

**2023/2024**

# **Annual Report**

**DALHOUSIE LIBRARIES**



**DALHOUSIE**  
UNIVERSITY

LIBRARIES

# Mission & Vision

## MISSION

Our mission is three-fold:

- To support teaching and learning through our innovative services and spaces — both physical and virtual — as well as through the dissemination of knowledge in all forms.
- To be active partners in Dalhousie's research endeavours through collaboration, dissemination, and management of information resources and to preserve Dalhousie's scholarly output.
- To provide inclusive and inviting spaces to enable our diverse communities to thrive intellectually.

## VISION

We strive to be a leading research library that inspires the creation, exploration, and discovery of knowledge in all forms through user-focused engagement with our diverse communities.

*Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.*

*We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.*

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF LIBRARIES

I'm pleased to share our 2023-2024 annual report showcasing milestones and achievements from the past year. Amid an ever-changing academic landscape, the library remains at the heart of our institution, providing essential resources, innovative services, and spaces that foster learning and research.

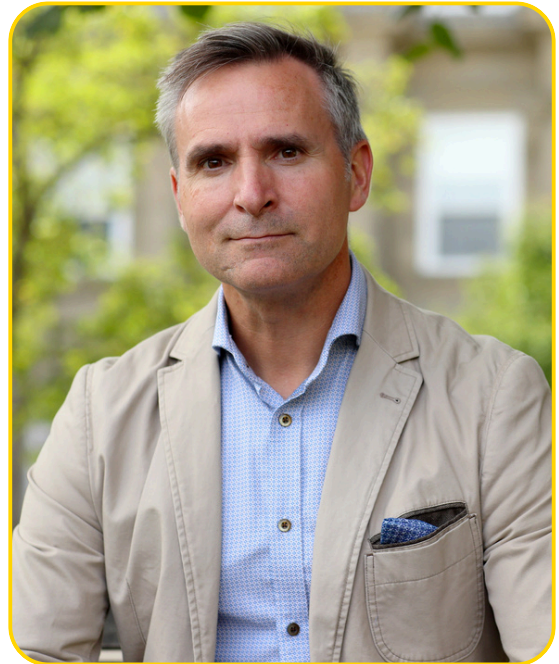
Every day our people engage with students, faculty, and community members to support their research and learning endeavours. We bring print and digital information resources from around the world to our campus. We participate in global efforts to break down barriers and make all knowledge openly available. We help students develop critical skills to evaluate information and navigate the complexities of artificial intelligence, and we provide spaces to engage in both quiet and collaborative learning and study.

Among the highlights I'm proud to share this year are our efforts to create welcoming intentional spaces on campus. We commissioned artwork by Lorne Julien depicting the Mi'kmaw Seven Sacred Teachings to hang on the exterior of the Killam Library. We also leveraged the convening power of libraries to hold events such as a drag story time, an Indigenous mid-winter feast, and a civil rights documentary screening.

I'm also proud to share several operational improvements including streamlining acquisitions with a new selection tool that significantly improves e-resource delivery times and consolidating our budget structure to align with best practices.

These achievements reflect the dedication of our library team and the support of our community. Together, we are building an inclusive, innovative library that enriches academic life for all.

Thank you for your ongoing support.





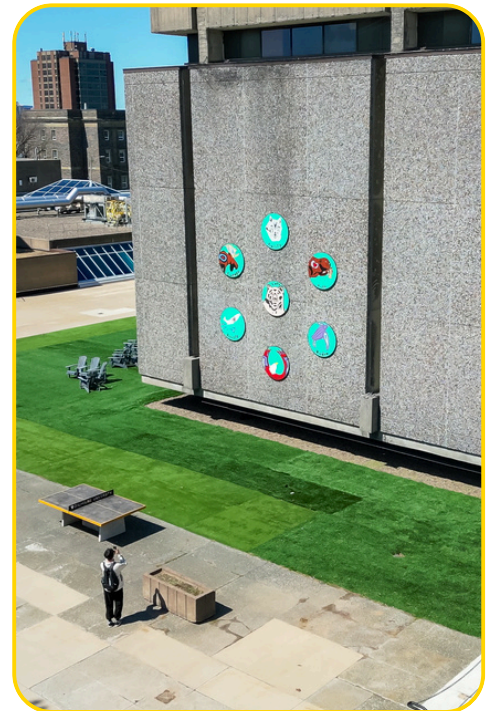
# MI'KMAW SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS

## SHOWCASED IN NEW PUBLIC ART ON KILLAM LIBRARY

In July, the imposing brutalist walls of the Killam Memorial Library were transformed. Through a collaborative project with Dalhousie's Communications, Marketing and Creative Services, Facilities Management, and Office of Sustainability, seven circular paintings were mounted to the library's exterior, adding vibrant colour and meaning to the space.

These eye-catching artworks are the creation of Millbrook artist Lorne Julien, known by his Mi'kmaq name Warrior on the Hill. Each painting features a different animal on a bright turquoise backdrop. But the paintings aren't just decorative pieces; they embody the Seven Sacred Teachings of the Mi'kmaq or L'nu'k.

Rooted in the interconnection with the land and the natural world, the Seven Sacred Teachings — honesty, respect, wisdom, love, humility, courage, and truth — are embodied by the animals depicted in Julien's artwork. Julien notes that this is not the only interpretation — there are different versions of the teachings for different regions.



**For Julien, this project was about more than art; it's about infusing spaces with new light, sparking discussion, and encouraging people to look within and reflect on their own lives.**



Dalhousie's Director of Indigenous Community Engagement Catherine Martin expressed her excitement at the addition of the artwork, saying it made her want to dance to a ko'jua song. She hopes the Dal community "embraces these teachings to make it a more peaceful place for all by practicing the teachings."

For Julien, this project was about more than art; it's about infusing spaces with new light, sparking discussion, and encouraging people to look within and reflect on their own lives.

By incorporating the artwork into the campus landscape, the university aims to honour Mi'kmaq knowledge and territory, fostering deeper connections with the rich cultural heritage of the Mi'kmaq.



# DRAG STORYTIME WITH ROUGE FATALE

In November of 2023, we hosted our first Drag Storytime. Halifax drag legend Rouge Fatale was a vision in shimmering sequins and fuchsia hair as she sat to read in the MacMechan Auditorium at the Killam Library. A group of attendees shuffled closer to sit cross-legged on the floor evoking kindergarten storytimes with a favourite teacher.



Fatale read four children's books, the chosen titles offering a balance of fun and humour with relatable stories. *My Shadow is Pink* by Scott Stuart drew out a sniffle or two among listeners. The story follows a young boy with a pink shadow, living in a world of blue shadows.

November's Drag Storytime provided an opportunity for members of the Dal community to experience library programming that they might not otherwise experience. Drag storytimes are a regular event in many public libraries but less so in an academic library setting.

The performance served as a starting point for a facilitated discussion about the many aspects of gender with experts from across the university doing work in sexual health, feminist philosophy, and performance studies. Fatale was joined by a panel of faculty and researchers, including Drs. Roberta Barker, Matthew Numer, and Stephanie Kapusta for a post-storytime conversation moderated by Dr. Rick Ezekiel, Dal's vice provost student affairs. Panelists spoke on topics ranging from gender in early theatre to personal experiences with family dynamics and creating safe and inclusive spaces.

Drag storytimes are designed to create what Fatale calls a "safer space". Not safe, because as Fatale says, no space is 100 per cent safe.



# IT HELP DESK SUPPORTING DALHOUSIE, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

The IT Help Desk, a service run by Dalhousie Libraries' Academic Technology Services (ATS), is a cornerstone for students, faculty, and staff in need of technical support.

With dedicated locations at the Killam Library, Wallace McCain Learning Commons, and the Sexton Library, the IT Help Desk is a busy hub where technology issues are addressed quickly and effectively. In the 2023-2024 academic year alone, the Help Desk tackled 27,960 issues, ranging from basic troubleshooting to complex technical needs.

The Help Desk is staffed with both professional technicians and a team of student navigators — Dalhousie students specially trained to handle IT questions. These student navigators are invaluable, often the first point of contact for patrons, handling inquiries about everything from software downloads and connectivity issues to Brightspace support and even 3D printing. With a strong emphasis on customer service, the team focuses on making technical support accessible and welcoming.

An impressive feature of Dal's IT Help Desk service is its global reach. Thanks to remote support options through Microsoft Teams and Collaborate, technicians can assist users anywhere in the world, enabling students and staff studying or working abroad to receive the same quality of support as those on campus.



The Help Desk's commitment to service is underscored by its ongoing training program. New navigators receive hands-on guidance and build a knowledge base using resources like the Help Desk Wiki, which provides quick solutions for common questions.

As demand for tech support grows with new digital tools and processes, the Help Desk team remains a reliable resource, keeping Dalhousie connected and secure.



# ACCELERATING ACCESS & EFFICIENCY WITH RIALTO

In 2022, the Dalhousie Libraries, alongside other Novanet partners, implemented a new Library Services Platform (LSP) called Alma. The change came with many benefits, but none as transformative as Rialto, an integrated ordering tool that brought new efficiencies to the process of acquiring print and electronic books — without extra costs beyond the purchases themselves. Before Rialto, ordering required a separate, annually-paid system outside of our LSP, complicating workflows. With the new platform, the libraries gained a streamlined, cost-effective system to better support teaching and research.

By the spring of 2024, implementation efforts were underway, led by Resources team members Kirsten Huhn, Robin Bishop, Ratna Dhaliwal, Jen Adams, and Allie Fulford who worked with Rialto's parent company, Clarivate. Through a series of configuration meetings, testing, and initial orders, the team prepared Rialto for broader use. By early summer, the system was rolled out to staff tasked with ordering and managing book acquisitions.

Rialto's standout feature, automatic ebook activation, has revolutionized access. Previously, ebook activations were time-consuming, lengthy, manual processes completed by Resources' staff. Today, ebooks from publishers like ProQuest and Taylor & Francis are available within hours, while most others go live in just three to five days.

