

**Virgil Orr Junior Faculty Award
Library Nominee 2019-2020
Nolan Eller, Assistant Professor,
University Archivist, Head of Special Collections, University Records Officer**

I am both honored and pleased to be selected as Prescott Memorial Library's nominee for the Virgil Orr Junior Faculty Award.

I. Description of activities in which the nominee has engaged to benefit the students, faculty, and university community and performance evaluations of the nominee by his/her superiors

As the University Archivist and Head of Special Collections, I strive every day to ensure that my department is meeting the curricular, research, and service needs of Louisiana Tech University. As the University Archivist, I serve not only the Louisiana Tech Community, but the needs of the larger world community in ensuring that the history of Louisiana Tech, the city of Ruston, Lincoln Parish, and North Central Louisiana is maintained, preserved, and made accessible for research. Louisiana Tech's mission is to provide quality teaching, research, creative activity, public service, and workforce/economic development. Through my work as a librarian and an archivist, I assist on a daily basis in meeting this goal.

Since being hired as the University Archivist in January of 2017, I have striven to increase the outreach of the Archives and Special Collections and to ensure that our materials are available to be utilized by our students and faculty. In order to meet this goal I have worked to increase the incorporation of the University Archives and our resources into student course work. I have provided archival and library instruction for the following courses:

- HIST 495: Senior Seminar in History
- HIST 300: Doing History (3 Sessions)
- FYE 100: First Year Experience
- HIST 486: Introduction to Public History (2 Sessions)
- HIST 489: Internship in Public History (3 Sessions)
- ENGL 591: Introduction to Research and Bibliography (3 Sessions)
- ART 115: Introduction to Design (3 Sessions)

These archival and library instruction courses are highly beneficial to all students performing primary and secondary source research. In these presentations, the students learn about the different research methods and materials available to them and how best to utilize these materials. For each of these classes, I aim to tailor my discussion around the course being taught, working closely with the faculty member to ensure that the information I am conveying fits the instructor's needs. In addition to archival and library instruction, I have also assisted with library outreach during the Summer Orientation. These events and instruction periods not only allow us to teach about our resources, but also allow us to get to know the students and their research

needs. In conjunction with my work with students, I have also assisted a number of the faculty with their personal research interests and have been heavily involved in the implementation and operation of Louisiana Tech's Digital Commons, which launched this year.

In addition to my work with individual classes and faculty, I have overseen three internships in Archival and Museum Studies. These internships allow the students to have hands-on experience with the archival profession. During these internships, the students under my supervision process collections and perform other assignments that align with their interests and fields of study.

In my role as the University Records Officer, in order to better instruct our faculty and staff on the benefits of good records management, I spearheaded efforts to re-evaluate Louisiana Tech's records management program. In order to do this, I composed two different presentations outlining what records management is and how to perform good records management. In addition to these presentations, I met with a number of the staff from different departments to go over their records management needs and to answer any questions they may have in regards to records management.

Furthermore, I formed and currently chair a committee that is focused on improving the aesthetics and cleanliness of the library building. Through this committee, I have had the opportunity to assist with the procurement of materials that the students have requested. This committee and collaboration has allowed me to further get to know our student body and further understand their needs. Through this collaboration, I believe we are on our way to making large improvements to the library that will aide in the educational experience of our students for the foreseeable future.

Performance Evaluation

My last review by my supervisor was conducted on May 9, 2018. My summative evaluation was that I "Meet Expectations." The following comments were made in relation to my goals, professional performance, professional development, and service:

- **Goal #1:** Continue to and build upon the practice of good collections management. This includes but is not limited to: creating a digital accession record for manuscripts/archival collections, re-organization of manuscript collections to fit current archival standards, continuing the processing of our collections backlog, continuing to grow/weed the collections where appropriate, becoming more familiar with the collections and history of the University through research, and monitoring and maintaining the collections physical integrity by monitoring the SCMA's environment.
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** You have made tremendous progress in re-organizing the 4th floor archives area, improving the recordkeeping for manuscripts, and catching up on the backlog of materials to be cataloged and processed. You are to be commended for the work you have done in

creating finding aids and processing forms, and digitizing a number of Lagniappes and University publications. In addition, you have created numerous opportunities to promote the SCMA, resulting in much more publicity and visibility.

