Douglas Library

1924 - 2024
100 years

A Historical Guidebook

Queen's UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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Welcome to Douglas Library

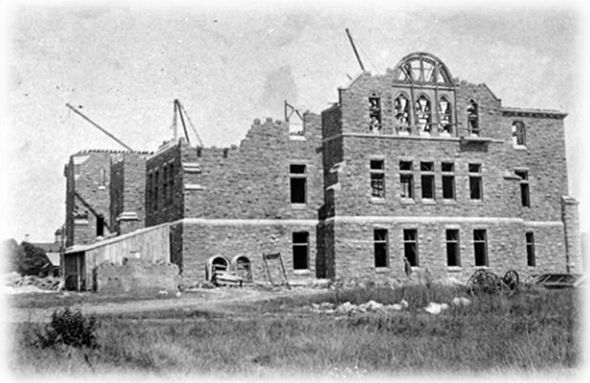
YOUR LIBRARY SINCE 1924

Douglas Library in 1925
(Queen's University Archives)

October 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of Douglas Library at Queen's University, the first purpose-built library building on campus.

Queen's University had a nascent library before it had students, buildings, or faculty. A full year before Queen's College was formed by a Royal Charter, and nearly two years before two professors and 13 students formed its first class, in 1840 Judge James Mitchell gifted six books to the new institution (a 1592 Latin Bible, a 1760 Greek New Testament, a 1664 French New Testament, a Greek Lexicon from 1821, and a 1760 two-volume set of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*).

Prior to the construction of Douglas Library, the library was variously over the years tucked into several buildings across campus. As explained in the *Queen's Alumni Review*, in 1841 the library's initial collection was housed in the tower of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. By the 1870s, the library operated out of the Old Medical Building, with no indoor access. The *Queen's Journal* described chilly winter line-ups and a librarian, bundled up like "a sort of library Santa Claus" handing out frigid books. In 1880, the collections moved again to Theological Hall (a.k.a. the Old Arts Building), where Dr. George Bell, librarian and registrar, according to the *Journal*, maintained a "death-like silence" in the new reading room. The library was also located for a time within Kingston Hall when it was built in 1902.



Construction of Douglas Library began in 1922
(Queen's University Archives)

By the 1910s, it was apparent that a centrally located library would better serve the growing student body, providing a purpose-built space that could serve as a place of community on campus and provide adequate space for library collections to grow. Although the funding and plans for Douglas Library were in place by 1915-16, construction was delayed by the First World War. Construction began in earnest in 1922 and the building was fully completed by October 1924 for students, faculty, and staff to use. James Douglas was a major benefactor at Queen's University and donated $150,000 for the construction of the library. In 1924, the building was much smaller than it is today, yet it housed all the university administrative offices, which took up most of the third floor. The second floor was one room, with three rooms on the first floor and a ground floor bindery-studio workshop. The basement was utilized as stack levels for over 300,000 volumes.

Throughout this guidebook, you will read about the history of Douglas Library through its first 100 years, including discussion of some of the people who contributed to it, the construction of the library, its architecture, features that make the building unique from other facilities on campus, and stories associated with the building.

Douglas Library in the Fall
(Queen's University Library)

Historical Timeline, 1915-1947

1915

James Douglas and his family donate funds to undertake the construction of a library

1922

Construction begins, architectural design by Sheperd & Calvin and Edward Lippincott Tilton

1923

May 9, Walter Douglas, the son of James Douglas, lays the cornerstone

1924

October 17, construction of Douglas Library is complete, and an official opening ceremony is held

1924

The Old Medical Building catches fire; its offices and facilities are temporarily moved into Douglas; many books from the Old Medical Building library are burnt or ruined by water

1947

Including Douglas Library, there are seven departmental libraries on campus

Historical Timeline, 1958-1990

1958

Poor ventilation in the basement of Douglas Library causes mold problems

1965

An expansion to Douglas Library is approved and new construction begins, architectural design by Mathers & Haldenby

1966

Fall, the new north wing is complete, including a second reading room on the third floor

1967

The expansion of Douglas Library is complete, expanding its footprint to three times the original size

1968

The bottom floor of Douglas, known as “the stacks,” opens to students

1990

Plans to build a new central library begin

Historical Timeline, 1994-2024

1994

Fall, the new Joseph S. Stauffer Library opens

1994

A second expansion and renovation of Douglas Library begins, architectural design by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMG)

1997

October 17, Douglas Library formally reopens as the Engineering and Science Library

1999

Douglas Library renovations are complete, including W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library on the second floor

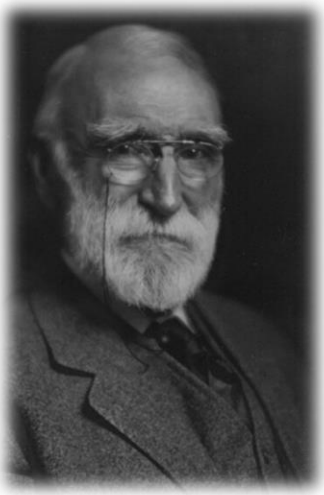
2024

Douglas Library celebrates its centennial

Historical Figures

Many people contributed to the initial planning and construction of Douglas Library. This section looks at James Douglas, Lois Saunders, the architectural firm Shepard & Calvin, and Edith Chown and Lorne Pierce, each of whom contributed to the construction and culture of Douglas Library before, during, and after it was built.

DOUGLAS LIBRARY'S NAMESAKE, JAMES DOUGLAS (1837-1919)



Portrait of James Douglas
(Queen's University Archives)

When you enter the front doors of Douglas Library, you are greeted by a bust of James Douglas on the left side of the entrance; the man for whom Douglas Library is named and an important figure in the history of Queen's University. James Douglas was a philanthropist, a mining engineer, and a historian. He was born in 1837 in Quebec City, graduated from Queen's University in 1858 with an arts degree, and continued his studies at Laval University and the University of Edinburgh in medicine and theology. He taught chemistry for several years at Morrin College in association with McGill University. In 1864, he became director of Harvey Hill Copper Company in Quebec, then in 1875 moved to the United States to oversee the copper works at Phoenixville, PA. By 1881, he had moved to Arizona and began a very successful career in mining. Douglas brought into production some of the most valuable copper mines in the United States and became a generous contributor to Queen's University and McGill University. In 1899 he received an honorary doctorate from McGill University, and in 1915 was awarded the John Fritz Medal by the American Institute of Mining Engineers for his achievements in mining, metallurgy, education, and industrial welfare.

During his later years, Douglas made major donations to multiple causes in history and medicine. He contributed a significant sum of money to the construction of a purpose-built library at Queen's after recognizing that library facilities were

inadequate to meet the university's research goals. He promised to meet half the cost of a new library to further research at the university. He also established the Douglas Chair in Canadian and Colonial History at Queen's, the first such professorship in any Canadian university. James Douglas was named Queen's University Chancellor from 1915 until 1918. He passed away in 1919 at 81 years of age, before the construction of his namesake library began.