**With the new platform, the libraries gained a streamlined, cost-effective system to better support teaching and research.**

Further enhancing efficiency, Rialto offers straightforward search and order functions, comparison of book pricing and licensing options, automated duplicate checks, and order tracking — all leading to significant time and cost savings. Since its implementation, 562 books (290 print and 272 electronic) have been ordered, with 24 selectors participating. Students and faculty have benefited directly, as 113 individuals were notified that their requested books were promptly ordered and received. The most activated ebook platforms include ProQuest Ebook Central, Taylor & Francis, and EBSCO ebooks.

Rialto exemplifies our commitment to enhancing access, streamlining processes, and meeting the evolving needs of our community.



# CONSORTIAL COLLABORATION

## ENHANCING OUR SERVICES THROUGH NOVANET

### A Consortium of Libraries

Dalhousie University's membership in the Novanet consortium enhances library services through collaboration with 12 academic institutions across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This partnership provides access to over 3 million titles and extensive digital resources, significantly expanding available materials for students and faculty.

Novanet streamlines interlibrary lending, enabling seamless borrowing between member libraries. Programs like Borrow Anywhere Return Anywhere improve regional accessibility, ensuring equitable resource distribution. By pooling investments in technology and digital collections, Novanet optimizes costs, allowing institutions to offer robust services efficiently.

Beyond resource sharing, Novanet fosters professional development and innovation. Collaborative projects, such as the eBook Demand-Driven Acquisition pilot, reflect a commitment to user-centered services. This cooperation enhances staff expertise and strengthens collective influence in publisher negotiations, benefiting users through improved services.

Novanet demonstrates the power of consortial collaboration and our role underscores Dalhousie's commitment to outstanding scholarship in a collaborative environment. Through shared knowledge and innovation, the libraries remain dynamic, accessible, and user-focused.

### Katie McCaskill: Novanet Manager

Katie McCaskill started her year as a subject liaison and Alma support librarian with Dal Libraries and finished it in a role where she supports all regional academic libraries, as manager of Novanet.

Since stepping into her new role, Katie has embraced the daily challenges and variety her position offers. She thrives on solving unexpected issues, describing it as a detective-like process, and finds satisfaction in helping Novanet institutions streamline operations. Katie values the collaborative environment, particularly working alongside experienced Novanet staff Brad Dewar and Pam Chase, from whom she learns something new every day.



Passionate about resource sharing, Katie has facilitated communication through town hall meetings with staff across the consortium, supporting knowledge exchange and future improvements. Her broad perspective, gained by working with staff from 12 member institutions, enriches her approach and underscores Novanet's goal to enhance library services collaboratively.

# RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH ART

## DAL LIBRARIES HOSTS HALIFAX WEST RED DRESS INSTALLATION



Last year, Dal Libraries collaborated with Halifax West High School to host a student art installation that honoured missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit individuals. The project featured red dresses suspended from white, birch-like trees, symbolizing lives lost. It also included a tree hung with metallic leaves engraved with the names, ages, and other details of missing individuals, and interactive paintings and portraits that play audio stories when touched. It was a visual representation that invited viewers to reflect on the impact of the crisis and the need for awareness and action.



Moved after seeing it on display at Halifax West, Leslie Phillmore, Dalhousie's assistant vice president academic, felt compelled to find a way to bring the collection to Dal. She saw its potential to encourage discourse about the ongoing tragedy and reach a wider audience. Phillmore connected Halifax West with Dal Libraries.

Wendy Lawrence, Mi'kmaq Indigenous Support staff person at Halifax West, conceived the project after the 2019 report from the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls found that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or to go missing than members of any other demographic group in Canada. Lawrence was the driving force behind the project, recruiting Halifax West visual arts specialist Robin Jensen and students to come together to help shine a light on the ongoing crisis.



Installed and displayed in the Ko'jua Okuom at the Killam Library, the artwork was a focal point and a call to action, reminding visitors of the continuing challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Through this collaboration, Dalhousie Libraries and Halifax West High School highlighted the transformative power of art in fostering awareness, healing, and reconciliation.



# A GATEWAY TO RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS

Last year, Dal Libraries provided six orientation sessions at the Killam Library for 201 International Baccalaureate (IB) students from local high schools — including Charles P. Allen, Citadel High, Cole Harbour District High, Halifax West, and Woodlawn. IB students, tackling extensive research projects, rely on our resources to support their academic journey. We provide the stepping stones to build critical skills essential to IB training — inquiry-based research, critical thinking, and independent learning.

Librarians Samantha Adema and Lindsay McNiff help to host IB student class visits. Lindsay has been hosting orientation sessions since 2018; she knows their coursework depends on students developing good research skills. “IB students always have big projects that involve writing and research, so we’re happy to help them get started. Exposure to our library resources gives them early experience with some of the research practices they will use when they get to university.”

