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New exhibit showcases LGBT life at UChicago

THE NEW SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXHIBIT FEATURES VARIOUS IMAGES, DOCUMENTS, AND RECORDS THAT SHOWCASE THE HISTORY OF LGBTQ LIFE ON CAMPUS.

Posted Apr 7, 2015 by [Shelby Lohr](http://chicagomaroon.com/author/shelby-lohr/) (<http://chicagomaroon.com/author/shelby-lohr/>)

On March 30, the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center unveiled its latest exhibition, *Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles*, a set of images, oral histories, ephemera, and personal documents chronicling LGBTQ life on campus.

The exhibition builds upon a previous Special Collections project called *On Equal Terms: Educating Women at the University of Chicago*. These projects were sponsored by the gender and sexuality studies department and Special Collections, as part of an effort to chronicle women's history at the University of Chicago.

Mich Elliott, an intern for the preparation of the LGBTQ exhibit and recent University of Chicago graduate (A.B. '14) said, "I think it's a really incredible opportunity to bring light to narratives of different experiences that people have had over the history of University of Chicago [and] the struggles and success that they had."

The exhibition also highlights some of the often unacknowledged same-sex relationships among female administrators and faculty, including former Dean of Women Marion Talbot, former Dean of the School of Social Service Administration Edith Abbott, and former professor Sophonisba Breckinridge.

Fourth-year Danielle Wilson described how she heard about the exhibit years ago while it was in its incipient stages. She enrolled in courses with two of the directors of the project, Monica Mercado and Lauren Stokes. “Now that I am a fourth-year, seeing it come to fruition is really exciting...I remember when they didn’t even know what to call it,” Wilson said.

The exhibit’s opening gala last Wednesday drew some of its financial supporters and exhibition contributors. In a speech at the event, Julia Gardner, a University librarian specializing in gender and sexuality, said that the exhibit will have a lasting impact for both students and researchers within the archives.

“The exhibit is not only valuable, but I think it’s also a reminder that...the world has an enormous capacity to see the good of all... [The University is] the first to tell these stories, and many of them are new... They are doing a wonderful job,” said Dean of the College John Boyer in a speech at the gala.

The exhibition is free and will remain open until June 12.

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