THE UNIVERSITY'S FIRST FULL-TIME LIBRARIAN, LOIS SAUNDERS

Lois Saunders was the first full-time librarian at Queen's University. Saunders worked at Queen's from 1897-1922, retiring just before the construction of Douglas Library was complete. Ms. Saunders was promoted to the University Librarian position in 1898 after her appointment as Assistant Librarian a year prior. She expanded the book collection and implemented the Library of Congress classification system. The number of library staff grew under her leadership, and she ensured they were paid at par with other staff across the university.

Lois Saunders, circa 1902
(Queen's University Archives)

Saunders fought hard for the building of a new library as lack of space was a significant issue. Once a new building was approved, she worked closely with the architects on the design of Douglas Library. In the December 1923 issue of *The Alumnae News*, Saunders reported that the long awaited "new library of Queen's University is rising rapidly," that "no building yet raised on the campus has been so anxiously desired, or so urgently needed." Saunders went on to say that once completed, the new library "promises to be the finest building on campus" and "a centre of light and learning to all Canada."

In addition to her work as librarian, Saunders was an artist, literary critic, poet, and translator. Her book of poetry, *Strangers and Foreigners,* was published in 1912. Saunders also wrote numerous articles for the *Queen's Quarterly* on topics ranging from Dante to Keats to Petrarch.

DOUGLAS LIBRARY ARCHITECTS SHEPARD & CALVIN

Shortly after the cornerstone was laid, 1923
(Queen's University Archives)

Shepard & Calvin were architectural partners in Toronto and the original architects for Douglas Library. Ralph Kissam Shepard (1874-1933) originally planned to develop Douglas Library in 1916, however, World War I delayed those plans for several years. Delano Dexter Calvin (1881-1948) was Shepard's associate. Calvin graduated from Queen's University in 1902 and studied architecture in Paris, France. Both men obtained commissions for important buildings in Toronto and at Queen's University. When Shepard passed away, Calvin returned to Queen's and became an unofficial university historian; he was the author of *Queen's University in Kingston: the first century* (1941) and other works. You can find Calvin's written work in Stauffer Library and in his fonds at the Queen's University Archives. Shepard & Calvin also designed other buildings at Queen's University, including the Ban Righ Women's Residence, the Memorial Chapel, Ban Righ Hall, and Queen's Crescent on Union Street.

Other important architects associated with Douglas Library were Edward Lippincott Tilton (1861-1933) who consulted with Shepard & Calvin and helped refine the original collegiate gothic design of Douglas Library, Mathers & Haldenby, the architects who designed the 1960s additions to Douglas Library, and Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB) who designed the 1990s renovation.

COLLECTING CANADIANA EDITH CHOWN AND LORNE PIERCE

The early collections of Queen's University Library benefited greatly from the generosity of donors. Stewarding collections was such a priority that even early university principals solicited donations of books from friends, family, and Canadian authors. Around the time that Douglas Library was built, two of the library's most significant and longstanding donors of Canadiana emerged. Dr. Lorne Albert Pierce (1880-1961) and Edith Chown Pierce (1890-1954) are the namesakes of the Pierce Collection of Canadiana, the majority of which is housed today in W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections in Douglas Library. During his lifetime, Lorne Pierce

was well known for multiple achievements; he was a major Canadian editor and critic, a member of the Canadian Authors Association, the Bibliographical Society of Canada, and the Champlain Society. He was also editor at the Ryerson Press from 1920 to 1960. Dr. Pierce devoted his life to finding and collecting works of Canadian literature and history. He attended Queen's University as part of the Class of Arts 1913 and met Edith Chown during their time as undergraduates. A native of Kingston, Edith was also interested in collecting Canadian works.

Lorne Pierce (1880-1961) and Edith Chown Pierce (1890-1954)
(Queen's University Library)

In the early 1920s, when he learned Douglas Library was being constructed, Pierce began planning to donate the earliest items from his collection of Canadian books and manuscripts. Synchronizing with the opening of Douglas Library, Pierce's donations began in 1924, and by the late 1930s the library housed 2,000-3,000 books from his collection, all written by Canadian authors or about Canada. Pierce augmented the collection throughout his life and in his will, and worked with successive Queen's librarians, Nathan Van Patten, E.C. Kyte, and Pearson Gundy, to build the collection.

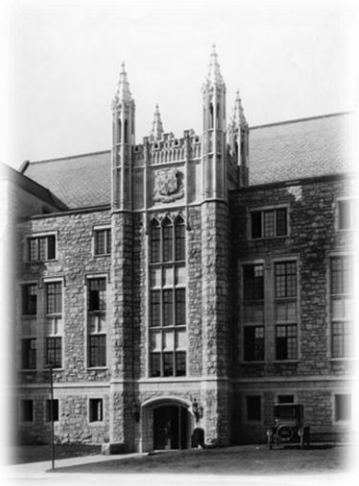
When Pierce initially donated his collection, he included Edith, a fellow Queen's graduate, as one of his reasons for the donation, citing "the sentimental reason that I found my wife there" and his pride in the "glory of [Queen's] traditions." Pierce's biographer, Sandra Campbell, notes that Edith made considerable sacrifices to support the collection; the couple was cash-strapped and in debt in the early 1920s, yet that didn't sway Lorne from continuing to acquire material for the Canadiana collection. Edith would confide in a friend that during this period in her marriage she "used to think that my new winter coat (that should have been) went on the shelves at Queen's."

The Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiana includes poets and authors such as Bliss Carman, Major John Richardson, and William Kirby. One of Canada's largest collections of literary papers was developed by the Queen's University Archives and began with the Lorne Pierce papers.

Architectural Features

DISPELLING THE RUMOUR
DOUGLAS LIBRARY WAS NOT BUILT BACKWARDS

Douglas Library is well known for its collegiate gothic architecture. The library is constructed of Kingston limestone and was built to replicate the look of old England. The traditional medieval style is imposed on modern structural materials of steel and reinforced concrete hidden behind a stone veneer. At the time of its construction, old English and gothic architecture were outdated styles, making this an interesting design choice. Douglas Library features four spired towers. Although largely inaccessible today following renovations in the 1990s, the library's old entrances include distinct features. The woodwork on the original staircases is fumed quarter-cut oak with multi-colored terrazzo on the walls, supported by an underlying fireproof structure.



