to tell the truth about the past and to find ways to do better.

*Debra Kolah  
Head of User Experience*

*Amanda Thomas  
User Experience/Public Services Librarian*



Raiya Myren '23



## Serials Catalog Librarian Retires

Alice's Mad Hatter Tea Party was the theme of a May 8 Zoom retirement party for Fondren Library's serials catalog librarian Alice Rhoades. Guests were asked to wear a silly hat and drink their beverage of choice in a teacup. A few polls were taken for guests to guess Rhoades's favorite stage role (Claire Zuchanassian in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "The Visit") and her first Shakespeare play on campus.

Rhoades was hired June 1999. She distinguished herself by shaping Fondren practice through the still ongoing shift from print to electronic journals, leading multiple large projects that allowed Fondren's journal holdings to be ever more accurately discoverable both locally and to the world. Her patience and wry good humor brought a steady hand to the sometimes bewildering changes these resources go through over time, sometimes over centuries.

Rhoades quickly immersed herself in Rice campus culture. In 2003, she joined the Rice thespian community playing the Fool in Baker Shake's production of "King Lear." In addition to her work with Baker Shake she appeared in "Rabbit Hole" and "Dead Man's Cell Phone," productions by Rice Players, and several productions with Rice's Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts. In 2005, she was in the chorus of Rice Light Opera Society's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Patience." Rhoades served as a university associate to Baker College and plans to continue as a community associate to Baker. In addition to her theater work on campus, Rhoades has been quite active in the Houston community theater scene.

In retirement, Rhoades had planned on traveling to visit many friends and relatives as well as doing some writing and a lot of theater. Unfortunately, most of those plans had to be shelved for now. She is still able to perform with various Zoom theater groups and is actively involved with two local ones. The first is Zoom Shakespeare, which has been doing live streaming. The second is Drunk Shakespeare. And who wouldn't love to see Drunk Shakespeare?

Congratulations to you, Alice. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

*Keith Chapman*  
Music Catalog Librarian



## Postdoctoral Research Associate in African American Data Curation Arrives

Serendipity has shaped Portia Hopkins' academic career. She credits serendipity with leading her to two of the three case studies for her dissertation "Breaking Through the Margins: Pushing Sociopolitical Boundaries Through Historic Preservation." On her way to do research at the Gregory School in Houston, Hopkins passed by a man overseeing a dig in Freedman's Town and stopped to learn more; she soon decided to include a chapter on grassroots preservation work in a neighborhood that was a center for African American life in Houston. Likewise, a conversation with the grandmother of children she was taking care of led to an invitation to visit St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Missouri City. Founded by former slaves in 1869 and partially burned down by an arsonist in 2006, this church and its efforts to secure a historical marker also became a case study.

Serendipity also led Hopkins to apply for her current position as Rice's CLIR/DLF postdoctoral research associate in African American data curation. In this role, she is working with Black community groups to document their stories and curate and preserve their digital artifacts. Hopkins came to Rice through a program overseen by the Council on Library and Information Resources and the Digital Library Federation that enables recent Ph.D. recipients to develop skills in libraries and archives. Fondren Library and Rice's Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning partnered to propose and manage the postdoc, building on a prior partnership to curate archival collections. Hopkins' mentors at Rice include Anthony Pinn, Lisa Spiro, Maya Reine and Amanda Focke.

Since starting at Rice in July, Hopkins has been helping teachers develop lessons for the new African American Studies course recently approved by the Texas Board of Education, highlighting archival resources available at the Woodson Research Center. In collaboration with the Convict Leasing and Labor Project, she and a Fondren Fellow are creating an interactive map telling the story of the Sugarland 95, a group of African American forced-labor prisoners leased to sugar plantations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose graves were discovered at the former site of the Imperial State Farm Prison. In addition, Hopkins will help to coordinate an oral history project, assist community groups in managing and preserving their data, and teach workshops on oral history and data curation. Through dedicated research time, she is also presenting at conferences and turning her dissertation into a book.