Dal Libraries has been providing services to IB students for over 20 years. During their orientations, IB students explore Killam’s study spaces, collections, and digital resources. They learn to navigate Novanet and discover tools that will help them synthesize information effectively. For the first time last year, the IB program also collaborated with the Writing Centre while visiting the Killam, equipping students with strategies for academic writing and communication — key competencies for higher education and beyond.

Maria Keramaris, IB extended essay coordinator at Woodlawn High School, says IB students engage with Dal Libraries to learn about research methodology. This is critical to the Internal Assessment (IA) for their historical investigation project and independent research paper. Students often find knowing how and where to start their projects challenging. Their introduction and orientation to the libraries provide a launching point for students to find and borrow relevant academic materials.

“Exposure to our library resources gives them early experience with some of the research practices they will use when they get to university.”

Keramaris says students value their connection to Dal Libraries. Not only do they learn to navigate research repositories, but they feel comfortable returning on the weekends to utilize the library spaces on their own time. Keramaris says students like the research atmosphere and look forward to digging into their projects with new skills and confidence.

As IB students continue their academic journeys, the libraries support their research abilities while laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and success.

# INCREASING INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION IN WIKIPEDIA AND WIKIMEDIA

For Indigenous history month, Dal Libraries hosted a Wikipedia edit-a-thon in the Ko'jua Okuom at the Killam Library focused on improving Wikipedia and Wikidata content related to Mi'kmaw people and Mi'kma'ki.

Dr. Stacy Allison-Cassin, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Management, guided participants in learning the basics of Wikipedia article creation and editing. She then led the group in a collaborative effort to enhance entries on notable Mi'kmaw people and organizations.



A total of 19 Wikipedia articles were edited, 50 references added, and more than 3,300 words contributed during the event, sponsored by the Department of Information Science and supported by a grant from Wikimedia Canada.

Edits and additions were made to articles about fiddler Lee Cremona, artist Ursula Johnson, activist Anna Mae Aquash, the first Mi'kmaq elected as Grand Chief, Gabriel Sylliboy, and more.

**The edit-a-thon, held during National Indigenous History Month, aimed to increase Indigenous representation, improve accuracy, and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive internet.**

Participants also learned about Wikidata and the importance of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representation in the knowledge base, which provides structured data to support Wikipedia and the Wikimedia movement.



The edit-a-thon, held during National Indigenous History Month, aimed to increase Indigenous representation, improve accuracy, and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive internet. The initiative not only enriched Wikipedia with Indigenous content but also equipped participants with the skills to continue contributing to the platform.

The event underscored the importance of accessible and accurate information, highlighting the role of digital platforms in honouring, preserving, and promoting Indigenous histories and peoples.



# OPEN FOR ALL

## OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE SCHOLARSHIP

Open access represents a fundamental shift in scholarly communication, offering unrestricted access to research findings for a global audience. This model democratizes knowledge by removing paywalls, which often exclude researchers from lower-resourced institutions and the general public. By making research accessible to all, open access fosters broader collaboration, enhances visibility, and accelerates innovation across disciplines.

For institutions like Dalhousie, open access aligns with our mission to ensure equitable access to information. It enables policy-makers, educators, and practitioners to utilize the latest research without barriers, strengthening the impact of scholarly work beyond academia. Studies consistently show that open access articles receive higher citation rates and reach more diverse audiences, amplifying the visibility and influence of our researchers' contributions.

We support open access by providing services like Dalspace, our research repository, and Open Journal Systems (OJS), which allows the Dal community to host their own open access journals without article processing charges (APCs). Achieving open access also requires robust partnerships. We collaborate with publishers and institutions to support sustainable models. As part of our consortium membership, the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) has negotiated transformative agreements that include discounts or waivers of APCs which can be a barrier for researchers.

Over the last year, Dal Libraries announced key OA resources and discounts to benefit

our community. Notably, Dal authors can publish free of charge in prestigious journals such as PLOS Biology and select Oxford University Press publications. These initiatives not only alleviate financial burdens but also support our commitment to open research and knowledge dissemination.

By investing in open access, Dal Libraries continues to champion accessibility, collaboration, and innovation, ensuring that knowledge remains a shared global resource.

### **Melissa Rothfus: Scholarly Communications Librarian**

Melissa Rothfus started her journey with us in July 2018 as Scholarly Communications Librarian. She relishes the variety in her job, from the different questions she fields and the opportunity to always be learning, to helping people every day. A point of pride for Melissa has been working on a collaborative survey on open scholarship at Dalhousie, which provided valuable insights into the community's practices and helped to shape new programs.

Melissa's role highlights the breadth of library services, particularly in research support. She ensures researchers know their open-access publishing options, advocating for cost-effective solutions that align with funder requirements — freeing up resources for what matters most, the research itself.



# CONNECTING STUDENTS TO SUCCESS

## THE MACRAE LIBRARY'S ROLE IN ORIENTATION AND BEYOND

Every semester, as new students arrive at Dalhousie's Agricultural Campus, the MacRae Library team is ready to welcome them into the fold. From the very beginning, the library plays an integral role in helping students settle into campus and academic life.

