

# HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY *letters*

JANUARY 2011



**On the cover:**

**A Map of North America, ca. 1784  
by Joshua Green, 1764–1847**

from *Drawings by Joshua Green*  
Harvard University Archives  
HUV 2181, Folder 5

Joshua Green, a judge and legislator from Wendell, Massachusetts, created a series of drawings while he was an undergraduate at Harvard College between 1780 and 1784. The drawings were donated to Harvard University by the artist's grandson, Samuel Abbott Green, following his publication of *Ten Fac-Simile Reproductions Relating to Old Boston and Neighborhood* in 1901.

Four of the drawings depict Harvard buildings, or buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Harvard campus.

The fifth item in the collection is the present map of North America. Carefully drawn in ink and watercolor, the map stretches from "part of Hudson's Bay" in the north to Punta Mala, Costa Rica, in the south. Costa Rica was colonized by Spain at the time Green drew his map. The map is drawn on a grid whose lines represent latitude and longitude; the "Tropick of Cancer" is labeled, as are the "heads" of the Mississippi River.

It is not known if Green's map was part of his academic work at Harvard College, or if it was created in another context.

Preservation and description of the *Drawings by Joshua Green* was generously supported by the Arcadia Fund as part of a larger project in the University Archives entitled "Harvard in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries."

For more information, visit the finding aid for *Drawings by Joshua Green* at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:hua11010>.

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## A Letter from Helen Shenton, Executive Director of the Harvard Library



Brian Smith, Boston, ©2010

On December 20, Helen Shenton was named executive director of the Harvard Library.

**Dear friends,**

For nearly 375 years, the libraries at Harvard have been at the core of the intellectual experience for faculty and students. The fact that our collections have grown organically to become the greatest university research library in the world is a testament to our remarkably talented library staff, just as it is a compelling demonstration of the extraordinary generosity of alumni/ae and friends across many generations.

As you know, there has been considerable study of the library system over the past two years. I was privileged to be a member of the Library Implementation Work Group (LIWG), which recently concluded its wide-ranging analysis of the libraries. The group's study has already offered a number of lessons, the most important of which may be that the present structure of the library, which has gone by the official moniker of "coordinated decentralization," has hampered the efforts of the library staff to take maximum advantage of technological advances to provide our students and scholars with the best service and the strongest collections possible given the resources the University has invested in us.

Historically, the Harvard library structure's degree of decentralization has made it unique among our peers and has offered

many advantages over the last century. Patron-facing services have been tailored to meet local, individual needs and collections have been developed in tandem with academic programs.

But in a rapidly shifting technological landscape, the current structure of our library system presents some serious liabilities. The libraries have collectively not been gaining the advantages of operating at scale. Rather than leveraging the power of the largest-scale university library in the world, the library system has performed as relatively small, independent entities. As a result, we have not fully adapted to today's fast-paced, highly integrated digital world. We have been slow to adapt to changes in technology and adopt new best practices. We lack a campus-wide strategic plan to manage library priorities. Purchasing advantages used in one place do not accrue throughout the system. All this ultimately means that though we have more resources, we have not been making the most of them.

On December 1, Harvard Provost Steven E. Hyman announced plans to revamp the management of the Harvard libraries, embracing a series of recommendations from the Library Implementation Work Group to establish a coordinated management structure, increasingly to

*continued*

focus resources on the opportunities presented by new information technology and to support new, currently underfunded areas. By creating a more nimble and dynamic organization, I believe we will ensure the preeminence of the Harvard Library and build the flagship research library for the 21st century.

On December 10, President Drew Faust announced the creation of a new Harvard Library Board. Composed of faculty members and administrators from across the University, the board will oversee the transition of the University's vast library system to its newly coordinated management structure. As Faust stated, "The creation of the Harvard Library Board is an integral step in positioning the Harvard Library for 21st-century excellence. These individuals will provide critical input into the design of the new management structure to ensure that it is closely aligned with the University's scholarly mission."

The board is composed of six permanent members and five rotating members who serve three years each, with their initial terms staggered. The permanent members

will be the provost, the Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor, and the deans or designees from the following schools: the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Harvard Law School (HLS), Harvard Business School (HBS), and Harvard Medical School (HMS).

Serving in these positions will be:

- Provost Steven E. Hyman, chair
- Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor and University Librarian
- Leslie Kirwan, dean of administration and finance at FAS
- Mary Lee Kennedy, executive director of Knowledge and Library Services at HBS
- Richard Mills, executive dean for administration at HMS
- John Palfrey, Henry N. Ess III Librarian and Professor of Law; Special Advisor for Information Technology at HLS

The rotating members will consist of three at-large, tenured faculty members, as well as deans or designees from the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), Harvard Divinity School, the Harvard Graduate School of

Education (HGSE), the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), and the Radcliffe Institute.

Serving in these positions will be:

- Mohsen Mostafavi, dean of the Graduate School of Design; Alexander and Victoria Wiley Professor of Design
- Stuart Shieber, James O. Welch, Jr. and Virginia B. Welch Professor of Computer Science in SEAS; faculty director of the Office for Scholarly Communication
- Nancy Cott, Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History; Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation Director, Schlesinger Library; director, Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
- Isaac Kohane, Lawrence J. Henderson Professor of Pediatrics; associate professor of medicine; director, Countway Library of Medicine, HMS
- William Fisher, WilmerHale Professor of Intellectual Property Law, HLS

The Library Board is charged with reviewing the strategic plans of the Harvard Library and assessing its progress in meeting those plans, reviewing system-wide policies and standards, establishing and making changes to the funding model for the Harvard Library, reviewing and adopting budgets, and exercising oversight of the work undertaken by the Harvard Library executive director.