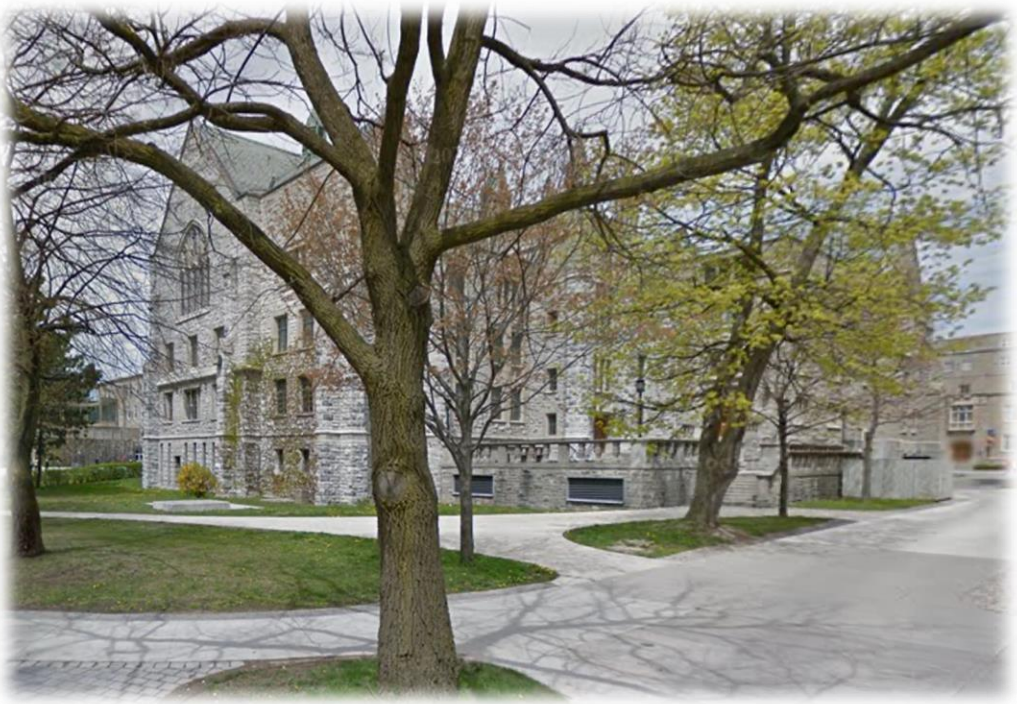
Main entrance to Douglas, 1925
(Queen's University Archives)

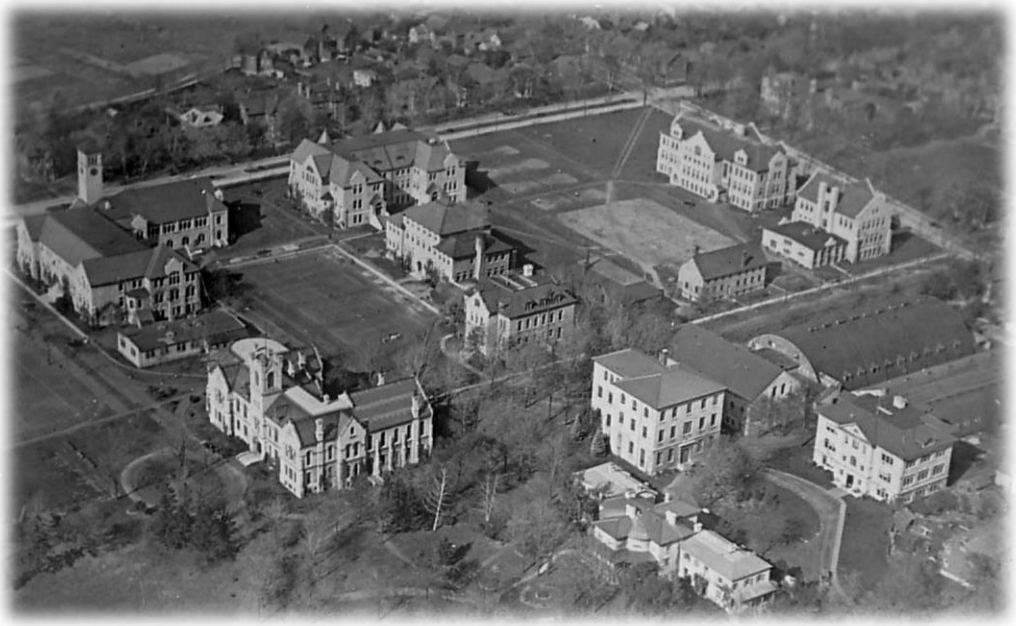
There has long been a rumour amongst students that Douglas Library was constructed backwards by mistake, and that the architect who made the error died by suicide when they realized the blunder. This, however, is entirely false, and the true story is much less dramatic. One of the original main entrances to Douglas Library was on the east side of the building (what we consider today to be the back of the building) facing a quadrangle. However, that entrance became less utilized in the 1960s when the first renovation was completed to make the library larger. It was during this renovation that the terrace was added in the location of what used to be the front doors of the library, and the main entrance was changed to the west entry doors off University Avenue. In the 1920s, University Avenue was on the outside edge of campus; the west side of the street did not yet include Ellis Hall, Richardson Hall, Dunning Hall, or Stauffer Library, which were built much later. By the 1960s, the University had grown considerably, and University Avenue was a main campus artery. When Douglas Library was expanded and renovated in the 1960s, it thus made sense that the main point of entry was from University Avenue. Douglas Library was not

constructed backwards; the east side of the building, where the terrace is located today, was the focal point of the building for more than 40 years.

Above: Students play tennis in the quadrangle in front of Douglas Library, circa 1925 (Queen's University Archives)

Below: The same view today, looking northwest from Fleming Hall Stewart-Pollock Wing (Google Maps)





Above: Aerial view of campus, 1919, prior to the construction of Douglas Library. University Avenue and Union Street are in the top right corner of the image (Queen's University Archives/Bishop Barker Co. Limited, Toronto)

Below: A view of campus circa 1945, some 20-25 years after the construction of Douglas Library. University Avenue and Union Street are in the top left of the image (Queen's University Archives)

Above: Aerial view of University Avenue and Union Street, 1968. By this point Douglas Library had been significantly expanded and there were two main entries to the building from University Avenue (Queen's University Archives)

Below: View of Douglas Library from University Avenue, circa 1980
(Queen's University Archives)

Above and below: Two views of the main entrance and circulation desk, circa late 1960s, following the 1966 expansion to Douglas Library. In those days, one entered the building up a set of stairs from University Avenue, thus arriving one floor above the present-day entrance, which was constructed in the 1990s. This detail explains in part why the floor numbering in Douglas is confusing to us today. We enter the building nowadays on what was previously considered a lower level (Queen's University Archives)

STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS
EARLY PRINTERS

The '1923 Reading Room'
(Queen's University Library)

Instantly recognizable as one of the iconic spaces on campus, the '1923 Reading Room' in Douglas Library has been a place of study and a prominent feature of the library since the building opened in October 1924. One of the room's most notable and memorable architectural features are the stained-glass windows. These one-of-a-kind works of art are not only a gorgeous design feature, but also a conscientious effort to celebrate and memorialize ten early innovators in the history of printing.

