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Leaving a legacy: Dean of Libraries Lori Goetsch reflects on 17 years of service

Kansas State University Libraries

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Dean Lori Goetsch's tenure saw many achievements, including the renovation of Hale Library.

LEAVING A *legacy*

DEAN OF LIBRARIES LORI GOETSCH REFLECTS ON 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO K-STATE AND THE COMMUNITY AS HALE LIBRARY RENOVATIONS NEAR COMPLETION

BY CAILIN RILEY

As it goes in life, one story ends, but another begins! This spring, we are saying farewell and good luck to our very own Lori Goetsch, dean of Libraries.

Dean Goetsch spent 17 years leading the Libraries through many changes and challenges, including the 2018 Hale Library fire.

After the fire severely damaged the building, as well as many books and materials, Dean Goetsch helped develop a plan for not only restoring the building and the book collection, but for keeping Libraries services and support available to the community throughout the renovation. After more than 30 months of planning, construction and perseverance, the first through fourth floors of Hale Library opened to the public on Feb. 15, 2021. The building, which includes the beautiful Historic Farrell Library and the Great Room, offers current and future K-Staters more than ever before. Beautiful architecture, functional study and collaborative spaces and soon, advanced technology, come together to provide students with a space that both supports and inspires academic success. Thanks to the many years that Dean Goetsch spent bringing this vision to life, a new chapter is beginning for the Libraries and K-State.



At the 2014 gala, Dean Goetsch celebrates with Anne de Noble, then president of the Friends of the K-State Libraries.

looking back

At the start of her tenure as dean of K-State Libraries 17 years ago, Lori Goetsch said that her leading goal was to make sure the Libraries were organized and positioned in a way to advance its profile on campus.

“We always hear that the library is the heart of the university, but I think my goal was to make sure that we were up to speed on giving people access to library services and support, no matter the challenge,” Dean Goetsch said. “And I think we succeeded in that.”

She’s certainly not the only one who thinks so. As Dean Goetsch’s retirement from the university approaches this May, many members of the K-State community are taking time to reflect on how her leadership inspired their own journeys.

Michael Haddock, associate dean of the Libraries, said that Dean Goetsch served as a mentor and role model as he moved along his career path from librarian to department head to administrator. Haddock said that in addition to elevating the prominence of K-State Libraries on campus and in the local community, Dean Goetsch also has shown a genuine care and empathy for students, staff, faculty and members of the community.

“Over the years, Dean Goetsch often served as a personal sounding board for me, letting me know what I did well and when there were times that I might have benefitted from taking a holistic view of a situation,” Haddock said. “She consistently gave me time, support and the flexibility to pursue my own scholarly interests, even

though they were not typical of most academic librarians.”

Lynn Carlin, special assistant to the provost and executive vice president, said that Dean Goetsch was one of the first members of the community to welcome her when she came to K-State in 2005 after working at the Library of Congress. Over the years, Carlin has worked with the dean in multiple capacities, including serving on the Deans Council and many university-wide initiatives.

“When I think of working with Lori over those years, I think of Lori as a caring boss, a valued colleague, a strategic partner and collaborator, a committed university leader and a friend,” Carlin said.

In addition to serving as a role model for others, Dean Goetsch is a firm believer in professional development and has been highly supportive of Libraries staff having the time and financial support to pursue their career aspirations. She modeled this commitment through her own professional service in the American Library Association and Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), including her time as ACRL president from 2009 to 2012, and as a member of the Greater Western Library Alliance board of directors. Dean Goetsch also devoted significant time over the years as a director on the board of Humanities Kansas, the state’s Council of Deans and Directors of Libraries and the Kansas Council of Academic Deans and Directors.

Dean Goetsch’s deep dedication and strong work ethic truly rose to the occasion in the years following 2018. She worked closely with others over countless hours through the process of restoring the building and transforming it into

a highly innovative facility that the community could be proud of. In addition to her efforts throughout the process of architectural design, construction, collections restoration and equipment decisions, Dean Goetsch also helped ensure continued, high-quality service to Libraries users, even though staff members were spread out across campus in 10 different temporary spaces. Staying positive and resilient through such a challenging event required the mental stamina and patience to see the light at the end of a very long tunnel—a 36 month-long tunnel, in fact.

“Lori has a natural gift for fostering highly positive and long-lasting relationships with donors, which was especially critical during the post-fire recovery. A beautiful, new-generation Hale Library will be a lasting part of her legacy as dean of K-State Libraries.

— MICHAEL HADDOCK, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE LIBRARIES

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Part of Dean Goetsch's mission has been to make the Libraries a community-oriented organization.



Dean Goetsch attributes the Libraries success to its staff. Here she presents the Dean's Award to Renee Gates in 2019.



In 2018, Dean Goetsch handed out care packages to students studying for finals in Hale Library, an activity she participated in every semester.



Dean Goetsch poses with Marlin Fitzwater at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in 2017.

“We had many challenges, but in particular, the move from a print-based environment to a digital environment was a big change for the community and our staff to adapt to,” Dean Goetsch said. “I was so amazed at how quickly our staff moved to keep providing their services in new ways and enhancing electronic resources.”

Haddock said that Dean Goetsch also successfully engaged donors to help raise funds to restore Hale Library. The donor community, including the Friends of the Libraries, has been an integral part of the Libraries’ story over the years, and without their support, the Libraries would not be where it is today.

“Lori has a natural gift for fostering highly positive and long-lasting relationships with donors, which was especially critical during the post-fire recovery,” Haddock said. “A beautiful, new-generation Hale Library will be a lasting part of her legacy as dean of K-State Libraries.”

Besides her work with Hale Library, Dean Goetsch also worked to elevate the arts and culture on campus and throughout the community with partnerships with the Beach Museum and McCain Auditorium. She also forged partnerships with a variety of organizations, including the Eisenhower Presidential Library, to advance education, scholarship, civic engagement, diversity and inclusion.

Timothy de Noble, dean of the College of Architecture, Planning and Design, said that Dean Goetsch’s commitment to improving the community is evident through her ability to marshal her resources to create the cultural enhancements that make a community. For example, under her leadership the Libraries have introduced community events such as lecture series, author discussions, a concert series and multiple galas.

“Dean Goetsch is not only an incredible advocate for the Libraries, but is someone who strives to position the organization in such a way as to be an integral part of the community through programming and events,” de Noble said. “That is often typical of public libraries, but is rarer among academic libraries.”

When asked about what advice she would give to the next dean of K-State Libraries, Dean Goetsch gave some sound advice.

“Don’t have a fire,” she laughed. “But I would tell them to take advantage of their excellent staff and also to enjoy the community that K-State and Manhattan has to offer. It’s important to explore and become a part of this amazing community.”

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— TIMOTHY DE NOBLE,
DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE,
PLANNING AND DESIGN



Dean Goetsch with Mark Chapman and Cheryl Mellenthin at the dedication of the new Great Room windows in 2013.

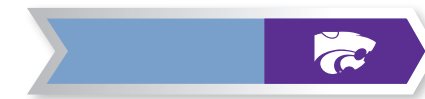


In 2012, a new space was dedicated for the Dow Center for Multicultural and Community Studies.



Dean Goetsch and fellow attendees at the Friends of the K-State Libraries 2016 gala.

DEAN GOETSCH FUN FACTS



1981 2001 2021

40 years of service in the library field

17 years as dean of K-State Libraries



Favorite exhibit: The St. John's Bible (pictured) and The Remnant Trust

PROVIDED LEADERSHIP DURING:

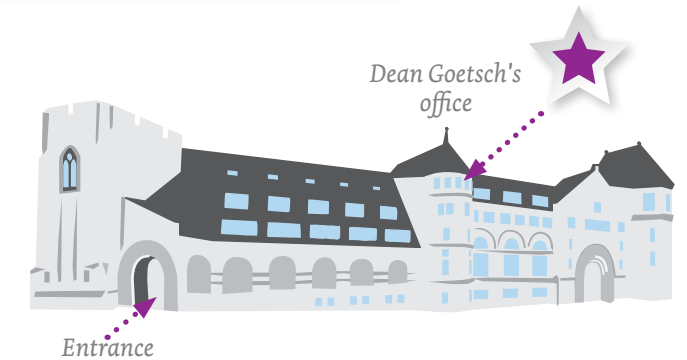


months of renovation and restoration of Hale Library



Favorite event: Earth Harp (pictured) and Friends' galas

22 PUBLICATIONS including books, articles and conference papers



382 STEPS to get from the entrance of Hale Library to her office