

News from the  
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Massachusetts  
Institute  
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# Bibliotheca

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Pentagram

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# From the Director

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As a library, we have a mission to make information and scholarship accessible to as many people as possible. At MIT, we see that access as a springboard to inspiration—an invitation to engage with content and use it in new and innovative ways. This issue of *Bibliotech* sheds light on some of the ways we make our collections more open and accessible to increase engagement with learners and researchers around the world.

Our Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship (CREOS) was established to better understand how we can make research in every field more equitably and openly available. Read as our postdoctoral associates each share the projects they have launched with their MIT faculty and Libraries collaborators (p. 4).

We're excited to introduce Emilie Songolo (p. 14), the new head of Distinctive Collections. Emilie has extensive experience elevating collections that have been underrepresented or difficult to access and making them searchable, visible, and relevant. I look forward to seeing how she and her staff collaborate with Institute faculty, students, and researchers to highlight materials unique to MIT.

The recent South Asian MIT Oral History and Digital Archive class (p. 8) is a wonderful example of such a collaboration. This class made the Institute Archives its laboratory, with students working hands-on to build a history of South Asians at MIT. As Associate Professor Sana Aiyar put it, class participants “aren’t just students of history—they get to be historians.”

This issue is also our chance to thank loyal supporters (p. 18) for your continued generosity and belief in our mission. By supporting the Libraries, you enable that critical access and inspiration that fuels new knowledge at MIT and beyond.



**Chris Bourg, PhD**  
Director of Libraries

Photo: Shawn Henry



# A Glimpse into CREOS Research

Postdoctoral associates partner with faculty on new research projects

**Image:** Eliot Indian Bible (Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God, Cambridge: 1663), MIT Distinctive Collections.

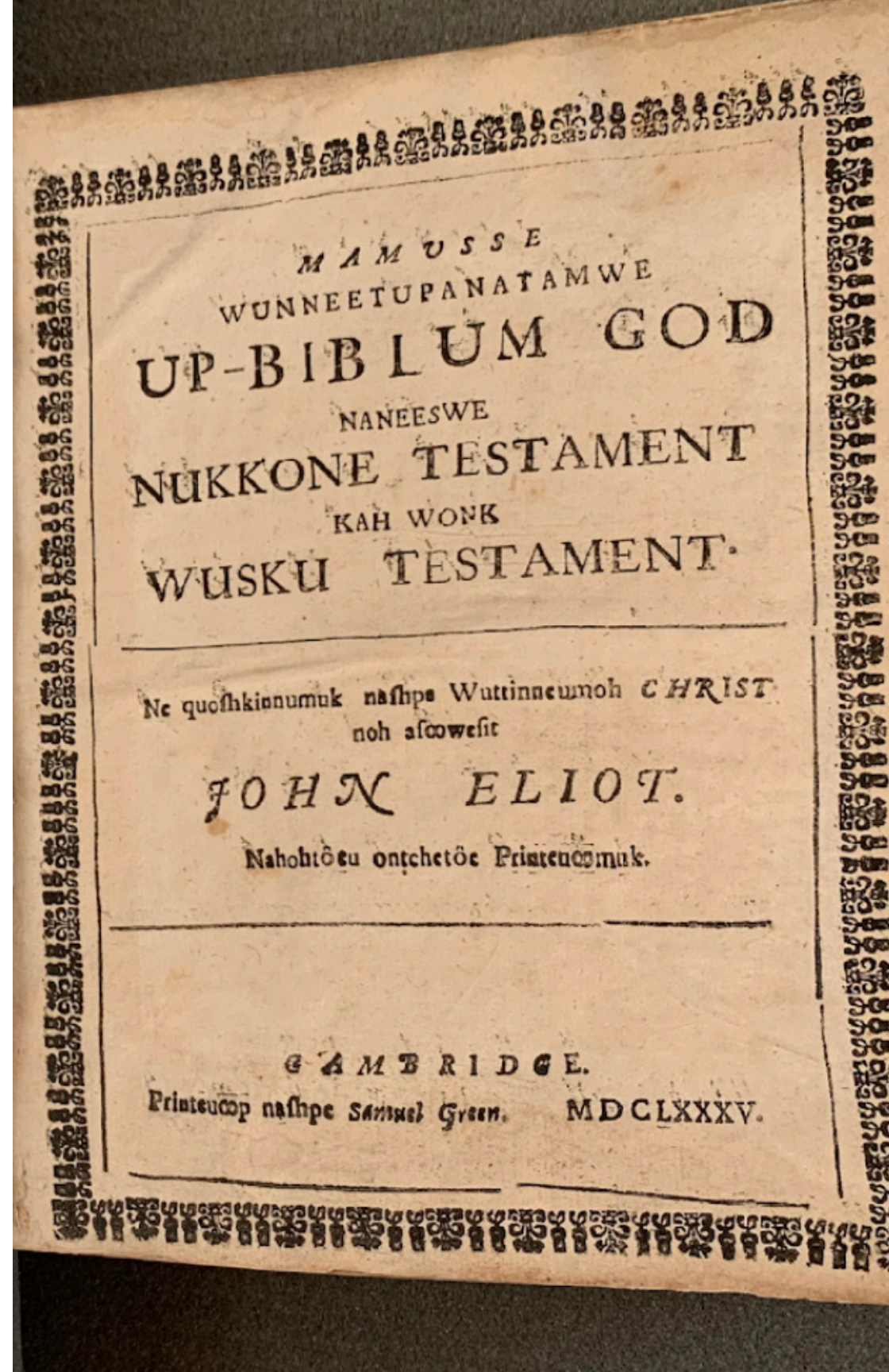
In September 2021, The Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship (CREOS) welcomed three postdoctoral associates for two-year terms as part of a research program funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Corey Masao Johnson, Suman Maity, and Ashley Thomas have been working with MIT faculty members as well as MIT Libraries staff on projects exploring open and equitable scholarship. *Bibliotech* asked each of the postdocs to briefly describe their research topic.

## Corey Masao Johnson

*Faculty mentor: Stephanie Frampton, Associate Professor of Literature*

“Documenting Indigenous Languages at MIT” addresses the challenges of endangered language preservation and the afterlives of linguistic data in material repositories. This line of inquiry was prompted by the papers of the late MIT linguist Kenneth Locke Hale (1934-2001), Ferrari P. Ward Professor of Modern Languages and Linguistics. Throughout his lifetime, Hale worked to document endangered aboriginal languages in Australia, as well as indigenous languages in North and Central America. He also participated in language reclamation through the use of historical archives. This includes revitalizing the Wampanoag language native to Cape Cod and Martha’s Vineyard using the so-called Eliot Indian Bible (Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God, Cambridge: 1663)—a 17th-century translation of the Geneva Bible into Wampanoag.

Given their sensitive cultural content, Hale’s papers, along with the Eliot Indian Bible, carry questions of privacy, data management, and rights of access. Concerns over “consent” from stakeholder communities have been at the forefront of our discussions, and the full assessment of this material is still ongoing. This project seeks to improve intellectual control over these collections, balancing proper stewardship of indigenous cultural materials with MIT’s institutional commitment to open-access research.





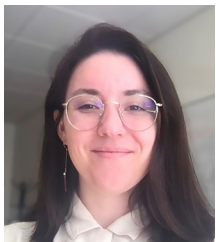
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**Suman Maity**

*Faculty mentor: Roger Levy, Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences*

Science has been experiencing vast gender imbalances in academic participation. Such inequalities have also been found in compensation, grant funding, hiring and promotions, authorship and citations. Despite progress in these areas in recent years, the presence of differential engagement with scholarship could lead to prolonged inequities in other areas. This imbalance can be attributed to the “Matilda effect,” in which the contributions of men are seen as more central and evaluated more highly, whereas women’s contributions are under-attributed and under-discussed. Due to the potential downstream effects of inequitable engagement with women-led and men-led work, the study of citation dynamics is a critical endeavor for understanding and addressing biases in science. In this study we seek to determine the existence and potential drivers of gender imbalance in citations.

We observe men-led teams showing higher citational preferences toward men-led papers and lower citational preferences toward women-led papers. Similarly, the women-led teams exhibit higher preferences toward women-led papers and lower preferences toward men-led papers. This citation behavior is consistent across all the subfields. Further, we also find a positive correlation between popularity of a sub-field and the gendered citation imbalance—the higher the popularity of the subfield (machine learning, computer vision, etc.), the higher the imbalance.

**Ashley Thomas**

*Faculty mentor: Rebecca Saxe, Associate Dean, School of Science, and Jarve Professor, Brain and Cognitive Sciences*

*Thomas will join the faculty of Harvard University next year and will continue this research as a CREOS visiting scholar.*

Humans who join new social groups or find themselves in new social settings are faced with the challenge of understanding new social dynamics, norms, and social structures that are specific to this new setting. This is also true of early-career researchers who find themselves in the new setting of academia and their respective field. How do early-career researchers come to learn about the social dynamics of this new environment?

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How does their understanding of the social dynamics of their field affect their behaviors as researchers, and in particular open-science behaviors?

