

## Alfred University extends lease to Box of Books Library

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From left: Alfred University President Mark Zupan, with Melanie Miller and Allison Snyder.

ALFRED, NY The Box of Books Library has had a home at the corner of Main and West University streets, in a building owned by Alfred University, for nearly seven decades. An agreement between the library and University ensures it will remain there another 14 years.

On Monday, The Box of Books and Alfred University signed a long-term lease extension, which will keep the library at its current location through 2031. Alfred University has been leasing property to the Box of Books since 1949; the new lease is an extension of an agreement signed in 2006.

“Public libraries are among the greatest assets of any community,” commented Mark Zupan, Alfred University president. “Given our long-standing ties to the library, Alfred University is pleased to extend this lease, which will keep the Box of Books in Alfred for the next decade and beyond.”

“This lease is truly an investment in the community of Alfred. It allows us to leverage funds from various sources to make improvements to the building for a sustainable future,” said Melanie Miller, Box of Books Library director. “The library has a long history in Alfred and we want to continue to serve the community for years to come. This lease guarantees that, and we thank President Zupan and Ms. (Giovina) Lloyd (Alfred University vice president of Business and Finance) for their efforts in making this happen.”

Added Allison Snyder, president of the Box of Books Library Board, “This long term lease provides our library with a variety of funding opportunities, which in turn provides our community with new areas to grow, learn and come together.”

The new lease is effective July 31, 2017, and runs through June 30, 2031. Under the terms of the agreement, the Box of Books Library will pay the University an annual rental fee of one dollar and be required to pay utilities and carry commercial property and liability insurance.

The Box of Books Library has a long history in Alfred. In 1923, Box of Books, then owned by Norah Binns (daughter of Charles Fergus Binns, founding director of the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University), was opened as a book shop in another building on the north side of West University Street. The building had originally been located on Main Street but was moved to the West University site in 1912.

In 1927, Binns sold the book shop to Hazel Humphreys, a 1919 Alfred University graduate. Humphreys kept Box of Books at that location until 1949, when she moved the building to its current location, on an Alfred University-owned

lot at the corner of Main and West University. Humphreys ran the Box of Books there until her death in 1978, when it was bequeathed to Alfred University.

At that time, the town and village of Alfred did not have a public library; local residents borrowed material from Alfred University's library collection located in Carnegie Hall. From 1967-76, the Southern Tier Library System provided materials to the community through a "bookmobile" service. After that service ended, the Southern Tier Library System and Alfred University collaborated to provide access to materials at a reading center located in the University-owned Greene Hall.

In 1984, the Alfred Reading Center was moved to the current location and renamed Box of Books Reading Center. Public and private monies funded an addition to the building in 1985, which opened in 1988. Box of Books received a provisional public library charter from the New York State Board of Regents in 2003 and an absolute public library charter in 2009.

The Box of Books Library has grown significantly over the years, continuing to provide valuable reading material to patrons, while using technology to educate and inform.

"Our library staff has done a tremendous job over the last few years of making a little go a long way. They have taken our small library and provided our community with a variety of materials," Snyder said. "They have connected patrons with the newest technology and offered opportunities to learn how to use it. They have created programming for children and adults that has touched on a variety of learning areas, including art, literacy, foreign language, gardening, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)."

"Twenty-first century libraries are more than books on shelves," Miller added. "Service to rural communities includes informational resources, educational programs and cultural experiences. The lease guarantees that the Alfred Box of Books Library will be able to continue providing services to the community for many years."