

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**East Carolina University News Services**

**For immediate release**

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### **ECU's Joyner Library grant award leads to \$119,500 archival project**

GREENVILLE, N.C. (6/9/2014) The National Archives' National Historical Publications and Records Commission has awarded a grant to the Special Collections Division at East Carolina University's Joyner Library to process the archives of the Institute of Outdoor Theatre. With matching funds from ECU, Joyner Library, and the IOT, the total project budget exceeds \$119,500, according to Dr. Michael C. Hardy, director of the IOT, which is located at the university.

The one-year, \$56,290 grant is part of the Commission's Documenting Democracy: Access to Historical Records program which funds projects that promote the preservation and use of the nation's most valuable archival resources. The grant will also allow for the creation of a comprehensive online Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aid that will allow worldwide access to a guide of the contents of the IOT archive.

"I am pleased that Joyner Library can partner with ECU's College of Fine Arts and Communication and the Institute of Outdoor Theatre to provide access to the archives to researchers worldwide," said Janice S. Lewis, interim dean of Joyner Library. "The photographs, video and audio recordings, publicity materials, feasibility studies, original research, and other materials will provide unparalleled insights into the challenges and successes experienced by outdoor theatres and the communities in which they operate. I look forward to sharing its riches with a broader audience."

Since its founding in 1963, the IOT has amassed a considerable collection related to more than 600 outdoor theatres. The earliest of those theatres began operations in the 1920s. The institute was founded with the purpose of supporting these theatres with technical assistance, documentation of best practices in the field, management and feasibility studies, and the networking and conference activities common to most associations.

"The archival materials accumulated by the Institute of Outdoor Theatre over the past 50 years provide a unique view of a distinct movement in American Theatre history," said Hardy. "We are very pleased to have received this important recognition of the quality of our archives from the National Archive's panel of experts, and we look forward to making them available to future researchers when this project is complete."

The audience for these materials includes set builders, regional and social historians, folklorists, those concentrating on performing arts history, tourism history, and those interested in the general origin of historical outdoor drama in the United States, as well as Shakespeare and Renaissance festivals and all other forms of outdoor theatre nationally and abroad.

Of the project, assistant director for Special Collections Kacy Guill said, “Once processed, we believe the IOT collection will have appeal to ECU students and well as national and international researchers.”

For more information about the grant, please contact Dale Sauter, principal investigator and interim head of service, at 252.328.0275 or [sauterd@ecu.edu](mailto:sauterd@ecu.edu).

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