As part of the planning committee for the *New to Dal* orientation program, library staff ensure that students gain a well-rounded introduction to university life. In addition to sessions on navigating university lingo and achieving academic success, the "Meet the Librarians" tour provides students with their first glimpse of how the MacRae Library supports their learning journey. Librarians connect with student leaders during orientation through a New to Dal Leaders AMA (Ask Me Anything) and Pecha Kucha presentations. These events orient student leaders to Dal resources, including introducing them to the library's offerings - these students in turn are empowered to guide their peers.

The library's impact extends well beyond orientation. MacRae librarians foster essential information literacy skills in first-year degree English classes and deliver advanced workshops to graduate students in AGRI5700, Communication Skills for Scientists. These tailored workshops are also part of undergraduate honours classes, ensuring that students at all academic levels gain valuable research skills.

Last year, MacRae librarian Jaclyn Chambers-Page collaborated with the Faculty of Agriculture Extended Learning to develop a research guide for the "Bridge into Agriculture" program. This guide provides key resources for students during the program and as they advance in their agriculture careers.

Erin MacPherson, Acting Head of the MacRae Library, emphasizes the library's commitment to student success, "Through these initiatives, the MacRae Library tries to connect with every first-year student on the Agricultural Campus, setting them on the path to academic achievement."

From orientation to advanced research, the MacRae Library is an essential partner in the academic success and personal growth of Dalhousie's Agricultural Campus students.

*Photo by Connor Mullins*



# UNEARTHING THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE ON THE FRONT LINES OF WWII

Last year, the University Archives accessioned\* 51 new collections and created 6,182 archival descriptions. While the volume is impressive, one of the more intriguing items was not newly acquired, but unearthed, as it were, for the second time in almost a century.

In December 1915, a copy of the Dalhousie Gazette was discovered by Dal alumnus Toby Jones as he was putting his machine guns into position in a trench in Flanders, Belgium. Even more remarkable was that the paper, left behind on the muddy ground of a collapsed dugout, contained his own name — Owen B. Jones, better known as Toby, or “the Poet of Dalhousie.”

Although the newspaper was only one month old, it was already out of date, as it described Jones as one of nine Dal students or alumni serving with the 40th Regiment, and he had since transferred to the 25th Battalion in his haste to get to the front line.

Toby Jones enclosed the mud-spattered paper in a letter to Archibald MacMechan, who taught English language, literature, and composition at Dalhousie for 42 years and corresponded with many of his former students long after they graduated.

The letter was subsequently published in a 1916 issue of the Gazette along with the story of its finding, and MacMechan kept all three items among his papers. These were donated to the University Archives by his daughters in the 1970s and 1980s and were among a backlog of records earmarked for processing and description in the Archives’ online catalogue.

The work of the Archives is often seen as a little disconnected to rest of the Libraries, but the unearthing of the Gazette — first in Flanders and 98 years later on the fifth floor of the Killam — gives new meaning to the library term “discovery layer.”

Jennifer Lambert, University Archives



\*Accessioned is an archival term referring to the addition of a new item to a library, museum, or other collection.



# NEW HAND-CRAFTED TABLE IN THE KO'JUA OKUOM

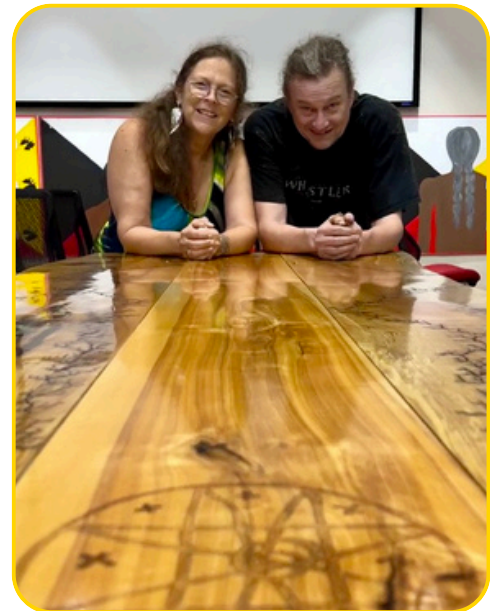
On Wednesday, October 18, a blessing took place in the Ko'jua Okuom at the Killam Library for the hand-crafted table created by Jim and Cheryl Walsh.

The bench-style, wood slab table was designed and constructed by Jim and Cheryl, who worked with raw materials from their own sawmill. They inlaid items in memory of past elders into the many natural crevices and contours, honouring and memorializing them into the wood slabs. It was a labour of love for Jim and Cheryl, and their dedication to the project is apparent in all its intricacies and details.

**“This truly was a labour of love.”**

“This bench-style table was lovingly and painstakingly worked from raw materials cut with our sawmill, flattened using a router and router sled, and hand-sanded with an orbital sander using 40-grit sandpaper going up to 3000 grit. Then many items were epoxyed into the natural crevices in the wood. These items reflect the lives of past elders, immortalized into the wood slabs... This truly was a labour of love. We both were thrilled to have the opportunity to do such a project which reflects our love and appreciation for all the elders, current and past. We leaned into their support for the artistic component of this project. We go home to make them proud and bless all that sit around her. Wela'lin.”