Hopkins received her doctorate in American studies from the University of Maryland. Prior to coming to Rice, she taught at several community colleges and universities and worked in the University of Alabama Libraries' special collections. Hopkins is particularly excited about the opportunity to explore different career possibilities afforded by a Ph.D. and to work more closely with community members on how to organize and make sense of their data.

*Lisa Spiro*

*Executive Director, Digital Scholarship Services*

*Note: Parts of this profile were previously published in the Digital Scholarship Services newsletter.*



## Staff Added to Support Electronic Resources

In early March, Thumy Webb accepted the position of electronic resources librarian in Fondren's acquisitions department in the technical services division. In this new role, Webb will work with colleagues to order, manage and maintain e-books, databases and other electronic resources for the Rice community. She will also engage in drafting new policies and procedures for streaming video acquisitions to enhance access.

Webb joined the Fondren staff in 2017 as project assistant for the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST) Project, an effort to ensure enduring distributed consortial access to one physical copy of key journals, allowing other consortium members to withdraw their copies. She then accepted a position as senior metadata assistant in cataloging and metadata services. Her cataloging knowledge and skills have been a major asset, particularly during the recent Alma system upgrade. Webb shared that she has enjoyed cataloging items such as Woodson Research Center gift books, Houston-specific materials and Tibetan religious scrolls.

Webb also serves as co-chair of the Primo Strategy Team, guiding improvements to Fondren's new public-facing search interface, and leads the Unsub project to review the value of subscribing to large journal packages from publishers such as Elsevier. Webb received her MLS degree in 2015 from the University of Manoa. Fondren is fortunate to have her background and knowledge in this new role.

*Jeanette Sewell*  
Database and Metadata Management Coordinator



## Shapiro Library Staff Award Celebrated Virtually

Mang Sun, systems librarian and the 19th recipient of the Fondren Library Shapiro Staff Innovation Award, was celebrated over Zoom July 22. Sun was recognized for his successful work in the migration of 23 years' worth of library data into a new library system, as well as a long history of technical leadership at Fondren Library.

Amanda Thomas, user experience/public services librarian and chair of this year's Shapiro committee, was faced with the challenge of moving this time-honored event into a virtual space. Thomas shared, "Though we would have preferred to celebrate Mang in person this year, the Shapiro Award selection committee was able to quickly shift all of our meetings and event planning to a virtual environment. We also ordered and shipped the award plaque to Mang in record time, so that he could receive it before the virtual ceremony."

Sun was grateful to be honored. "The unprecedented online ceremony was fantastic, fast-paced and well-organized," he said.

The Shapiro Award was created in 2002 to honor the memory of Beth Shapiro, former vice provost and university librarian, and recognizes a library staff member who displays innovation or has provided exemplary service to the campus community. Nominations are reviewed by a committee composed of a faculty member, a student and two staff members.

Additional information about the award may be found at <http://library.rice.edu/shapiro-award>.

A full-length article on Sun's award may be found in Rice News at <https://news.rice.edu/2020/07/24/systems-librarian-sun-honored-with-fondrens-shapiro-award/>.

*Debra Kolah  
Head of User Experience*

# Fondren Library Supporting Research in Rice's History and Legacy



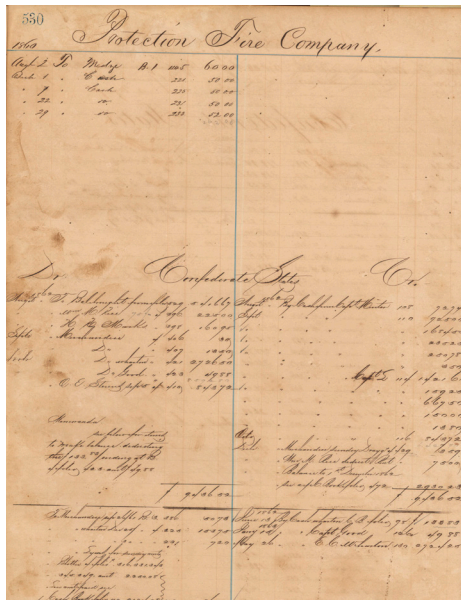
In June 2019, President David Leebron appointed a Task Force on Slavery, Segregation and Racial Injustice to “investigate Rice’s past with respect to slavery, segregation and racial injustice; to encourage frank and honest discussion about that past; and to identify suggestions for Rice’s future.” Led by faculty members Alex Byrd and Caleb McDaniel, the task force is supported by Fondren Library in several ways.