In this project we started by asking whether researchers indeed think about their field in terms of its social dynamics. We distributed a survey to researchers via Twitter and academic listservs. As we hypothesized, participants’ answers to questions about whether their field was hierarchical or competitive were highly correlated, suggesting cohesive ideas about the social dynamics in their field. To ask how these ideas relate to people’s decisions to engage in open science, we have collected data in two ways. The first setting is in lab meetings at the MIT School of Science, which will allow us to investigate how these perceptions of social dynamics influence open-science practices without only attracting supporters of open science to take our survey. The second is by distributing a survey to all researchers in the School of Science, which will allow us to have an exploratory data set. This data exploration will inform confirmatory tests we will do in the representative sample.

To learn more about CREOS research, visit [libraries.mit.edu/creos](https://libraries.mit.edu/creos).

# History Lab

Class led by Sana Aiyar delves into the South Asian experience at MIT via oral histories and Distinctive Collections



## By School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) Communications

Researching history in the MIT archives is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, according to junior Jupneet Singh. “You get a name from here, a picture from here” and you begin to piece together stories about people from the past, says Singh, who has been diving into the archives this spring for class 21H.S04 (South Asian MIT Oral History and Digital Archive), a special topic in history taught by Associate Professor Sana Aiyar.

Following in the path of similar research courses such as 21H.S01 (MIT and Slavery), which Singh took online during the pandemic, the South Asian history class is introducing students to the techniques and methods of historical research while building up a body of materials that sheds light on the experience of MIT students and faculty from South Asia — a region comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan — and of South Asians from around the world, including the United States.

Students are also generating digital and visual content for a website and an exhibit. The exhibit will open in October 2022 in the MIT Libraries’ Maihaugen Gallery in concert with a series of events that include a day-long conference and a gala organized by the MIT South Asian Alumni Association.

## Interviewing alumni

The idea for an exhibit to preserve this rich history came from Ranu Boppana, president of the MIT South Asian Alumni Association who was inspired by the “China Comes to Tech” exhibit hosted by the MIT Libraries in 2017-18. The South Asian Oral History Project began in earnest in January 2021 during Independent Activities Period. It was the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and MIT-India — one of the experiential learning programs run by MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives, better known as MISTI — was unable to send students abroad as usual. So, the program funded students to conduct research at home instead.

“That was my first time actually doing history research on my own, trying to find my own sources,” says senior Kathryn Tso, a double major in history and materials science who worked on the project in 2021. Tso interviewed several alumni for the oral history part of the project, including Canadian author M. G. Vassanji ‘74 and Pervez Hoodbhoy PhD ‘78, a Pakistani nuclear physicist and activist. “It was a lot of fun,” Tso says. “We got to hear people’s incredible stories, through MIT and beyond.” Tso had no previous experience with primary source research and says the experience of working on the South Asian project was “enlightening.”

Aiyar says the engagement she saw in students like Tso is what prompted her to offer the class. “It was clear to me that offering a class like this would cater to an interest that was coming organically from students,” she says.

**Image:** A 1949 photo shows Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at MIT. Photo courtesy of Ross Bassett.

**“It was really special to be in the archives, because you’re literally touching things that are 100 years old.”**  
—Jupneet Singh

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### Insights into the past

The first South Asian student arrived at MIT from India in 1882, when India was still a British colony; the second didn’t show up for another 20 years. Finding detailed stories about the earliest students can be challenging, but Aiyar says it’s already clear that the history of South Asian students and faculty at MIT is “fantastically rich.”

For example, although the project is still in its early stages, researchers have already identified one early MIT student affected by the racially charged politics of the early 1900s: Madan Bagai from the Class of 1934.

Bagai was the son of Vaishno Das Bagai, a native of British-ruled India and a naturalized U.S. citizen who had his citizenship revoked in 1923 following a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that declared that Indians were not “white,” and could not therefore be accepted into the country. Having already surrendered his British citizenship, the elder Bagai was left stateless. He ultimately committed suicide, leaving behind a public suicide note protesting his denaturalization. Aiyar says, “To have Bagai’s son show up in our MIT database just a few years after this traumatic event gave me goosebumps.”

### Hands-on research

“The Technological Indian,” by Ross Bassett (Harvard University Press, 2016) serves as the primary textbook for the class, providing a deep dive into the experience of Indian students at MIT and how they helped transform their home country into a technological powerhouse. Aiyar also provides context on such topics as inclusion and exclusion in higher education, anti-colonial nationalism, the Cold War, and globalization.

The bulk of the class, however, is devoted to taking oral histories and conducting historical research using the MIT archives. For Singh, whose parents immigrated to the United States from India to provide “a better life to their children,” this work is personally meaningful. “These are the people who paved the way,” she says.