*Jim & Cheryl Walsh*

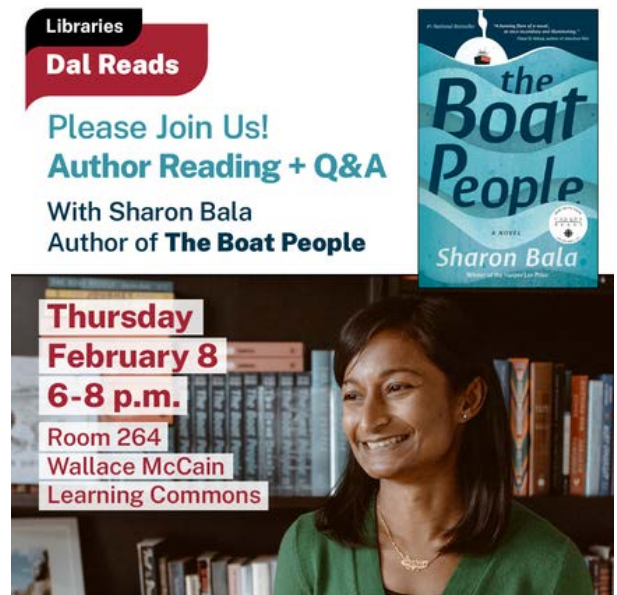


# DAL READS Q&A WITH AUTHOR SHARON BALA

Author Sharon Bala visited Dal Libraries in February to share insights into the creative genesis of her acclaimed 2018 book, *The Boat People* — a debut novel that delves into the complexities and heartbreak of the global refugee crises.

Inspired by true events surrounding the 2010 arrival of 492 Tamils from Sri Lanka on the cargo ship MV Sun in British Columbia, *The Boat People* is a compelling and essential tale for our times, alternating between northern Sri Lanka and contentious refugee hearings in Vancouver.

Bala's novel, chosen as the Dal Reads 2023-2024 title selection, intricately weaves together multiple perspectives to explore themes of displacement, asylum, identity, and the refugee experience. The author talk attracted a full room for an evening of insightful discussion and a celebration of literature.



**“I had such a wonderful time. The questions and conversation were really fantastic and the group who were present were such a delight.”**

SHARON BALA

Bala's presence enriched the event, allowing attendees to delve into the book's and engage directly with the author. Bala read excerpts and then Dr. Vanessa Lent, Dal Reads Advisory Committee member, moderated the conversation, exploring various themes and questions inspired by Bala's novel.

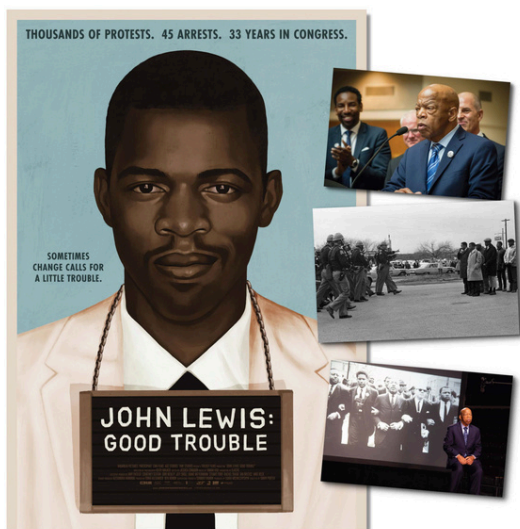
The event offered attendees valuable insights into the characters and their journeys, as well as the writer's creative methods. Bala shared her experiences in editing and shaping the manuscript, offering attendees a comprehensive understanding of her writing process and the broader literary landscape.

Sharon was generous with her time, staying after the formal discussion to sign books and chat with attendees.





## EVENTS



### FILM SCREENING JOHN LEWIS: GOOD TROUBLE

In partnership with Dalhousie's Office of Equity & Inclusion, the U.S. Consulate General, the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute (ANSJI), and the Tribe Network, Dal Libraries hosted a screening of John Lewis: Good Trouble in the MacMechan Auditorium at the end of February.

A small but enthusiastic group joined us for the film and stayed after to hear from director Dawn Porter who joined us virtually from her home in New Jersey. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and speak directly to Porter, who was encouraging and generous, providing insight into filmmaking and career advice. Students, some of whom were learning about John Lewis and key events of the civil rights movement for the first time, were moved to commend Porter on her work and left the event inspired and energized.



### K.R. BYGGDIN IN CONVERSATION WITH LUKE HATHAWAY

Dal Libraries once again partnered with the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia to host a reading by the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award winner. On August 14, a crowd gathered at the Glitter Bean Café in Halifax to celebrate *Wonder World* and listen to K.R. Byggdin, the 2023 winner.

The evening began with K.R. Byggdin reading a passage from their debut novel. It was followed by a conversation with poet and host Luke Hathaway about their writing process and some of the book's themes, including belonging, humour, family dynamics, and finding queer community and elders. K.R. Byggdin took questions from the crowd and offered insight into their time with [Dalhousie's creative writing program](#), the book editing process, and what the future holds for the author.



## EVENTS



### APUKNAJIT MID-WINTER FEAST

On February 1, we celebrated our second Apuknajit at the Killam and MacRae Libraries in Halifax and Truro. The Mi'kmaw mid-winter feast was celebrated with traditional foods and teachings. Welcome smudges and prayers were shared by Elder Patsy Paul-Martin in Truro and Elder Ann LaBillois in Halifax.

We connected the two libraries virtually, so all participants could enjoy the teachings of Gerald Gloade, program development officer for the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre. Gerald told the story of Apuknajit and how the spirit of winter helped people through the harshest part of the year. He shared stories about the moon and stars, the ways of understanding the moon cycles in Mi'kma'ki, and how the Mi'kmaw language connects to the natural world.

Full rooms and bellies were a testament to the community we are building at Dal and the importance of spaces like our Indigenous community rooms as spaces for gathering, reflecting, and celebrating Indigenous voices and culture.

### SCARY STORIES AT SHIRREFF HALL

Dalhousie Libraries partnered with the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia and Dal's Residence Life to bring back our spooktacular event Scary Stories at Shirreff Hall. It was the first hosting since the pandemic and students were eager to attend a night of frights featuring local storytellers.

Professional storytellers Cindy Campbell-Stone, Dan Conlin, and Steve Vernon regaled the packed and dimly lit room with creepy folklore and fiction. More than one student jumped out of their seat as the entertainers dramatized their tales with dramatic and well-timed flare and flourish.





## OUR PEOPLE

### MARY LOU CASSIE

2023 marked the end of an incredible career for Mary Lou Cassie. Mary Lou's 38 years at Dal Libraries were nothing short of extraordinary. Deaf, blind, and unable to speak, her journey with us began through a work placement program for the physically challenged in 1985. But Mary Lou's story takes the concept of physical challenge to a whole new level. It is a story of triumph.

For decades, Mary Lou was a dedicated conservation clerk at the Killam, a role she embraced with passion and commitment. She mastered the halls of the Killam, mapping out intricate routes through various departments and to her desk. She was determined - it only took her a month to mentally chart these paths. At her desk, she worked with a book truck filled with damaged materials. On average, she processed an impressive 50 books per week, evidence of her proficiency in the art of conservation.

A favourite part of her day was spending time with coworkers, with whom she developed strong bonds. Colleagues from different departments took turns accompanying her at break time; many learned English two-handed sign language or American Sign Language to communicate more freely with Mary Lou.

Mary Lou's retirement marks the end of an era at Dal Libraries, and she will undoubtedly be missed by all who had the privilege of working alongside her. We also want to celebrate her exciting next chapter, which Mary Lou says will be spent walking outside with friends, reading Braille books, and travelling in her well-deserved retirement.



On behalf of the libraries, we extend heartfelt congratulations to Mary Lou, who has enriched the fabric of Dal Libraries and will be missed by all.



## OUR PEOPLE

# WEEKEND & EVENING WARRIORS

## KEEPING THE LIBRARY OPEN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Every evening and weekend, our dedicated supervisors ensure students have a reliable place to study and collaborate. When other academic services are closed, the library remains a beacon of support, offering a quiet haven for focused study and group projects. For many students balancing heavy course loads and part-time jobs, evenings and weekends are critical times for study and preparation. Thanks to our evening and weekend staff, students know they can rely on consistent, welcoming spaces to access resources, meet deadlines, and find peace of mind — an invaluable service that fosters academic success and community.

### Kathy Eisan

Kathy Eisan, Evening Supervisor at the W.K. Kellogg Health Sciences Library, has worked for Dalhousie for an impressive 36 years. Kathy is proudly service-minded and committed to the success and well-being of students, faculty, and colleagues. Kathy has worked closely with health sciences faculty, navigating and organizing numerous reserve documents and resources for students. If you have the good fortune to work with Kathy, you know that she loves to bring in sweat treats for students and her coworkers. Lucky Kelloggers!



### Daryl Atkinson

Daryl Atkinson, Evening Supervisor at the MacRae Library, started working for Dal Libraries in September 2018. Daryl loves helping users at the circulation desk, getting to know student and community regulars, and building a rapport with them. Each year around Valentine's Day, Daryl helps with the Blind Date with a Book project. He enjoys creating the "dating profiles" for the books - it's a chance to get creative and it's fun to see students get excited about the gift-wrapped books. The program helps to introduce new students to the library.



Additionally, Daryl organizes and analyzes foot traffic data for all our library locations, a vital part of understanding how our libraries are used. So, he's not only helping to keep the libraries open after hours, Daryl plays a key role in how we plan our hours and services to best serve our users.