If you look carefully at the ten windows on the east and west walls, the upper portion of each features a design in stained-glass based on the devices or trademarks of some of the most important early printers in Europe. The stained-glass designs were created by the artist and naturalist, Edwin Tappan Adney (1868-1950), who was the roommate of notable Canadian poet, Bliss Carman (1861-1929). Carman was a close friend of Lorne Pierce (1890-1961), a Queen's University graduate and one of the namesakes of the Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiana. Adney contributed armorials for the Osler Library at McGill University and shields of the Canadian provinces for Currie Hall at the Royal Military College, among numerous other works.

The stained-glass monuments to early printers are 8 x 18-inch panels with lead strips a quarter inch wide. They all feature gothic and renaissance aspects and are meant to replicate the look of laid paper. This effect is achieved by using very pale blue and green glass panels. There are 1-½ inch borders of ruby red glass that line eight of the ten panels, and two of the center panels are entirely ruby red glass.

The designers of Douglas Library were clearly inspired by the momentous effect of the printed book over the past half a millennium, and the stained-glass windows serve as visual monuments to the printing press and the book as one of the most useful, versatile, and enduring technologies in history. Much more than a useful gadget, the printed book has been a pedagogical instrument, a source of religious

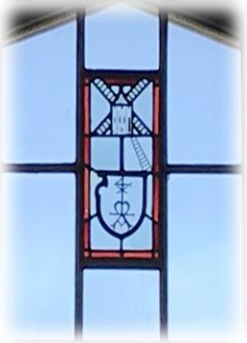
inspiration, and a work of art. Some argue that it is the single most powerful invention in modern history.

The printers represented in the stained-glass windows in the '1923 Reading Room' are amongst the earliest, most important and influential craftspeople of the 15th, 16th and early 17th centuries.

These insignia represent the trademarks of early printers, which are also known as printers' marks or printers' devices. Early printers began using unique designs or marks to distinguish their production in the 15th century. Printer's devices served as hallmarks of quality to safeguard against forgery; they were inspired by economic and artistic motives.

Moving clockwise around the room, beginning in the southwest end of the west hall, and ending at the southeast end of the east wall (on this page, clockwise from the top left), the ten printers whose devices appear on the windows are: Sebastien Cramoisy II, William Caxton, Nicolaus Jenson, the de Marnef brothers (Enguilbert, Jean, and Geoffroy), Berthold Rembolt, Androw Myllar, Thierry Martens, the Heirs of Ottaviano Scotto di Monza, Aldus Manutius (Aldine Press), and Simon de Colines.

The stained-glass windows in Douglas Library are meant to remind students of the history of early printing and the revolutionary power and importance of printing and the book over the course of the last 500+ years.



MEMORIAL HALL

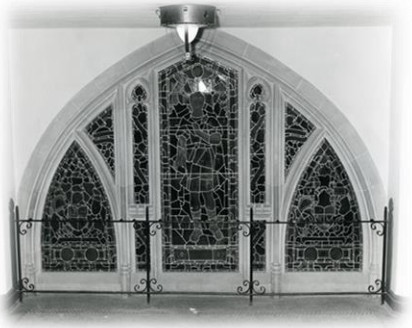
Memorial Hall, circa 1924
(Queen's University Archives)

In the earliest iteration of Douglas Library, before the renovations in the 1960s, a central architectural feature of the interior on the main floor was a vaulted cenotaph, also known as Memorial Hall. This feature was included in the design of the building after the First World War. The original entrance to the library was through a vestibule containing a bronze tablet commemorating everyone associated with Queen's University who perished in the war. Stained-glass windows were found above each doorway with illustrations reflecting the war effort at Queen's.

There were two installments of the stained-glass windows associated with Memorial Hall; the first was in 1924, and the second was added in November 1926 by Robert McCausland. Several designs for the new memorial windows were submitted to the school, and students were asked to vote on which ones they thought were most suitable. Ultimately two sketches were chosen; the east window depicted a student "hearing the call to arms," and the west window depicted the same student "drawing the sword."

Memorial Windows, 1968
(Queen's University Archives)

During the 1960s renovation the first floor of Douglas underwent major changes to accommodate a new library services desk. Memorial Hall, being in the center of the library, made these renovations difficult. It was thus decided to move the bronze tablet and stained-glass windows to the Memorial Room in the Student Memorial Union (later known as the John Deutsch University Centre) where they remain to this day.



Memorial Windows, 1968
(Queen's University Archives)

THE 1960s RENOVATION AND EXPANSION

Construction of a new north wing, April 1964
(Queen's University Archives)

Throughout Douglas Library's history, several renovations have taken place, such as in 1954 when the university's administration offices moved out of the building into Richardson Hall, allowing for the redesign of those spaces for library purposes. However, the first major renovation occurred in the 1960s, with the addition of a north wing and the expansion of the building. The addition cost upwards of $1.5 million. Renovation and expansion were necessary due to the increase in library collections and a much larger student population. Prior to 1964, the extent of the building's length was equal to the size of the '1923 Reading Room' on the top floor. Nowadays, the original north-side stained-glass windows in the '1923 Reading Room' are no longer on the exterior of the building; in fact, the stairs we use today to access the third floor, as well as the door into the '1923 Reading Room,' did not exist prior to 1964. The 1960s renovation resulted in major changes to the physical appearance of Douglas; in 1964, the north wing was added, which included a new reading room on the third floor, three underground floors for stack levels, and a new main entrance to the building.

While renovations were underway, all the books and materials from the library had to be relocated. Many students helped shift the collection to other buildings in the summer of 1960. Discussions regarding renovating and expanding Douglas took place for approximately two years and the work was meant to be completed and the building returned to full use during the 1964-1965 academic year. However, due to inadequate resources, the expansion was delayed, and the development of the north wing was only approved in February 1963. The north wing of Douglas was first used in the 1965-1966 academic school year. By 1966, all renovations were complete, with new facilities and reallocated spaces, and Douglas Library returned to normal use. The expansion and renovation increased the library by three times its original size. Before the 1960s renovation, the university considered building a

Construction of a new north wing, nearing completion
(*Tricolor* 1965)

humanities/social science library behind Mackintosh Corry Hall and constructing a new stacks level; however, those plans would not see fruition. Renovations during this decade necessitated the removal and reallocation of several rooms in Douglas, such as the Memorial Hall, the Buchan room, the Treasure room, the Blue Spruce room, the Map room, and the Lorne Pierce room.