The Woodson Research Center (WRC) in Fondren Library is serving as key research support in this effort. An online research guide provides information on resources related to slavery and racial injustice at Rice University. These materials include published histories, online exhibits created by Rice students, books and archival materials housed in the WRC. To access that information, visit <https://libguides.rice.edu/slavery-racial-injustice-at-rice>.

Many archival resources have already been digitized and are accessible online in Rice’s institutional repository, the Rice Digital Scholarship Archive. Examples of key publications already online include *The Rice Thresher* (1916–2018), *The Campanile* yearbook (1916–2018) and *General Announcements* (1912–2020). Providing researchers with online access to archival materials has been crucial, as in-person access to the WRC reading room is currently limited. WRC staff are also providing reference assistance to members of the task force, as well as undergraduate and graduate students and university administrators researching a variety of events, issues and topics throughout Rice’s history.

To support the research work of the task force, Rice welcomed Will Jones, a postdoctoral research associate, in August 2020. Jones received his Ph.D. from Rice’s history department in spring 2020. His dissertation was a history of how enslaved people in Louisiana made families and communities in the wake of the U.S. 19th-century domestic slave trade. Jones works closely with the WRC to identify and research archival materials and recommends archival materials for digitization to enhance their accessibility to members of the task force and the public.

Digitizing some of the 170 business ledgers from the William Marsh Rice Business and Estate Ledgers, call # UA 102, 1855-1965, is a large project in support of the task force. These business records of William Marsh Rice comprise data on his personal investments, his estate records and those of the early Rice Institute. The ledgers provide examples of Rice’s hiring of enslaved persons and business dealings with the Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War. Thanks to generous support from the Friends of Fondren Library, several are being digitized and made available online in the recently created Task Force on Slavery, Segregation and Racial Injustice Historical Documents Collection, which can be found at <https://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/109444>. This online collection will include documents from early Rice history to current day.



Top: Will Jones, postdoctoral research associate

Bottom: Excerpt from William Marsh Rice's business and estate ledgers, old business ledger 1859-1862, UA 102

Rebecca Russell  
Archivist/Special Collections Librarian

For more information about the task force, please visit (<https://taskforce.rice.edu/>).



Reginald DesRoches



Klara Jelinkova



Peter Rodriguez

## University Administrators Reflect on COVID Measures at Friends' Annual Meeting

The Friends of Fondren Library (FoFL) held its annual meeting online Oct. 15, with optional Bernhardt Vineyards wine delivery substituting for the usual banquet. The dialogue between Provost Reginald DesRoches and Vice President for International Operations and IT Klara Jelinkova was moderated by Peter Rodriguez, dean of the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business. FoFL board members John Dennis and Mary McIntire served as event co-chairs.

President David Leebron welcomed the group by reflecting on Fondren's role at the intersection of technology devices and information resources as disparate as rare books and cell phones. He thanked FoFL for its support for Fondren's evolving mission. Sara Lowman, vice provost and university librarian, also welcomed guests. Additionally, FoFL membership vice presidents Clare Jackson and Lindsay Germano thanked members for their support and invited guests to join FoFL.

DesRoches spoke of his trust in Rice's approach to the pandemic and its agility as circumstances changed. Rice had the first COVID-19 case in Houston. Rice's healthy resources, small size and strong ties with the Texas Medical Center were advantages in our large city that saw significant COVID-19 spikes. Rice's crisis management structures were already in place in part due to Houston's weather patterns. Jelinkova noted that needed technology had been in place for the virtual pivot, but that the pandemic accelerated its adoption.

"Pivotal in Rice's plan was the decision to place trust in students to take responsibility for safe public health practices," said Jelinkova. Digital contact tracing and mobile health apps were available but the university chose instead to appeal to community values and individual choice. The students have lived up to that trust.

