

OU LIBRARIES

Gold mine: Student newspaper archive goes online

A gift from the family of a former library professor financed a project to digitize more than 5,000 issues of OU's student newspaper.



Homepage of the digitized student newspaper archive

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If you want to experience Oakland University's history through the eyes of hundreds of student journalists, you no longer have to visit University Archives to do so. Thanks to a generous gift from the family of a former OU library professor – and collective efforts of dedicated library employees – you can access [digital issues](#) of the university's student newspaper dating back to its [inaugural issue](#), published on October 23, 1959.

On that date, the newspaper had not yet adopted an official name. In place of a masthead is an aerial photo of a largely undeveloped landscape, save for the Oakland Center and North and South Foundation Halls. The headline above reads: "Alma Mater – her first full-length portrait."

The collection, which contains nearly 5,600 digital issues, is available at [OUR@Oakland](#), an online repository that provides open access to the intellectual, scholarly and creative work produced by the Oakland University community.



Dominique Daniel led the team of library employees who helped digitize a collection of OU student newspapers.

Dominique Daniel, coordinator of OU Archives and Special Collections, said the project had two main purposes: accessibility and preservation.

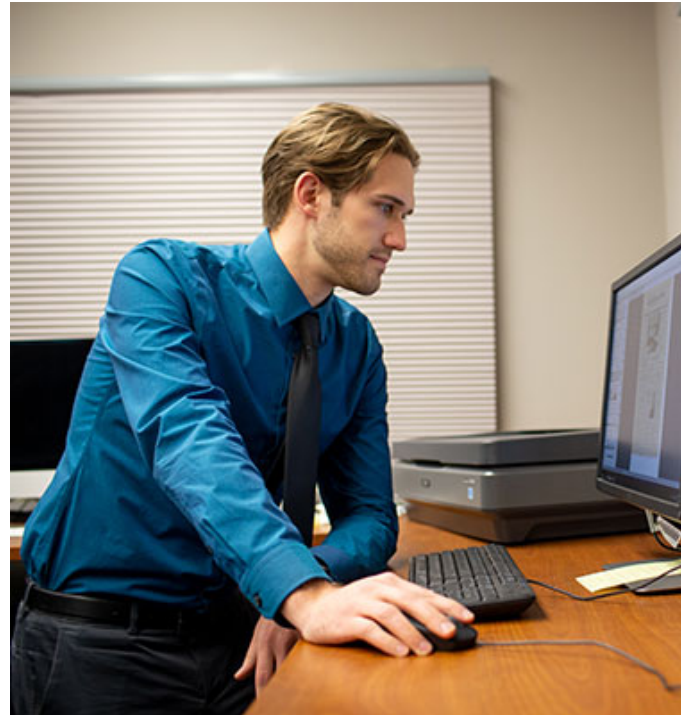
"We wanted to provide easier access to the general public, because when the newspapers are online, people can browse the issues and search within the text," she said. "Also, when people look at the newspaper online, they are not touching or handling the physical one which in some cases, the pages are yellowing, brittle or even torn."

Daniel added that former student newspaper reporter and University Archives intern Cheyanne Kramer helped "fill in the gaps" in the university's collection by providing access to issues from the student newspaper's historical archive.

“There were a few issues we were missing, and sometimes their issues were in better shape than ours, so we worked together to create the highest-quality digital collection possible.”

Daniel called the collection a “gold mine” of information that can be useful for a variety of purposes.

“You can search any issue and find out what was happening at the university during that time. If you’re an alum, you can search for your name and see where you are mentioned in the newspapers,” she said. “We showed the collection to a group of alumni who came back for a reunion during Homecoming Weekend, and they loved it.”



Library employee Josh LeVoi is shown scrolling through the digitized student newspaper archive.

The digitization project was supported through [a \\$50,000 gift from the family of Library Professor Emerita Janet Krompart](#). They wanted to honor Linda Hildebrand, also a Library Professor Emerita, for her longtime friendship with Krompart.

“Linda took care of the archives before I did,” Daniel explained. “Her dream was always to digitize the student newspaper, because she knew how valuable of a resource it was. She started the digitization program here at OU, and she was one of the first to use OUR@Oakland.”

Since the student newspaper digitization project required additional staff and resources “this funding was perfect,” Daniel added. “It allowed us to do state-of-the-art digitization and create the final product that you see now. Newspapers are particularly difficult to digitize because there’s so much information on a single page. A lot of articles, a lot of authors, a lot of pictures.”

Library staff members Josh LeVoi,
(programmer analyst) Margie Friant,

(digital archives assistant), Shirley Paquette (archives assistant) and Meghan Finch (former digital assets librarian), handled most of the logistical, technical and quality control aspects of the project, including taking inventory, converting files, checking metadata and managing the website.



Pictured from left are Margie Friant, Shirley Paquette, Dominique Daniel and Josh LeVair.

“Josh, Margie, Shirley and Meghan put a lot of collective time and effort into bringing this project to fruition and achieving high-quality results,” Daniel said. “We could not have done this without them.”

To preserve and increase accessibility for teaching and research, University Archives hopes to be able to digitize many other collections – especially those at high risk for deterioration due to age – including thousands of photographs, audio/visual materials and microfilm. To learn more about OU library programs and services, visit the [OU Libraries website](#).