During the 1960s, the circulation of bound journals was strict; unbound journals did not leave the library and bound journals could only be borrowed for one day. The first photocopier was not installed until 1965, so if you wanted to read the journals, you had to do so in the library or take them home overnight, write your notes, and return them to the library the next morning. The 1960s renovation was meant to provide enough growth space for only 20 years, so there was the assumption that after 20 years another renovation or alternative solution would be required. As the 1980s approached, spaces in the library became more and more crowded, with ever more books and students.

The '1966 Reading Room,' 1973
(Queen's University Archives)

DOUGLAS TERRACE, BASEMENT LEVELS, AND THE SKYLIGHT

Douglas Terrace, 2019
(Queen's University Library)

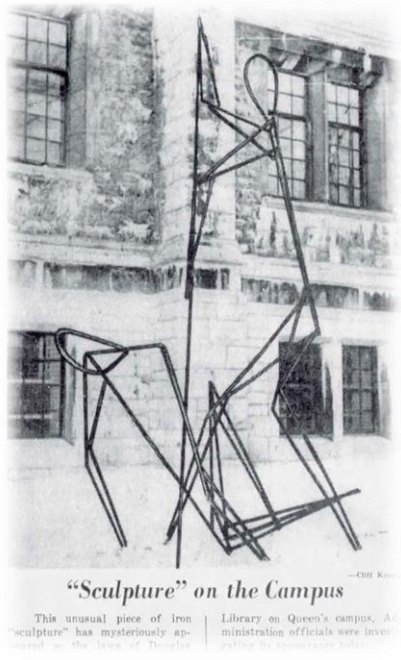
When walking behind Douglas Library today, one is greeted by the beautiful terrace – a popular spot for informal graduation photos. The terrace was not an original feature of the building but was added in the 1960s expansion and renovation. Until the 1990s, it provided an entrance to each wing of the building. In the 1970s, one could find picnic tables out on the terrace, and it was a favoured place for students and staff to relax outside and take study breaks. However, after further changes to the building in the 1990s that resulted in an accessible entrance to the building from University Avenue, the terrace fell into disuse. For the

last two decades, students have been able to access the terrace only from the outside.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the building, one of the exterior terrace doors will be reopened to allow entry and exit to the library once again.

A library staff gathering on the terrace, June 1989
(Image courtesy of Tracy Vyse)

The abstract sculpture that for many years featured on the Douglas terrace has an intriguing back-story. Colloquially known as “Two Figures in Conflict,” its origins were as an end-of-the-year prank by Mechanical Engineering students from Science ’66. The two figures were built with steel reinforcing rods and welded together in a mechanical shop in McLaughlin Hall by students Lorn Newton and Steve Groch. The original concrete base with anchor bolts was cast by Jeff Marshall in Ellis Hall. In February 1966, fourth-year engineers covertly placed the statue, which weighs more than 600 pounds, on the front lawn of Douglas Library during the night, resulting in rampant speculation as to its origins in the *Queen’s Journal* and *Kingston Whig-Standard*. Ultimately, library and university officials decided that the sculpture could stay.



“Sculpture” on the Campus

This unusual piece of iron “sculpture” has mysteriously ap-

Library on Queen’s campus. A- ministration officials were inve-

Article from the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, Feb. 24, 1966, reporting the strange appearance of a “sculpture” in front of Douglas Library.

The Douglas Library reading rooms are popular study spaces, along with the basement levels that also provide adequate study space. However, the basement was not always available to students over the years. In the 20th century, many library stacks were closed to students, and Douglas' basement levels were off-limits to students and faculty through the mid-1960s. Rather than allowing students to access books openly, staff would retrieve the books from the basement levels by request. From 1968 onward, the stack levels were available to students, however, the basement levels were only meant for shelving, making them very confined and dark. Due to this, few students used the Douglas basement levels except to retrieve books.

The 1960s brought about a rapid growth in the number of students and an increase in books; the library went from adding about 3,000 volumes per year to over 10,000 per year. This led to the basement levels becoming overcrowded with volumes and there was inadequate lighting for one to safely find their way around. So dark were the basement stack areas that as the *Queen's Journal* reported, students had serious safety concerns; a situation compounded by "dead-end aisles," rows of shelving that ran right up to the wall leaving no escape route. Jane Philipps, head of Douglas Library noted in 1997 that "security issues were in the forefront in planning" the 1990s renovations. These renovations solved the safety issues when the light well (or skylight) was installed, and shelving was reduced. The skylight provided some natural light to the dark basement; shelving was reduced (and books relocated to the new Stauffer Library) and reconfigured to allow for study tables and comfortable seating. Space between the shelves was increased, and shelving was no longer extended to the walls.

Stack level, basement, 1973
(Queen's University Archives)

"DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE READING ROOM IS?"

The '1923 Reading Room,' ca. 1925
(Queen's University Archives)

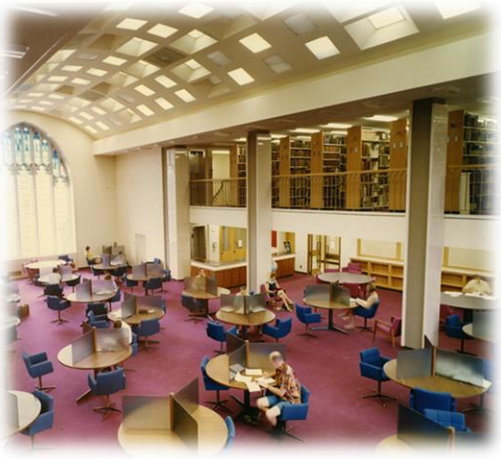
Perhaps the most iconic spaces in Douglas Library are located on the third floor – the 1923 and 1966 reading rooms. Although the reading rooms in Douglas don't have formal names, and are known as the '1923 Reading Room' and '1966 Reading Room' by library and university staff, each generation of students tends to give the rooms unique nicknames. The '1923 Reading Room' was the first and only reading room within Douglas when it was constructed in the 1920s. It has long been well known for its high domed ceilings, gothic stained-glass windows, and oak chairs. The room has a capacity of 160 people.

Students quietly studying in the original reading room, circa 1957
(Wallace Berry, Arts '42)

This reading room has had multiple names, such as the 'Reserve Reading Room' (where students in earlier decades would go to consult high-demand books that could not be taken out of the library) and (unofficially) the 'Harry Potter Room'. The nickname, 'Harry Potter Room,' has had such an impact that in February 2016, the room was host to a special reading of J.K. Rowling's book. However, the library and room have no actual connection to the book or the author, and in time new generations of students may come up with a new colloquial name for it.