Rice's COVID-19 numbers currently look better than anyone expected. Dual delivery instruction is hard and more work for faculty, but students and faculty are adapting and increasingly comfortable with required campus safety measures. Research awards have increased and labs are open; library resources have remained available.

Important social aspects of work and study have been lost, both panelists agreed, from breaks between meetings to the full college experience. Making virtual experiences less flat and more connected is an ongoing challenge. DesRoches noted that students and faculty have been running for 13 weeks without a break; in-person instruction ended before Thanksgiving. Some work cannot be done virtually.

Jelinkova believes we will not give up the advantages of participation from anywhere. She noted that online summer school enrollment increased multifold. Moving forward, online instruction will become more varied and adaptive as faculty creativity strengthens. How well we meet student expectations in the future will determine the university's success, DesRoches believes. He noted virtual conference events are more star-studded and better attended than ever. Rodriguez sees skyrocketing demand in the Jones School and predicted an increasing virtual future for professional education. Eliminating commutes and advancing careers, along with easing global recruitment, can help Rice play a part in transforming Houston.

Rice students are grateful for the in-person options the university has provided, DesRoches said, while Jelinkova reminded everyone that 25% of Rice's students overall are international and that some were unable to return to Houston and Rice due to border challenges. Only 20% of Rice students are currently fully remote, with 40% off campus and 40% on campus, and enrollment is steady. Hopes are that the percentage of on-campus students will increase this spring.

*Melinda Reagor Flannery*  
Assistant University Librarian for Technical Services

# Owl Together Homecoming Concert



In the context of the pandemic, Alumni Affairs combined its fall events, Families Weekend and Homecoming, into a new virtual event called Owl Together. The Woodson Research Center’s Houston Folk Music Archive (HFMA) and Friends of Fondren Library (FoFL) joined forces and reformatted the Homecoming concert successfully offered in 2017 and 2018. Hannah Ballard of Alumni Affairs, Mary Lowery, executive director of the Friends of Fondren Library, and I coordinated the event using Cadence and the Zoom webinar platform.

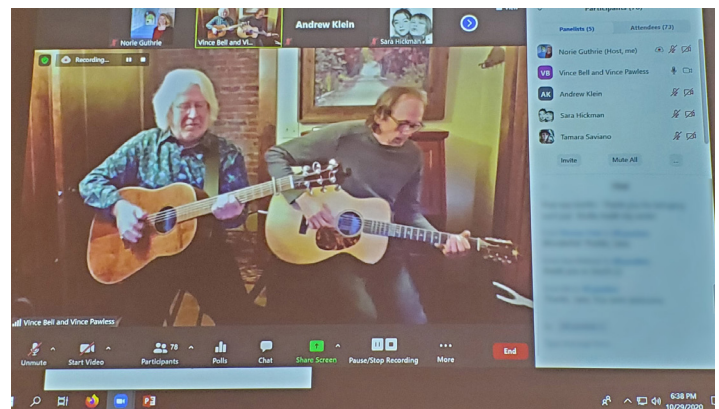
Andrew Klein, master of ceremonies and lecturer in the Program for Writing and Communication, began the event with an online poll and announced winners of a poster contest. This year’s poster was designed and printed by Carlos Hernandez of Burning Bones Press.

Tamara Saviano, author of “Without Getting Killed or Caught: The Life and Music of Guy Clark” as well as a soon to be released documentary on Clark’s life, then talked about the importance of music archives to writers and researchers. She noted using the HFMA for images and other background information while creating the documentary.

Next came the main event, solo performances by 2010 Texas State Musician Sara Hickman and Vince Bell, whose songs have been recorded by Lyle Lovett and Nanci Griffith. Hickman and Bell have donated their materials to the HFMA and have been wonderful supporters of the archive. Their songs touched on Houston’s folk history as well as provided a salve for isolation in this current largely online world.

Support was also provided by FoFL’s Homecoming Committee Co-Chairs Gretchen Stephens and Barbara Gibbs.