The establishment of the Harvard Library Board is the first step along a path that will strengthen the ways in which we support the University's research and education mission. The changes we will pursue will enhance our information technology systems; rationalize our system for acquiring, accessing, and developing materials for the "single-university" collection; and improve collaboration with our peers.

At its first meeting on December 20, the major agenda item was the appointment of an executive director. I am honored to have been appointed to this position, particularly at so transformative a time for the world's greatest university library. The digital future is here, all around us, transforming the way we teach, learn, research, communicate, and live. As the new Harvard Library's first executive director, I feel a responsibility to be true to the institution's legacy even as

we make changes to adapt to the rapidly changing technological and intellectual landscape of the 21st century.

Harvard's libraries are not only a local resource, but also a global treasure that supports the scholarly work of researchers around the world. To meet the broad needs of our faculty, students, and outside scholars, we need to attend first and foremost to how much material we can provide access to, rather than simply counting how much we have acquired. As disciplinary boundaries have changed and digital technology has created a virtual space that spans the globe, that access should be available regardless of geography or platform. The ability to find materials should be at the fingertips of our patrons, whether they are surfing the Internet from a remote corner of the globe or drafting their dissertation in Widener. And our means of delivery of these materials should be flexible, correlating the needs of the patron with the interests of the University.

For the Library Board, my colleagues across the Harvard libraries, and myself, our collective work begins in earnest in the coming semester. It is no small part of my charge to reach out to alumni/ae and friends. As the community of support on which our progress has historically rested, I will look forward to hearing from you for your thoughts, fresh ideas, and feedback.

Cordially,



Helen Shenton  
Executive Director of the Harvard Library

*In 2009, Helen Shenton, head of collection care for the British Library (BL), was named deputy director of the Harvard University Library. With 11 years of experience on the BL's senior leadership team, Shenton is steeped in collection management, information technology, human resources, and new building projects. She studied English literature at University College London and trained at the London College of Printing and with the arts and crafts book conservator Roger Powell. She joined the British Library in 1998 after 14 years in the conservation department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where she was responsible for the textiles, paper, paintings, photography, and book disciplines.*



The Widener colonnade forms a backdrop to December's first snow.

Kris Snibbe/Harvard Public Affairs and Communications

# Giving to the Harvard Library

## Legendary Collections

Since 1638, generous support of alumni/ae and friends has been key to building and sustaining Harvard's library collections. Nearly 375 years after John Harvard's bequest, Harvard University is the steward of one of the five great libraries of the world. Today, the Harvard collections are peerless in magnitude, global reach, and overall breadth.

*Throughout history, the strength of the Harvard collections has been derived from visionary gifts that support acquisitions.*

## Collecting for the Future

The Harvard Library must reflect the complex world of scholarship and information in the 21st century. Meeting the challenge means that we must acquire, disseminate, and preserve information in all the forms in which it is created. Today's acquisitions range from traditionally published books to "born digital" objects that exist only in cyberspace. The Harvard Library provides the University's faculty, students, and researchers—now and in the future—with comprehensive access over time to all of these materials.

*New levels of support are needed to strengthen traditional as well as digital collections and to acquire materials worldwide.*

## Unique Materials

Harvard's library holdings embrace thousands upon thousands of individual items that are historical, rare, or unique. These materials range from illuminated manuscripts and the earliest of printed books to photographs gathered since the dawn of photography, as well as personal papers and organizational records, cartographic holdings from around the world, and much more. The experience of working with materials has long been an irreplaceable part of a Harvard education.

*Increasing access to unique materials demands increased investment in preservation and digitization.*

## Outstanding Services

Legendary collections linked to high levels of service lead to effective learning, cutting-edge research, and new knowledge. The University must retain and cultivate an exemplary cadre of librarians, archivists, technologists, and other dedicated professionals who serve the University with tremendous skill and innovation. It is in the hands of these extraordinary individuals that the Harvard collections come alive every day.

*Underwriting for strategic positions across the library system adds important value to Harvard's legendary collections.*

## Meaningful Opportunities

The Harvard Library provides each donor with the unique opportunity to make a gift that reflects personal interests and intellectual commitments. The Harvard Library will work with you to create a gift that is meaningful to you and to Harvard students, faculty, and researchers.

- Endowment opportunities, which begin at \$100,000, offer special benefits to donors and library patrons alike.
- Gifts of any size are vital in addressing ongoing challenges and meeting today's needs.
- If you are an alumnus/a, you will receive full class credit for your library gift or pledge.

*All gifts to the Harvard Library are tax-deductible under the full extent of the law. You may receive additional tax benefits by making a gift of securities. Please contact the Harvard Management Company at [security\\_gifts@hmc.harvard.edu](mailto:security_gifts@hmc.harvard.edu) or 866.845.6596.*

## Giving to the Harvard Library

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Or, you may send your gift or pledge to:

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**Thank you for your generosity.**

**The Harvard Library gratefully acknowledges alumni/ae, friends, foundations, and corporations for their generous gifts of \$1,000 or more, which were received between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010.**

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### Design Consultants

Sametz Blackstone Associates, Boston

### Special Thanks

Kevin Galvin, Tania deLuzuriaga

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