**Image:** Jupneet Singh prepares a video for an exhibit based on the research of class 21H.S04.

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A chemistry major and a Burchard Scholar who hopes to minor in history, Singh has been working to provide a fuller view of the experience of South Asian women at the Institute. She has learned, for example, that the first woman from the region graduated in 1958 with a master’s degree in ceramics, but it wasn’t until the 2000s that records show a South Asian woman student had been present in every MIT department.

“I’m going into the archives to find information on the women, such as from PhD theses, to find out what they studied and tell a narrative about the first women here,” Singh says. “It’s harder than I expected.” Still, Singh says she loves the work. “It was really special to be in the archives, because you’re literally touching things that are 100 years old,” she says. More recent documents can also be exciting, she says, such as when she went through papers belonging to James Killian, the MIT president (1948-59) for whom Killian Court is named. “It’s surreal. There’s Killian Court and this is President Killian’s letter!”

While the class and the project focus on MIT, Aiyar stresses that students are also learning a lot about the history of South Asia — from British colonialism to the partitioning of India from Pakistan to today — and about the region’s growing interest in engineering and technology, which has been supported by MIT.

“This is a story that’s broader than just MIT,” Aiyar says. “The South Asian experience at MIT becomes a lens by which we can explore and understand the historical context of important contemporary issues such as race and immigration in America and decolonization and nation-building in South Asia. Students in this class — what I like to call the history lab — learn to historicize and contextualize their archival research and the deeply personal individual oral histories they conduct with alumni in multimedia class projects. For this semester, they aren’t just students of history — they get to be historians.”

# Staff News

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## New Appointments

Caitlin Canfield  
*Access Services Assistant*

Sylvia Figueroa-Ortiz  
*MIT Libraries-ACRL Diversity  
Alliance Administrative Fellow*

Caleb Hall  
*Music Technology and Digital  
Media Librarian*

Paxton LaJoie  
*GIS Specialist in Education  
and Practice*

Deana Lee  
*Project Manager*

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## Retirements

Jim Eggleston  
*Access Services Associate*

Nance McGovern  
*Director of Digital Preservation*

Galen March  
*Access Services Assistant*

Jonathan Paul  
*Reference Associate*

Alejandro Paz  
*Energy and Environment  
Library Liaison*

Katie Rusin  
*Administrative Assistant*

Emilie Songolo  
*Head, Distinctive Collections*

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## 2022 Infinite Mile Awards

The Libraries honored the outstanding contributions of its employees on June 15, recognizing achievements in the following categories.

### Collaboration and Inclusion

Ece Turnator  
*Humanities and Digital  
Scholarship Librarian*

### Community Building and Engagement

Human Resources Team:  
Cherry Ibrahim, Sam Locke,  
and Jess Mallo

### Innovation, Creativity and Problem Solving

Electronic Thesis Delivery  
Project Team: Caitlin Robles,  
Mikki MacDonald, Wilder J.  
Moss, Jeremy Prevost,  
Helen Bailey, Adam Jazairi,  
Matt Bernhardt, and  
Stephanie Hartman

### Results, Outcome and Productivity

Allyson Harper-Nixon  
*Resource Sharing Assistant*

### Tough Questions / Critical Thinker

Julia Lanigan  
*Acquisitions Associate*

### Unsung Hero

Joe Carrano  
*Digital Archivist*

### User Service and Support

Aaron Hunnewell  
*Senior Cloud Infrastructure  
Engineer*

### Christine Moulen “Good Citizen” Award

Rob Caplin  
*Administrative Assistant*



# Emilie Songolo Leads Distinctive Collections

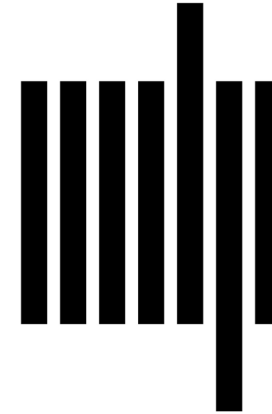


Emilie Songolo joined the MIT Libraries in July as head of the Department of Distinctive Collections (DDC). In this role, Songolo will work across the Libraries to transform the use of MIT's archival and unique collections and share them with the world.

Prior to joining MIT, Songolo was the Senior Librarian for African, Global and Francophone Studies and the Head of International and Area Studies for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries. She is the recipient of multiple awards, including the UW-Madison Librarian of the Year, the UW-Madison Outstanding Woman of Color, the Dr. Brenda Pfaehler Award of Excellence, and the UW-Madison Academic Staff Assembly Commendation for Outstanding Service in the Community. Songolo is a graduate of the University of Yaoundé, Cameroon, Mount Holyoke College, and UCLA, where she earned her master's of Library and Information Science.