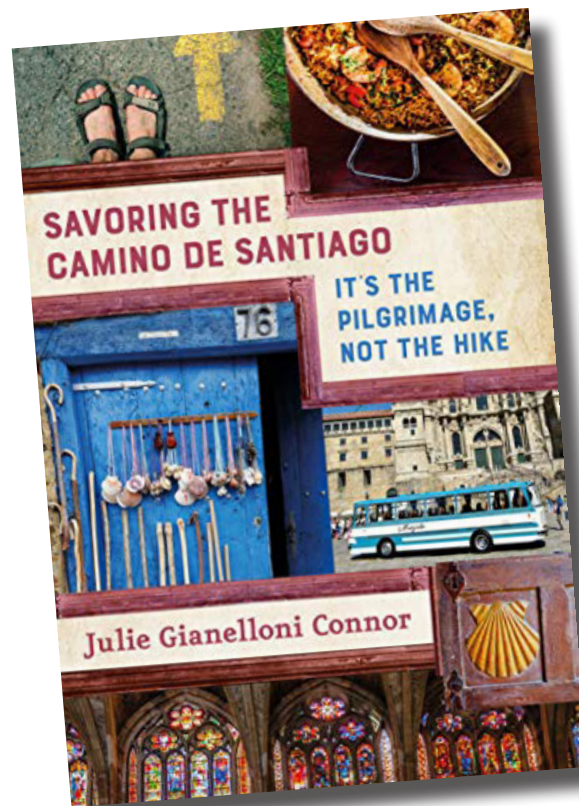
*Norie Guthrie*  
Archivist Librarian



Zoom image: Sara Hickman

Zoom image: L to R: Vince Bell and Vince Pawless





Julie Gianelloni Connor

## Friends of Fondren Library Enjoy Virtual Travel

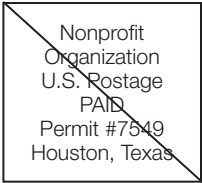
On Nov. 4, Julie Gianelloni Connor '73 virtually delivered her postponed Meet the Author lecture, presented by the Association of Rice Alumni and Friends of Fondren Library (FoFL). Members of both organizations were delighted to learn more about her book, "Savoring the Camino de Santiago: It's the Pilgrimage, Not the Hike," and to think about travel at a time during which it is curtailed by the pandemic. Connor's spring lecture in the twice-yearly series was canceled due to the pandemic, and she graciously agreed to reschedule in a virtual format.

FoFL event chair Mindy Vanderford '84, introduced Connor, highlighting her career as a diplomat in the U.S. Foreign Service and as owner and editor of Bayou City Press and noting that her book has already won several awards. These include a silver medal for travel writing in the national eLit competition and Amazon's No. 1 new book status in both "hiking and walking" and "Spain and Portugal" categories.

Connor first described the Camino de Santiago (St. James), and common iconography of this pilgrimage. Since the Middle Ages, people have walked this path in northern Spain to visit St. James' shrine in Santiago de Compostela. Historically, their broad hats, cloaks, walking staves, and gourds for carrying water or wine identified pilgrims along this route. Now, modern pilgrims can be spotted by their backpacks and displayed scallop shells, the primary icon of the pilgrimage. Connor shared experiences and beautiful photographs from her 2016 pilgrimage with her son, James. She then described how her attempt to write a blog led to the accomplishment of writing her first book.

Kate Coley '11, associate director of alumni programs, noted that "although we all miss being in the same room for events, one huge perk of not being able to meet in person is that we have the opportunity to bring this event to a wider audience. It was amazing to see such a big turnout from alums across multiple time zones. I definitely hope we keep up aspects of this new way of meeting, even after in-person gatherings are completely safe again." FoFL member Gretchen Kuhn '73 summed up her enjoyment of the lecture, "There is nothing I like better than travel, walking and books."

Mary Lowery  
Executive Director, Friends of Fondren Library



## NEWS from FONDREN

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Historic Rice Stadium served as a polling location for the 2020 election from October 13 through Nov. 3. The photo collage features Fondren staff who cast their ballots during early voting at the stadium. Clockwise from top left: Robert Estep and friends, Jeanette Sewell, Shannon McKirchy and Debra Kolah