Cathey Perkins (Arts '58) remembered the original reading room in Douglas Library in a 1995 issue of *Queen's Alumni Review* as "one of the prime 'pick-up joints' on the whole campus" during the 1950s. Although strict silence was called for in those days in the reading room, as Perkins recalled, a quick thumb signal that said "Break time. Meet you downstairs," was often the prelude to a rendezvous in the coffee shop across the street. Before campus pubs were a thing at Queen's, the reading room was one of the gathering places on campus and "some people polished their flirting skills to a high lustre there and in its environs… and no small number met their life's partner."

The second reading room in the north wing of the third floor was added during the 1960s renovation and is thus known as the '1966 Reading Room.' A popular nickname among some generations of students for this room was the 'Purple Passion Pit' due to the purple carpet that was once a prominent feature and the colourful swivel chairs. The room had a funky style when it was first built, fitting a popular 1960s aesthetic. For students who spent time in Douglas Library from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, the 'Purple Passion Pit' was considered a space for relaxation and conversation among students as opposed to the more formal study space offered by the '1923



The 'Purple Passion Pit,' 1967
(Queen's University Archives)

Reading Room.' At some point around 1983 or 1984, the carpet in the room was updated from purple to blue, and when alumni came to visit the library afterward, many were shocked to find their beloved 'Purple Passion Pit' was no longer purple. Although the carpet colour changed, the nickname remained. The mezzanine level above the '1966 Reading Room' once held a student lounge, but it was removed due to noise complaints. Over the years, students creatively came up with different names for the rooms as a fun way to distinguish them from one another. The reading rooms on the third floor are a special part of Douglas Library and, over the years, have remained special spaces for students.

THE 1990s RENOVATIONS

1994 conceptual drawing by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg (KPMB)

The second major renovation of Douglas Library began in 1995 and was completed in 1999. These renovations began immediately following the opening of Joseph S. Stauffer Library. There were a few important reasons for the 1990s renovation: increased admissions meant that the library was overflowing with students, and there was no room for the expanding collection of volumes to support learning and research. The 1960s renovations were meant to fulfill the projected needs of the university for 20 years, thus by the early 1990s Douglas Library was past due for attention. Also factoring into the need to renovate were previously mentioned safety and accessibility concerns.

The renovations were estimated to take around three years; however, an electricians' and plumbers' strike resulted in a one-year delay. The 1990s renovation was to include several newly designed library units: the Engineering and Science Library, W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections, the Music Library, and technical services. The vision was to transform Douglas into a hub for science and engineering resources, special collections, music and study, integrating a new library into an old one. The budget for the renovation was set at $12 million.

Front entrance to Douglas, 2022
(Queen's University Library)

By 1995, Douglas was vacated, and Stauffer was open for students to use while Douglas was under construction. By 1997, the Engineering and Science Library on the second floor was in full use. It wouldn't be until 1999 that the W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library would also be available to students.

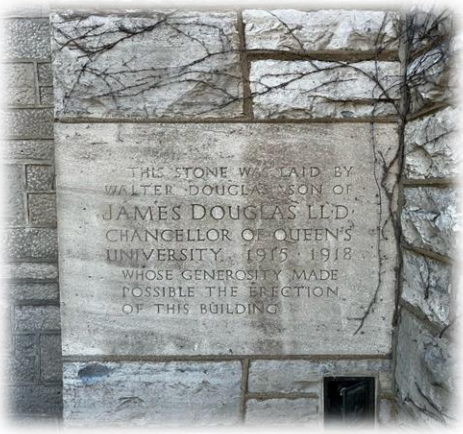
The 1990s renovations to Douglas Library were predominantly to the interior of the building, but the 1966 stairway and entrance from University Avenue was demolished to make way for the accessible entrance that we utilize today. We enter the building today at ground level, where previously one had to climb a set of external stairs and entered the building on the first floor. The new steel and plexiglass entrance installed after 1995 was not initially popular, garnering criticism that it disagreed with the original style of the building. Architectural historian, Pierre Du Prey referred to the new entrance as a "glorified bus-stop not sympathetic to Gothic renewal architecture." Some alumni also took issue with the alterations to the new entrance to Douglas, calling it "an eyesore, completely at odds with the original design." On top of addressing space, accessibility, and safety concerns, the 1990s renovations to Douglas Library were also designed to modernize the building, to better complement Stauffer Library's design.

View of Douglas Library today, from University Avenue. The 1990s renovation to the entrance, 1966 north wing, and original 1923 construction are all visible in this image
(Queen's University Library)

Exploring Douglas Library Today

Now that you have a general sense of the architectural history of Douglas Library, and some of the people who played a part in its culture and development, we turn our attentions to a few of the present-day features of the building and artworks inside.

DOUGLAS LIBRARY CORNERSTONE



(Photo by Melanie Escobar-Echeverria)

Located just to the right of today's main entrance to Douglas Library, you can find the original cornerstone, which was laid on May 9, 1923. It reads, "This stone was laid by Walter Douglas, son of James Douglas LL.D., Chancellor of Queen's University, 1915-1918, whose generosity made possible the erection of this building." The architects and builders of the 1960s and 1990s renovations took care to ensure the original cornerstone remained visible.

BUST OF JAMES DOUGLAS

Just inside the main entry to Douglas Library, on the left, is a bust of the library's namesake. Sculpted by the social-realist sculptor and artist, Mahonri Young (1877-1957), it was presented to the university by Robert B. Douglas in 1992 to commemorate the memory and contributions of James Douglas, benefactor and Chancellor of Queen's University, 1915-1918.

(Photo by Melanie Escobar-Echeverria)

RELIANCE PRINTING PRESS

(Photo by Brendan Edwards)

The Reliance Printing Press, located in the entryway of Douglas Library was gifted to Queen's University Library in 2000 by Bob Hilderley of Quarry Press. This specific printing press was used as a proof press at Ryerson Press when Lorne Pierce was editor. The back of the printing press reads, "This style of press was used to print the first editions of Kingston Weekly and Daily Papers." Reliance presses were manufactured in Chicago between 1895 and 1911. Originally the press was intended to be on display in W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections, however, it was deemed too heavy. At more than 6,000-pounds, its weight surpasses the floor load for the second floor, thus it was put on display in the entrance of the library and has remained there since.

"FEEDING THE YOUNG" BY GOYCE KAKEGAMIC

(Photo by Yusaku Shiba, "Artwork in Douglas Library")

This silkscreen print by former Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief and original member of the Woodlands School of Art, Goyce Kakegamic (1948-2021), is located in the stairwell between the ground floor and the lower landing. Kakegamic was a pioneering Cree printmaker. Along with his brothers, he established the Triple K Co-Operative in Red Lake, Ontario with the intention of representing themselves on their own terms, rather than being dependent upon the wants and expectations of non-Indigenous publishers. Created circa 1985, the artwork was an anonymous gift to the university.