- **Goal #2:** Continue to grow the public face and outreach of the SCMA. This includes but is not limited to: reformatting policies and procedures, instituting new/rotating exhibits, creating new brochures and outreach materials, building relationships with community stakeholders, and being an active participant in university and community events.
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** You have really increased the awareness of the SCMA by building relationships both on campus and throughout the community. Your involvement in state-wide archive and library organizations is appreciated as we promote our SCMA.
- **Goal #3:** Maintaining and becoming more comfortable with the Records Management system at Louisiana Tech University.
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** Your creation of two records management training PowerPoints and sample forms for Louisiana Tech University staff has been very helpful as we move toward updating all records retention schedules.
- **Professional Performance**
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** You have created an excellent record of professional performance activities of the past year. Your involvement in so many campus and community organizations is very much appreciated, along with your approachability and welcoming attitude. Your participation in the North Louisiana Historical Association, Louisiana Digital Consortium, Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Society, and Society of Southwest Archivist are very beneficial for your professional development and performance.
- **Professional Development**
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** You have attended numerous training sessions, conferences, and presentations over the past year which have been very beneficial in your professional development. You have applied much of what you have learned to your day-to-day activities.
- **Service**
 - **Exceeds Expectations:** You take the opportunity to provide service in many ways at many times. Your continual service to the profession, Louisiana Tech University, and the community is to be highly commended.

II. Statement of beliefs concerning the importance of teaching, research, or other services and activities in which the nominee is engaged, and community/university service to the overall mission of the university.

I entered the field of archives and special collections because I have a passion for history, its protection, its dissemination, and for helping the people in the community I serve. Every day I have the opportunity to help people by teaching them about the collections of the University Archives and Special Collections. This can entail answering a reference question in regards to a specific subject, teaching patrons about our resources and how to access them, educating an individual in regards to the proper way to handle materials, assisting an individual wanting to preserve a family scrapbook or heirloom, or demonstrating the rich history of our institution through an exhibit.

Not only is it important for me to assist with research, but it is also important for me to research myself to ensure that I am adequately serving my patrons. I have to be abreast of the changes in the field and know the history of my institution and the materials within my collection. This requires much research into different avenues including archival theory and best practices, various family histories, local and organizational histories, and so much more. This not only benefits me in my chosen field, but also it benefits our patrons and allows me to better promote our institution and our collections.

My department's mission is to collect, preserve, and to make available historically significant materials primarily focusing on the history of Louisiana Tech, the city of Ruston, Lincoln Parish, and North Central Louisiana. Because I serve not only the people of Louisiana Tech, but also the entire cultural community surrounding Louisiana Tech, it is imperative that I remain active in the community to ensure that our area's unique history is collected and preserved. Because of this, I try to be as active as I can be by attending different functions, being involved in historically focused organizations, and speaking with local groups and organizations.

When I speak to students, faculty, and outside community patrons, I always stress that the materials within our collection are here for them. It is my job to ensure that these materials are available for not only our current researchers, but also researchers who may utilize our collections in 100 years or more. By meeting this goal and holding myself to a high standard, I feel that I am very much maintaining and supporting the mission of our university.

III. Selected List of Publications, Grants, and Similar Activities

Grants:

Eller, Nolan. (2016-2017). Purchase of one Epson Expression 12000XL Photo Scanner and computer workstation. Louisiana Tech University Lagniappe Ladies. Amount Awarded: \$5000.00

The procurement of a new scanner and all necessary equipment to institute a digitalization program has had massive impact on the SCMA and Prescott Memorial Library. We have been able to digitize a number of collections of interest and have added those collections to the Louisiana Digital Library, Archive.org, and the Louisiana Tech Digital Commons. Not only are we now able to get more of our extraordinary collections available to the general public, but we will also be assisting in the long term preservation of the materials. The scanner will allow us to scan deteriorating documents, photographs, slides, and negatives by transferring them to a more stable format that can be more easily accessed.

Publications:

Eller, Nolan. "Building Beyond Barbed Wire: Exploring the Prisoners of Camp Ruston and Their Artistic Creations." *Louisiana Folklife Journal*, Accepted, Pending Publication, April, 2020.

Presentations:

Eller, Nolan and Abigail Desoto. "Refreshing our Image: How We are Making the Library More Welcoming." LOUIS User's Conference, 15-16 October, 2019, C.B. Pennington Jr. Conference Center, Baton Rouge, LA. Presentation

Eller, Nolan. "Reconstructing Louisiana: Exploring the Creation of Lincoln Parish and the Political Battles of E.M. Graham and Allen Greene through their Papers." Louisiana Studies Conference, 21 September, 2019, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA. Presentation.

