

WVA Herbarium Newsletter

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Donna Ford-Werntz, Herbarium Specialist, Editor

Phone (304) 293-0794

West Virginia University

Department of Biology

PO Box 6057

Morgantown, WV 26506-6057

Fax (304) 293-6363

Life Sciences Building B2

email: dford2@wvu.edu

<http://biology.wvu.edu/facilities/herbarium>

Digitization Projects

Progress continues on the southeastern U.S. flora digitization grant. In 2016, three talented student workers graduated, with one hired by the Smithsonian National Herbarium to a digitization job. Before departing in December, he trained a replacement to operate the imaging station. A new work-study student began last fall to do project filing and general curation.

To date, about 46,000 collections from the 12 southeastern states have been bar-coded. Over 44,000 of these specimens are imaged, with nearly 25,000 uploaded to the NSF CyVerse data cloud. This summer, WVU Herbarium files should be posted on the project portal. They will then link to database templates for future label transcription.

Dr. Ford-Werntz attended multiple digitization activities at the national Botany 2016 conference in Savannah, GA. Project planning included WVU Herbarium participation with a fern imaging NSF proposal (in review). In other funded collaboration, 128 macro-algae collections were loaned last fall for imaging at the NY Botanical Garden. A sample of collection images were published in the spring WVU Magazine research edition staff picks section.

Bryophyte Curator Bid Fond Farewell

Dr. Susan Studlar has relocated to North Carolina, after 23 years as Visiting Associate Professor in the WVU Biology Department. During this period, she regularly taught three courses: Plant Geography (Biol 363), Plant Diversity (Biol 351), and Plant Anatomy (Biol 352).

Sue served as curator of the bryophyte and lichen herbarium, including overseeing its move from old facilities in Brooks Hall to 12 new specimen cabinets in her Life Sciences Building (LSB) 5234 office. She also maintained the Biology Department native wildflower garden beside LSB.

Sue shared her passion for botanical diversity and non-vascular plants in the classroom and with numerous student assistants in the herbarium. Under her direction, bryophyte specimens were

Fairey Donation Supports Herbarium!

Three WV Botanists Recently Deceased

The WVU Herbarium received a substantial gift (shared with Core Arboretum) from the Fairey estate. John E. Fairey III died in 2015 in Columbia, SC at age 74. He taught for 30 years at Clemson University, where he was a professor to current WVU Biology Department chair Richard Thomas.

John was raised in Rowesville, SC and received his B.S. from the University of South Carolina. He came to WVU to be a student with Dr. Earl Core. He studied the taxonomy of *Scleria* (nutrush) in the southeastern U.S. (M.S., 1964) and in North America (Ph.D., 1972).

Dr. Fairey made only a handful of collections for the WVU Herbarium. However, his research included evaluation of over 5,500 loaned specimens, as well as fieldwork. In 2002, he co-authored the *Scleria* treatment for Flora of North America (vol. 23).

The Fairey bequest makes a significant increase in WVU Herbarium monetary resources. This donation to WVU Foundation herbarium accounts provides much-needed funds for supplies, staff and critical equipment. We are

exceedingly grateful for John's generosity in support of ongoing herbarium education, research and service.

Two other botanists with ties to WVU Herbarium died in the past year. Homer Dupstadt lived until age 97 in June 2016. A Pennsylvania native, he earned a M.A. in Biology from WVU (1966). His career included teaching at the high school and college levels.

Homer was a WVU Herbarium assistant from 1974-1992. He collected over 850 West Virginia specimens, mostly from the eastern panhandle. Homer also contributed numerous collections from his studies of Bedford Co., PA flora.

Eleanor Bush was the most recent plant conservation figure loss, in January 2017 at age 103. Born in Mannington, WV, she was a descendent of Zackquill Morgan (founder of Morgantown). Following her B.S. at WVU and M.S. from Ohio State University, she resided in Philippi, WV.

Eleanor was part of the group that bought Cranesville Swamp and formed the Nature Conservancy WV Chapter. From 1964-2000, she collected ca. 950 specimens in the WVU Herbarium. These formed the basis for her 2004 book on the Barbour County Flora.

transferred from flat sheets and lichen shoebox storage to compact case drawer organization.

Sue worked on bryophyte inventories for WV DNR, moss harvest studies in Monongahela National Forest, cliff flora at New River Gorge, and non-vascular packet digitization for NSF. She dedicated time to public programs as well, giving annual moss walks for the WV Botanic Garden and for the Blackwater Falls Wildflower Pilgrimage.

Sue improved the order, accessibility (online label images) and stature of WVU's large, historic non-vascular herbarium. Following her departure, the collection moved to a new home on the 6th floor of LSB. We greatly miss Sue's devoted service and wish her well in Asheville!

Outreach and Curation

The WVU Herbarium provides education and service to a variety of audiences. In 2016, Dr. Ford-Werntz taught WVU courses every semester and did programs for Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, and the WV Herb Society.

Incoming collections from Kevin Campbell and WVDNR projects provided new collections to mount and process. For spring 2017, a student and volunteer staff of eight are working, half on vascular specimens and two each on mosses and on lichens.

Ongoing data requests, specimen loans, exchange programs, and regular botanist visits keep WVU Herbarium engaged with the scientific community. Last December WVU eNews profiled the herbarium in its Climb Higher feature.