"I feel honored and thrilled to join the MIT Libraries community in the role of head of Distinctive Collections," says Songolo. "I look forward to leveraging the collective expertise of my colleagues to bolster DDC as the shining star that it is. Together, we will strengthen relationships with faculty, researchers, students, external stakeholders, and campus partners, as well as with all library units."

# News from the MIT Press



In the midst of a challenging year for the publishing industry, the MIT Press has shown resilience in its operations and strong, positive results. The Press continues to embark on bold projects, such as providing publishing support to diverse voices and leading the market shift to digital content and open access.

To ensure that the MIT Press continues to push the boundaries of publishing for the public good for decades to come, we are launching the MIT Press Fund for the Future. The MIT Press looks beyond transitory market forces and established genres to publish works that elevate knowledge, inform, and empower. Support for the Fund for the Future will help the MIT Press mobilize knowledge to create fairer, freer, more open societies.

In the words of Matthew Browne, one of many talented MIT Press acquisition editors: "I seek to acquire projects that fit the Press' unique strengths: deeply researched, often zeitgeisty, singular, provocative, discipline-spanning books that are comfortable sitting in the margins of scholarship. Books that challenge the status quo and point to new ways of thinking."

The MIT Press provides a unique lens on the interplay among science, design, technology, and culture in order to accelerate problem solving, social progress, and human understanding. The MIT Press Fund for the Future will future-proof our enduring commitment to mobilizing knowledge for the greater good. Learn more at [mitpress.mit.edu/give-mit-press](https://mitpress.mit.edu/give-mit-press).

# What's New

**Image:** Collaborative Reading Room, Hayden Library. Photo: John Horner

## Hayden Library Wins ALA/IIDA Library Interior Design Award

The 2022 Library Interior Design Awards, a biennial competition recognizing excellence in library interior design, is presented by the American Library Association and IIDA, a commercial interior design association. The Hayden Library renovation, designed by Kennedy & Violich Architecture, won in the category of academic libraries over 30,000 square feet.

“Libraries are one of the most challenging and remarkable projects that designers can take on as they need to create a shared, multi-use space that continually inspires and facilitates learning for a community,” said IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO Cheryl S. Durst. “These winning projects connected equitable use and created strong community connections.”

## Lewis Music Library to Host Visiting Artist

The Lewis Music Library received a grant from MIT’s Center for Art, Science & Technology to host an artist residency this fall with Andreas Refsgaard, a renowned Danish digital artist exploring the intersection of coding and the arts and humanities. As part of the 2-3 week residency, “Machine Learning and the Arts,” Refsgaard will present a sound installation, exhibit, and artist talk, lead interactive workshops, and visit music technology classes taught by MIT faculty such as Eran Egozy and Ian Hattwick.



# Honor Roll

## Thank you

We are grateful for the generosity of our library friends and supporters. Our donors enable the Libraries to support the MIT community and to advance the Institute's mission by producing, collecting, and sharing knowledge to solve the world's biggest problems. Thank you for your support.

### \$100,000+

Raymie Stata

### \$50,000 to \$99,999

Gareth R. and Sandra S. Eaton  
Lionel L. Kinney

### \$10,000 to \$49,999

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Darryl M. Fraser  
Peter J. Sherwood

### \$5,000 to \$9,999

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Mary G. Lienhard  
Estate of William G. May  
Barbara K. Ostrom  
Catherine Parham  
Christopher and  
Heather Stockard  
Glenn P. Strehle  
Jason Weller

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Michael J. Hostetler and  
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Mrs. James J. Strnad  
Lyse S. Strnad

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Ifigenia A. Boulogiane  
Gerald L. Clarke  
Phillip L. Clay  
Becky C. Cockerill  
Mary Jean Crooks  
Dean G. Duffy  
Thomas G. Evans  
John J. Frishkopf  
David Hallenbeck

Sharon A. Israel  
L. Robert Johnson  
Brewster M. Kahle  
Joseph J. Kesselman Jr.  
Allen S. Lee  
Frederick J. Leonberger  
Maura Marx  
Jeffrey A. Morrow and  
Sara P. Gaucher  
Michael C. Murphy  
Ilse Nigro  
Amy Davidson Plummer  
Robert P. Popadic  
John I. Rho  
Louis E. Slesin  
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Barrie K. Trinkle  
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Charles Joseph Whelan III  
Walter A. Winshall  
Carl I. Wunsch

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Constance A. Herron  
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Richard Laura  
Emin Martinian  
Marilyn G. McSweeney  
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