Eller, Nolan. "Artists in the Archives: Exploring the Benefits of Collaborations Outside of Traditional Archives Users." Society of Southwest Archivists Annual Meeting, 17 May, 2019, Marriott University Park, Tucson, AZ. Presentation.

Eller, Nolan and Abigail Desoto. "Refreshing our Image: How We are Making the Library More Welcoming." Louisiana Library Association Annual Meeting, 14 March, 2019, Crown Plaza Hotel, Baton Rouge, LA. Presentation.

Eller, Nolan and Sharon Wolff, Howard Margot, and Michelle Riggs. "The Great Divide: Research Before, During and After the Information Age." Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts

Association Annual Meeting, 26 October, 2018, University Hall, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA. Panel Discussion.

Eller, Nolan. "The Carpetbagger's Wife: Exploring the Story of Adele Coleman Twitchell through Her Papers." Louisiana Studies Conference, 22 September, 2018, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA. Presentation.

Eller, Nolan. "Treasures of the Tech Archives." Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association's Spring Chautauqua, 10 April 2018, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association, Ruston, LA. Presentation.

Eller, Nolan and Mary Linn Wernet, Charles Pellegrin, and Rebecca Smith. "Hands on History: Archival Solutions for University and High School Students." Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association Annual Meeting, 6 October, 2017, The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA. Panel Discussion.

Eller, Nolan. "Building beyond Barbed Wire: Exploring the History and Creative Landscape of Camp Ruston and Its Prisoners." Louisiana Studies Conference, 12 September, 2017, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA. Presentation.

Exhibits

Eller, Nolan and Penny Humphries. *A Pleasant Walk Through Old Tech Days: Exploring 125 years of Louisiana Tech History*, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *Life of Gussie Calhoun*. Permanent Exhibit, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *Homecoming Exhibit*. Rotating Exhibit, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *Louisiana Tech Dairy Exhibit*. Rotating Exhibit, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *Louisiana Tech Christmas Card Exhibit*. Rotating Exhibit, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *Mardi Gras Exhibit*. Rotating Exhibit, Louisiana Tech University Archives and Special Collections, Ruston, LA.

Eller, Nolan. *AE Phillips Centennial Celebration Exhibit*, 3 November, 2017 Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA.

IV. Selected List of Community Service/Activities

Community Service:

Member, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association, 2017-Present

- Vice President of the Board of Directors, 2019-Present
- Member, Board of Directors, 2017-Present

Volunteer, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association's Fall Chautauqua, 2017

Volunteer, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association's Spring Chautauqua, 2018

Volunteer, Lincoln Parish Museum and Historical Association's Fall Chautauqua, 2018

Volunteer, SGA Big Event, 2018

Volunteer, I.A. Lewis School Career Fair, 2018

University Service:

Volunteer, Louisiana Tech University Student Health Center 24th Annual Wellness Fair, 2019

Volunteer, Louisiana Tech University Student Health Center 23rd Annual Wellness Fair, 2018

Volunteer, Louisiana Tech University Fall Freshman Convocation, 2017-2020

Volunteer, Louisiana Tech Summer Freshman Orientation, 2017-2020

Committees and Organizations:

Library Committees:

Member, Cataloging/Systems Administrator Search Committee, 2018-2019

Chair, Library Building Committee, 2017-Present

Member, Library Advisory Committee, 2017-Present

University Wide:

Member, Louisiana Tech University Senate, 2018-Present

- Executive Board Member, 2018-Present

Member at Large, Faculty Staff Club, 2018-Present

Member, University Climate Committee, 2018

State Wide:

Member, Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts Association, 2014-Present

- President, 2018 – 2019
- Nominating Committee Chair, 2018-Present
- Vice President/President Elect, 2017-2018
- Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Chair, 2017-2018
- Scholarship Committee, Chair, 2017-2018
- Board of Directors, Member, 2015-2017
- Nominating Committee, 2015

Member, Louisiana Historical Association, 2017-Present

- Board of Directors, 2020-Present
- Bylaws Committee, Member, 2018-Present

Member, North Louisiana Historical Association, 2015-Present

- Board of Directors, 2019-Present
- Bradbury Scholarship Committee, Member, 2019-Present
- Overdyke Scholarship Committee, Member, 2017-Present

National:

Member, Society of Southwest Archivist, 2014-Present