Sen. Reid’s papers find a home in Special Collections

by JOHN TRENT ’87

For many years, U.S. Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada has known the final destination for his personal papers, which span more than a half-century of the state’s and the nation’s political history.

“I’ve always felt this attachment to the University,” Reid said during a special ceremony on Aug. 30 in the Glick Ballrooms of the Joe Crowley Student Union. “I always knew in my heart what I was going to do.”

What he did was donate his papers to the University. They will find a home in University Special Collections and University Archives in the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center as part of the Nevada Political Archive. The Archive includes papers from U.S. Sens. Alan Bible ’30 (economics), ’70 (honorary doctor of laws), Paul Laxalt ’71 (honorary doctor of laws) ’85 (honorary award) and Richard Bryan ’59 (prelegal).

Reid’s papers also provided impetus for the University to create the Harry Reid Public Engagement Lecture Series, a bi-annual, University-wide lecture series, as well as the Senator Harry Reid Doctoral Fellowship. This doctoral fellowship in Nevada and western history will be established in the Department of History. It will be awarded competitively to a Ph.D. student intending to study western American or environmental history. It is envisioned as a public history fellowship, with an assignment involving work with the Reid Papers, and assisting in bringing topics from the Senator’s papers to a broader audience.

“It’s a great University, and I hope my papers make it better,” said Reid, who announced in 2015 his historic 30-year career would come to a close with his retirement following the November elections.
New dean brings diversity and identity studies expertise

by KERRI GARCIA ’92

The University of Nevada, Reno welcomes Debra A. Moddelmog as the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Moddelmog comes to Nevada from The Ohio State University where she served as professor and chair of the Department of English.

During her 29-year career at Ohio State, she served in a number of administrative roles, including associate dean of humanities and director of the Diversity and Identity Studies Collective at Ohio State (DISCO). Moddelmog is also a scholar and teacher of 20th-century American literature, modernism and sexuality studies, and one of the foremost experts in the world on the writings of Ernest Hemingway.

In addition to leading one of the country’s largest English departments at Ohio State, Moddelmog established an interdisciplinary program in sexuality studies (which examines human sexuality in personal, historical, legal, political, societal and cultural contexts) at Ohio State, now one of the top schools in the country for this discipline. She was principal coordinator and co-advisor for the program for more than a dozen years. Another of her contributions is the formation of DISCO, an inter-disciplinary and university-wide collective that coordinates and fosters collaboration between departments and academic programs, such as American Indian, Asian American, African & African American, Disability, Comparative Ethnic, Latino/Latina, Sexuality and Women’s Studies.

“I am delighted to welcome Debra to our team,” Kevin Carman, the University’s executive vice president and provost, said. “She brings extensive leadership experience as well as progressive efforts and expertise in diversity, gender and sexuality studies that will no doubt contribute and advance our campus dialogue, understanding and appreciation of our complex world.”

Moddelmog received her doctorate degree in English from Pennsylvania State University, her masters in English from Auburn University and her bachelor’s in journalism from Georgia Southern College.

Davidson Academy students perform well in National Academic competition

The profoundly gifted students at the Davidson Academy tested their knowledge of global and foreign policy at the National Academic WorldQuest competition in Washington, D.C. this April. The team of four students scored 74 points in the competition, earning them the No. 21 spot overall out of 49 teams. The team, which is sponsored by the University Honors Program and the Northern Nevada International Center, placed first in the regional competition earlier in the semester, qualifying them for the national competition. The Davidson Academy of Nevada is a free public school established in 2006 for profoundly gifted middle and high school students and is located at the University of Nevada, Reno.
College of Science’s mountaintop cameras part of firefighting arsenal

The fire camera on the Midas Peak tower, about 40 miles north of Battle Mountain, tracked the Hot Pot fire that exploded at a rate of 10,000 acres an hour for about five hours, threatening the town of Midas. The camera is one of the first four installed last year in the Bureau of Land Management’s Nevada-funded project to protect Nevada’s communities.

Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship launches Women’s Initiative

University of Nevada, Reno students and community leaders gathered in May to celebrate and promote women in entrepreneurship at the launch of the Ozmen Center for Entrepreneurship Women’s Initiative at the University’s Innovation Center—Powered by Switch. The Women’s Initiative aims to connect innovative female entrepreneurs with leaders, established professionals and business owners in the community. It will also highlight female business achievements in and around the community. In 2015 the number of female-owned businesses grew 1.5 times the national average for all businesses, according to Fortune. However, there is still a lack of representation and engagement among the growing segment of female entrepreneurs.
With 30 remote mountain peaks in central and northeastern Nevada, the Lake Tahoe Basin and parts of the Sierra Nevada are home to a new real-time camera fire detection system that is helping to protect Nevada’s forests, rangelands and communities.

The Alert fire camera system is built on the backbone of the University’s Seismological Lab’s earthquake monitoring communications network, with its 150-plus seismographs throughout Nevada featuring private high-speed internet connectivity capable of transmitting seismic, environmental and climate data, in addition to the live-streaming, high-definition video from the fire cameras.

Traditionally, fire managers would send planes to spot and monitor fires, which takes time and resources. The fire cameras provide the possibility of faster, more efficient and effective responses.

“The system enables the fire coordinators to have a live view while directing resources, just as if they were sitting on the mountaintop,” Graham Kent, director of the Nevada Seismological Laboratory, said.

Since its inception, the Alert fire camera system discovered seven fires. In the first half of 2016 with 20 cameras and a larger footprint, the new system monitored 42 fires, discovered two fires and provided early intel for fire managers on others.

The Seismological Lab designed, built and maintains the network of cameras. They use Axis new IR-capable HD cameras, with 32x, pan-tilt-zoom capability, providing 360-degree panoramic views from high-mountain towers. The tower-mounted camera on the 7,800-foot-elevation Midas Peak, about 40 miles north of Battle Mountain, was used to monitor the Hot Pot fire, which exploded at a rate of 10,000 acres an hour for five hours beginning July 2.

“We were able to relay our situation to the Great Basin Coordination Center in Salt Lake City and the National Interagency Coordination Center in Boise,” said Paul Petersen, state fire management officer for Nevada Bureau of Land Management Fire and Aviation. “By having both of those centers watch the camera to get an overall picture of the situation, we were able to get five additional air tankers from Utah and Idaho and a DC-10 air tanker from California.”

Kent encourages the public to visit the Seismological Lab’s website to help scan for fires.

“The beauty of this system is that not only can fire service personnel look for indications of fire, but the public interface can be used by anyone, at any time, to look for fires in a crowd-sourcing fashion,” Kent said. “The more eyes the better. While fire agencies can move the cameras, the public can observe the real-time views as well as the time-lapse functions built into our webpage viewer or our YouTube channel.”

An old technology that uses natural bacteria predators, called bacteriophages, is the focus of new research in the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources. The technique is being used to reduce salmonella bacteria in meat products.

“We were able to reduce salmonella by as much as 90 percent in ground poultry, ground pork and ground beef,” Assistant Professor Amilton de Mello said. “We’re excited to be able to show such good results. Food safety is an important part of our work and salmonella is one of the most prevalent bacteria in the nation’s food supply.”

De Mello’s research treated meat products infected with four types of salmonella by applying Myoviridae bacteriophages during mixing. They are viruses that can only harm specific bacterial cells and are harmless to humans, animals and plants. “The results are very encouraging and we're hoping this can be adopted by the meat industry to increase food safety,” de Mello said.

“Amilton brings an abundance of energy and expertise to the program,” Bill Payne, dean of CABNR, said. “He’s one of 10 new faculty in the college who will allow us to better connect with and support agricultural producers in ways that have not been possible for many years.”
Students joined faculty, staff and Wolfie to march in the Northern Nevada Pride Festival and Community Parade in Downtown Reno July 23. ASUN and The Center for Student Cultural Diversity were among the many sponsors of the event, held in support of the local non-profit organization Our Center, Northern Nevada’s only LGBTQ community center.
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