“TORSO SHOWING DOTS” BY ZOYA NIEDERMANN

In the stairwell between the main floor and first floor is this art piece by Montreal-born sculptor and artist, Zoya Niedermann (1954-). The piece was given to Queen’s University by Mr. and Mrs. L.L. Odette. The artwork is a lithograph, created utilizing a planographic printmaking process.

“LIKLIK PIKININI WANTAIM ROKROK, PALAI NI PISIN” BY TIMOTHY AKIS

Located in the stairwell between the first and second floors is a silkscreen print by Timothy Akis (1944-1984), an artist from Papua New Guinea. This piece was also given by Mr. and Mrs. L.L. Odette. Akis’ art was typically inspired by the wildlife of Papua New Guinea. The English translation of the title is, “Small boy playing with a frog, a lizard and a bird.”

(Photos by Yusaku Shiba, “Artwork in Douglas Library”)

THE SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY LOUNGE

Located on the first floor of Douglas Library, this space was recently redesigned by staff of the Engineering and Science Library. The lounge space features a collection of more than 600 popular, diverse, and award-winning science fiction and fantasy novels.

(Queen’s University Library website)

THE DOUGLAS CHAIR

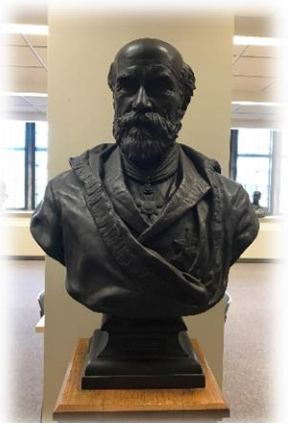
(Photo by Melanie Escobar-Echeverria)

Nowadays located on the second floor, within W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections, is a large finely crafted wooden chair. The Douglas Chair was presented to the university on October 13, 1913, by Chancellor James Douglas, as a physical embodiment and accompaniment to an endowment for the Douglas Professorship in Colonial History. The actual chair was carved in Burmese teakwood in Kashmir, India by Margaret Nanton (née: Joly de Lotbiniére) (1854-1949). Over the years, the title of the chair changed to the Douglas Chair in Canadian and Colonial History; the position is honorary and bestowed to recognize someone in the history department who has done notable work in the field.

The chair has multiple designs carved into it, representing Canadian and colonial history. The backrest of the chair has carvings of the emblems representing the provinces of Canada (circa 1913) and the coat of arms of Queen's University, with the motto "sapiential et doctrina stabilitas." On either side of the armrests are heads; one on the right side representing a North American Indigenous person, meant to symbolize the origin of the country and its nature, and on the left is the head of a woman, signifying strength and culture. On the chair's front stretcher (rung) is a depiction of a sailing boat with the motto "in mari viae tvae," or "the sea is your way." This depiction reflects the seal given by Louis XIII to the Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France in 1627. On each of the arms a lion's head is featured, surrounded by leaf motifs. On the accompanying footstool is carved the Latin expression, "magna est veritas," which translates as "truth is mighty."

After languishing on the top floor of Watson Hall for many years, the wooden chair was restored by Stéphane Doyon, a student in the Art Conservation Department, and relocated to where it resides today. The Douglas Chair played a role in bringing to Queen's some of the pioneering historians who created the field of Canadian history. Past holders of the Douglas Chair include W.L. Grant (1910-1918), J.L. Morison (1919-1926), Duncan McArthur (1926-1935), R.G. Trotter (1935-1951), A.R.M. Lower (1951-1959), and Roger Graham (1968-1984). Since 2003, Professor Donald Akenson has been the holder of the Douglas Chair in Canadian and Colonial History.

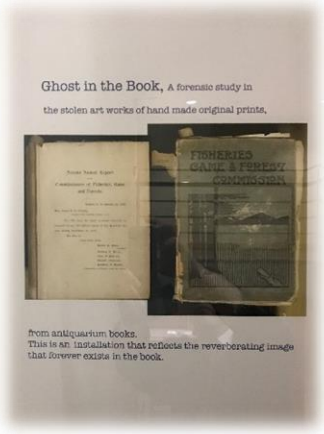
BUST OF SIR SANDFORD FLEMING



(Photo by Brendan Edwards)

On the second floor, in the graduate student reading room that shares space with W.D. Jordan Rare Books and Special Collections, there are numerous busts and artworks. Of note is the bust of Sir Sandford Fleming (1827-1915), the second Chancellor of Queen's University (1880-1915). Fleming is also remembered as Canada's foremost railway engineer in the nation-building era of rail construction in the 19th century, and the mind behind standard time and time zones that we utilize today. Near Fleming's bust on this floor is a display of some of his honorary medals, including the Order of St. Michael and St. George, Knight Commander (K.C.M.G.).

"THE GHOST WITHIN THE BOOK" BY OTIS TAMASAUSKAS

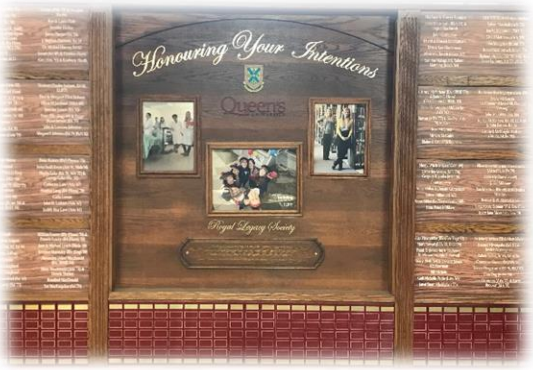


(Photo by Brendan Edwards)

Located in the stairwell between the second and third floors, this original 16-piece installation by Otis Tamasauskas, artist, printmaker, and professor of fine arts, is a series of digitally and creatively reconstructed prints based on stolen images from a rare book. The work is meant to draw attention to the preservation of antiquarian books. In the artist's words, "Looking more closely at the book I noticed the pages that laid over the hand painted artwork, had a direct impression, (oil residue from the ink) of the image…. By scanning the oil residue pages and playing with the temperatures of colour and heighten contrast, I was able to retrieve information. This forensic approach all of a sudden switched into a creative approach, allowing me to personally enhance the images."

ROYAL LEGACY SOCIETY DONOR WALL

On the centre of the west wall in the '1923 Reading Room' one finds the Royal Legacy Society donor wall. The Royal Legacy Society recognizes Queen's University alumni and friends who have remembered the University through a bequest or future gift commitment. These donors ensure that Queen's can meet the needs of the future while preserving its strong tradition.



(Photo by Brendan Edwards)

THE QUEEN'S COAT OF ARMS CARVED IN STONE

Engraved in the upper portion of the building's façade, above the original east entrance and between its gothic spires, one can see the Queen's University coat of arms. Likewise, the coat of arms and "Douglas Library" are engraved into the stone façade above the original west entrance to the building off University Avenue. The university's motto, "sapientia et doctrina stabilitas" ("wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times") are beneath the crest. These features proudly proclaim the building's identity and its inheritance.

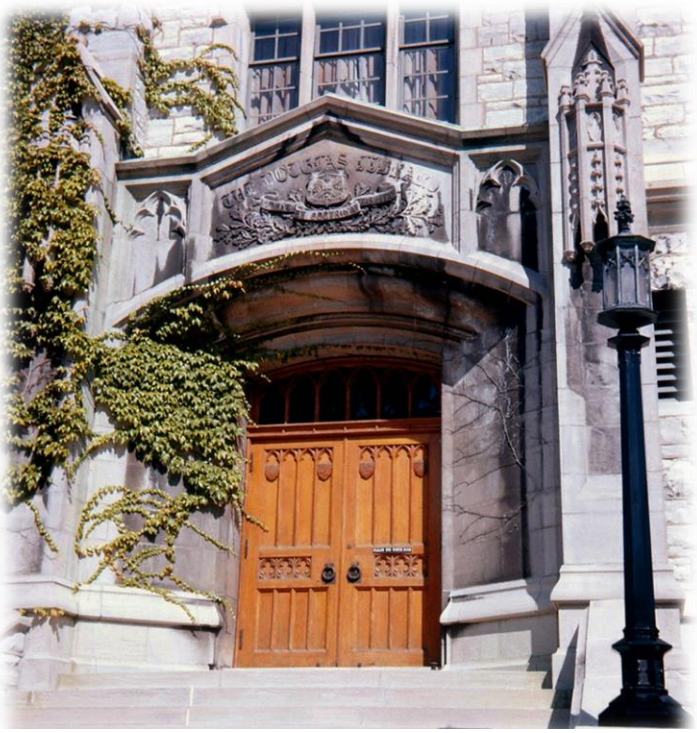


Photo of the original University Avenue entrance, 1977
(William F.E. Morley, Curator of Special Collections)

Looking Forward to the Next Chapter

This concludes our historical exploration of Douglas Library. While this guidebook has touched on many aspects of the library's history and culture, it has by no means been exhaustive. Everyone who has ever entered the various doors of Douglas Library over the past 100 years has their own story to tell about the ways in which this space has played a part in their lived experience at Queen's University.

For a century the Douglas Library has played a central part in campus life. Something like 25 cohorts of Queen's University students, from across the disciplines and across the globe, have mined its resources, found space for quiet study, and socialized within its walls. Generations of faculty and staff at the university have likewise considered Douglas Library to be an integral part of their Queen's University experience. Although Douglas Library has undergone several changes through the years, it remains a coveted and well-loved space for thousands of students every year. We anticipate it will continue to play an important part in the Queen's University experience for decades to come.

(Queen's University Library, 2019)

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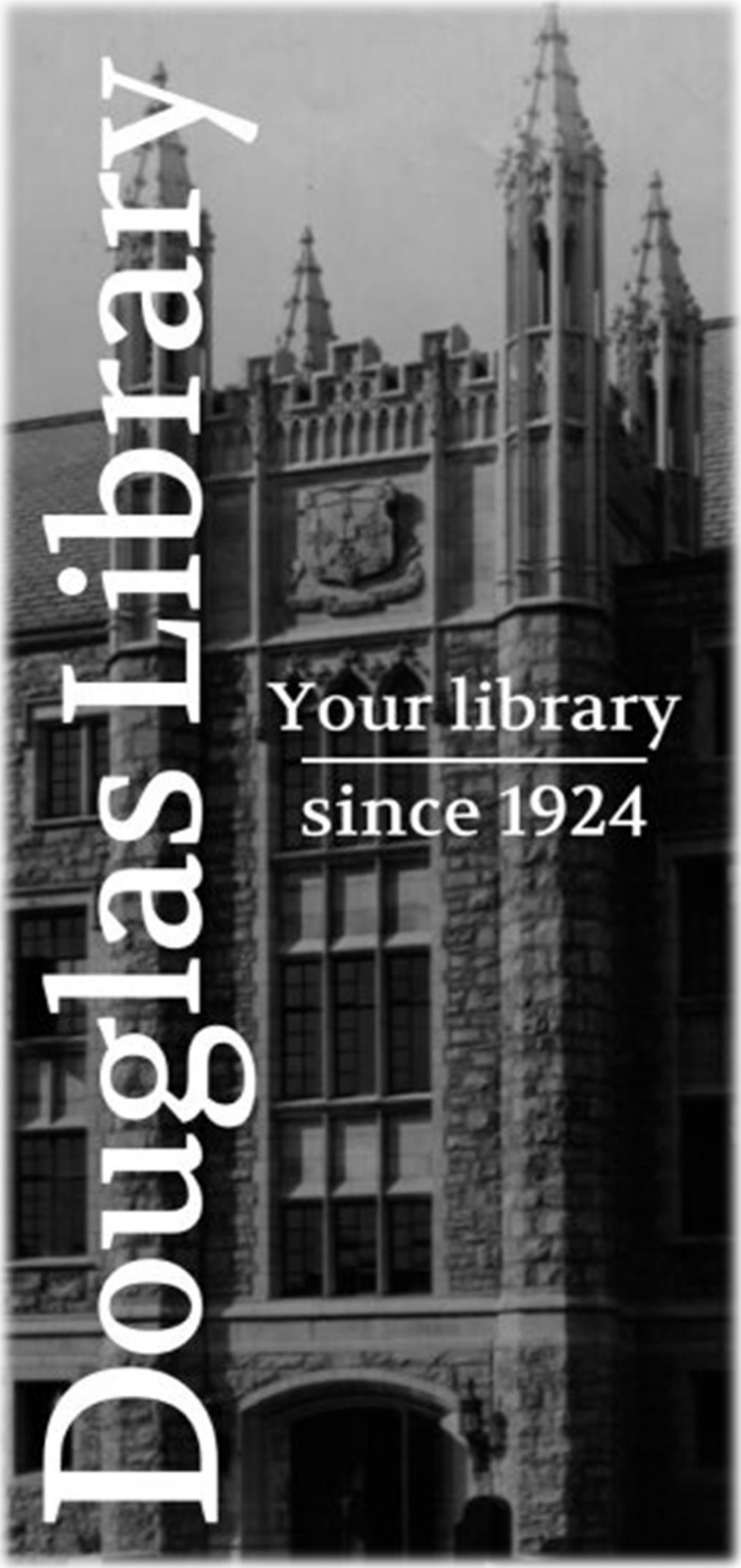
Students and staff in Douglas Library, 1967 (Queen's University Archives)

Douglas Library staff and students of yesteryear
(All photos from Queen's University Archives)



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