

# Library History (a work in progress)

@ DOROTHY H. HOOVER LIBRARY

The Library was formed in 1922, one year after the Ontario College of Art moved into its own building in Grange Park. At that time, the College had a staff of 7 instructors, 6 visiting instructors and 3 assistant instructors, under the direction of a Principal and Vice-Principal, with 330 registered students. Robert Holmes (botanist, master of water colour technique, and flower painter) successfully lobbied for the establishment of a Library and generously donated his personal book collection to the College. Space on the second floor of the OCA building (now known as the "Grange Wing") was partitioned off from the life model's dressing room to form a small library.

*"One entered a narrow passage lined with shelves holding leather bound back numbers of The Studio and American Artist magazines and piles of the Illustrated London News, some textbooks and Mr. Holmes' private library. Approaching the windows the space widened to accommodate a table. Ivy League types pityingly compared it to a linen cupboard. During open hours my father [Fred Haines] appointed as librarian Amy Despard who could supervise students and simultaneously demonstrate her bookbinding."* Dorothy Haines Hoover

A much-loved teacher, Mr. Holmes died in 1930 while delivering an address at the Ontario College of Art graduation dinner at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto.

*"Tragedy and poetry were strangely mingled in the sudden death last evening of Robert Holmes, RCA, one of the most distinguished and popular of Canadian artists -- tragedy because of its unexpectedness and poetry because of the setting and final words of the artist. George A. Reid, R.C.A., former Principal of the College of Art, had toasted "The Future of the College", and Mr. Holmes replied.....He said, ironically, that he must have been assigned to that toast because he was something of a "futurist". "More likely, however," he said, "it was the affinity between my love of flowers and the flowers about me -- the boys and girls in the graduating classes -- who are the real flowers of life...."*  
*With the word "flowers" upon his lips, Mr. Holmes sank into his chair and his chin dropped on his chest. Thus ended the life of Robert Holmes -- a scholar, a gentleman, a kindly and witty man who had contributed greatly to the development of Canadian Art..."* Globe & Mail, Toronto, May 15, 1930

In 1952, Dorothy Haines Hoover assumed responsibility for the Library and facilitated its relocation to Glendon Hall on Bayview Avenue, south of Lawrence.

*“At the E.R. Wood property on Bayview Avenue....the library fell heir to the handsomest room in the house. Located immediately to the right of the entrance, it was panelled from floor to coved ceiling with circassian walnut in which were recessed four shell-topped niches, their shelves covered with green gold-tooled Florentine leather the better to preserve Mr. Wood's leather-bound rare editions. Opposite the entrance door was a fireplace with carved Grinling Gibbons swags and in the center of the floor an immense Italian table with room for 20-30 students or the OCA Board meetings. French doors led out to the lawns. My office was on the second floor in Mr. Wood's bathroom overlooking the gardens. The mammoth bathtub was encased in plywood (gold taps removed) and fitted for a vertical file, the hinged top doubling as a slide table.” Dorothy Haines Hoover*

In 1957 the Library moved into the 1<sup>st</sup> extension to the original OCAD building, known today as 100 McCaul.

*“As a result of the good offices of Sydney H. Watson, we were assigned stunning contemporary space in the south east corner of the new wing. It consisted of a large rectangular room bounded by 2 walls completely shelved, a window wall overlooking the sculpture court and a small office which also had a view of the charging desks and all the traffic. Beyond the office was a work area, more study space and double doors leading to the reference or Board room. Windows continued along the south, shelving above cabinets along the west and glazed display cases along the north wall. We had more glazed recesses in the hall outside where we could display textiles, ceramics and metalwork with their related books, illustrations, manuscripts, book jackets and memorabilia. Vertical blinds throughout tempered the sunshine; chairs were upholstered in Heliconian blue. The gift of a pair of large Dogs of Fo and tall benjamins prompted critics to call the library too elitist.” Dorothy Haines Hoover*

Dorothy Haines Hoover retired in 1968 and was succeeded by Ketha McClaren, Ian-Carr Harris, and Jill Patrick (1988-current). In 1987 the Library was renamed in honour of Dorothy Haines Hoover. Mrs. Hoover graduated from the University of Toronto in 1924 with a degree in Modern History and from 1947 taught in OCA's post-war programme of Museum Research Studies. From 1952 to 1968, Ms. Hoover doubled as lecturer and head librarian.

In the mid 1980s the Library relocated to the main floor of the Grange Wing where it remained until 1999 when it moved into its current space at 113 McCaul.