## OUR PEOPLE

### A CLEARER VIEW ENHANCING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This year, Dal Libraries took significant strides toward financial clarity and operational efficiency. By revamping our budget model, we have a sharper, more accurate view of our financial landscape, allowing us to align with best practices and university-wide recommendations. Key to this transformation was consolidating small, dispersed funds into larger central budgets. By restructuring acquisitions and classroom technology into dedicated budgets and simplifying operational funds, we've reduced complexity and streamlined financial management. This not only enhances oversight but also generates efficiencies, contributing to lower overall spending.

With salaries and benefits comprising most of our budget, we have limited places to look for savings to balance our budget. We've carefully reduced non-salary expenditures by up to 20% in targeted areas, ensuring minimal impact on core services and staff well-being. These measured steps enable us to direct resources toward our highest-impact services and ensure our operations remain sustainable and adaptable.

#### **Hershan Fernando: Financial & Physical Resources Manager**

Hershan Fernando started his role as Financial and Physical Resources Manager in September 2023. Before Dal Libraries, Hershan worked for Dal's Center for Collaborative Clinical Learning and Research.

Hershan's many projects and committees keep him busy, from the university's Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee and the Killam Retrofit to the DPMG professional development sessions he contributes to, he's always on the go.

He says he enjoys the new challenges each day presents at the libraries. Whether they are financial or related to our locations, prompt problem-solving and responsiveness are key elements in his work. "Being prepared for the unpredictable is a big part of the job."



# OUR PEOPLE

## ARRIVALS

We welcomed the following people to the Dalhousie Libraries from July 2023 to June 2024:

- John Cameron - Classroom Technologies Technician
- Madison Gilfoy - Library Services Assistant
- Hershan Fernando - Manager Financial & Physical Resources
- Jennifer Adams - Collections & Access Librarian (Law)

We welcomed the following people to new roles over the past year:

- Mark Lewis – Chief Law Librarian and Associate Dean Learning & Teaching
- Jodie Walker – Resources Clerk (Law)
- Scott MacPherson – Copyright Specialist
- Daryl Atkinson – Instructional Tech Support (temporary assignment)
- Seungkyoo Lee – Library Services Supervisor (temporary assignment)
- Danielle Hoar – Library Services Supervisor (temporary assignment)

## DEPARTURES

We also said farewell to a few colleagues:

- Lachlan MacLeod
- Teanna Sparks
- Sara Clarke
- Carlina Gillis
- Nora Frauley-Elson
- Kathryn McCaskill
- Bennett McNutt
- Guoyu Hu

### Retirements

- Karen Tarum
- Mary Lou Caissie

## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



**32,270**  
service point  
interactions



**2,678,553**  
journal articles  
accessed



**523,258**  
library research  
guide views



**27,960**  
IT help desk  
problems solved



**2,655**  
laptop loans



**296**  
copyright  
questions  
answered



**192,998**  
open education  
resource page  
views



**7,024**  
users assisted  
with Brightspace



**1,572**  
items added to  
DalSpace  
repository



**439**  
instruction  
sessions for  
4,894 students



**11,282**  
requests for Dal  
materials from  
other libraries



**146**  
new collections  
accessioned to the  
Archives



**35,840**  
individual digital  
objects created  
and preserved



**1,127,972**  
catalogue and  
database  
searches



**517**  
Live Help  
sessions to the  
Dal community

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Catherine Banks

Linda Barnett

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Stanley-Blackwell

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Patricia Norman

Douglas Rasmusson

Marilyn Read-Stark  
& Gerald Stark

Patrick Rivest

Estate of Alex Ross

Timothy Ruggles &  
Tina Usmiani

Estate of O.E. Smith

Aretha Smith

Shiela Sperry

Beth Stevenson

Sarah Stevenson

J. Elizabeth Sutherland

Michael Vandenburg

Dr. W. Wheelock

Kenneth Whynot

Doctors Nova Scotia

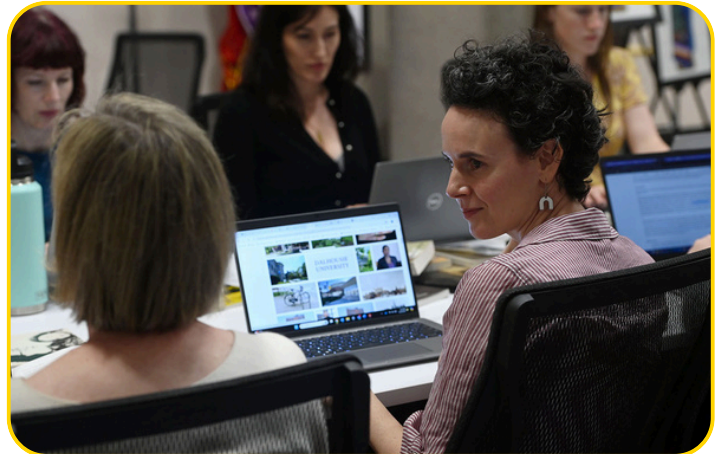
TD Canada Trust

And 10 anonymous  
donors









**2023/2024**

# **Annual Report**

**DALHOUSIE LIBRARIES**

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