

Alfred University acquires 1903 letter from Susan B. Anthony

2/06/20



Laurie Lounsberry Meehan
91 and President Mark
Zupan with the framed 1903
Susan B. Anthony letter.

ALFRED, NY – A letter written by Susan B. Anthony, Rochester’s leading women’s rights activist, to Alfred University librarian Edward Mulford Tomlinson in 1903 has been acquired by Alfred University and will become a part of the University’s permanent archives, in celebration of the University’s historic commitment to women’s rights and its role in the Suffrage Movement.

Anthony’s letter was written on the stationery of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Office of Honorary President, located at Anthony home at 17 Madison St., Rochester.

It acknowledges Mulford’s request for volume IV of Anthony’s History of Woman Suffrage. “Of course I will send you Vol. IV, cloth, of the History of Woman Suffrage to complete your set,” Anthony wrote. Fifteen years earlier, in 1888, she had given the first three volumes of the set to Abigail Allen, wife of Jonathan Allen, Alfred University’s second president.

She also refers to memories of visiting Alfred University, her acquaintance with the Allens, and Alfred University’s inclusive educational policies with respect to women students. Alfred University was the first co-educational institution of higher education in the U.S. both to admit women and allow them to pursue the same full course of studies offered to male students.

In announcing the acquisition of the letter, University President Mark Zupan observed: “The significance of the communication between Anthony and Tomlinson, and the relationship Anthony had with Alfred University, cannot be overstated. Anthony was well aware of the role Alfred University had played in advancing equal rights for women.”

The acquisition of the Anthony letter from Schulson Autographs, an on-line dealer of rare autographs, was made

possible through the support of seven Alfred University alumni, all members of the University's Board of Trustees. Trustee Michael Carey, a 1999 graduate of Alfred University, helped organize the acquisition, and was joined by Greg Connors '92, Board chair; Carolyn Clark '90, Board vice chair; Steve Heine '81, Kristen Klabin '92, Kevin Livingston '93; and Eric Zuckerman '03.

Laurie Lounsberry Meehan '91, Alfred University librarian and archivist, was notified of the letter's existence by a research colleague, who discovered it on the Schulson Autographs website. After the trustees acquired the letter, Carey arranged to have it framed and protected by UV-resistant glass and transported it from Utah to New York City, where it was presented to Zupan at last week's Board of Trustees meeting.

Anthony was born in Adams, MA, but moved with her family to the Rochester, NY, area in 1845, settling on a farm in what is now the area of Brooks Avenue. The house became a meeting place for abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass.