

News from Nova Scotia

News from the Patrick Power Library, Saint Mary's University

Shawna Murphy, Outreach and Engagement Librarian

Indigenous Artefacts from the Nova Scotia Museum find a home in the Patrick Power Library

The Patrick Power Library at Saint Mary's University is now a host location of the Nova Scotia Museum, as part of a partnership meant to help Nova Scotia's First People tell their story.

A soft launch of Mi'kmaq artefacts, on loan from the Nova Scotia Museum and housed in a brand-new display case in the Patrick Power Library, occurred on March 14. The display is the result of a partnership between Saint Mary's University and the Nova Scotia Museum. Several years in the making, this partnership came out of a request by Isaiah Bernard, Co-President of the Saint Mary's Indigenous Student Association, for the Patrick Power Library to host a temporary display of artifacts during Mi'kmaq History Month in 2017. The Library agreed, citing the University's Strategic Plan, which emphasizes the enhancement of Indigenous cultural education. This was also in recognition that Saint Mary's University is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.



With the help of Indigenous Student Advisor, Raymond Sewell, Isaiah obtained several artifacts from Stephen Powell, Nova Scotia Museum curator at the time, and created a temporary display. Shortly after the display was dismantled, Isaiah approached the Library about creating a more permanent Indigenous display. In December 2017, an agreement was made stating that Saint Mary's University was approved to display artifacts from the Nova Scotia Museum's collection.



This collaboration between memory institutions provides the Patrick Power Library with the opportunity to help highlight Indigenous heritage and provides the Nova Scotia Museum with the opportunity to display materials that may otherwise be in storage. Stephen Powell has since retired, and curator Katie Cottreau-Robins now oversees this

project. In December of 2018, Dr. Malcolm Butler, Vice President, Academic and Research, agreed to the purchase of a display case to be situated in the Patrick Power Library for the display of Mi'kmaq artifacts.

A panel discussion spoke about the artefacts and the partnership on March 14. Moderated by Hansel Cook, Saint Mary's University Archivist, the panel featured Raymond Sewell, Indigenous Student Advisor at Saint Mary's; Isaiah Bernard, Co-President of the Saint Mary's Indigenous Student Association; Suzanne van den Hoogen, Saint Mary's University Librarian; and Dr. Katie Cottreau-Robins, Curator of Archaeology at the Nova Scotia Museum



(*all picture here in order*). The event and the exhibit are the start of what we hope will be a deepening relationship between the library and Indigenous peoples at Saint Mary's, a step towards the decolonization of library space, and an opportunity to reflect on what it means that we are in Mi'kma'ki.

African Heritage Month at Saint Mary's

On Tuesday February 12, in celebration of African Heritage Month, Saint Mary's hosted a panel discussion on "Racial Apartheid and Black Freedom Struggles in Nova Scotia and South Africa" in the Patrick Power Library. The event accompanied an exhibit of materials from the Lynn Jones African-Canadian and Diaspora Heritage Collection, housed in the Saint Mary's University Archives. Organized by Dr. Val Marie Johnson from the Department of Social Justice & Community Studies and Hansel Cook, Saint Mary's University Archivist, the panel featured researcher and filmmaker Francesca Ekwuyasi, and Regina James (*both pictured here*) of the East Preston Empowerment Academy.



Ekwuyasi, originally from Lagos, Nigeria, provided her perspective as a former international student at Saint Mary's, and as a current Halifax resident. James traced the heritage of African Nova Scotians, beginning in Africa, and spoke of the struggles that African Nova Scotians have had, and continue to have, for equal rights and the right to have their voices heard. "No one is going to write your story for you," James emphasized. "We have to write our own story."

A question and answer period after the discussion also featured Dr. Lynn Jones (Global African Congress, NS Chapter). “Our goal was to ensure the elections were free and fair”, said Dr. Jones, recalling her work as an election observer for the 1994 South African Presidential election of Nelson Mandela. She described how Black South Africans showed up early and waited in long lines, so they wouldn’t miss their chance to vote. For most who had lived under the recently ended apartheid system, it was their first time voting.

The event ended with a roundtable initiated by Dr. Jones, who asked: “Who you be, so I can know your name?” According to Dr. Jones, this is the way African Nova Scotians are able to learn about each other and place one another in the community. Africans and African Nova Scotians in the audience stood up and introduced themselves in this fashion, sharing their histories with the panel and audience. In addition to showcasing the Lynn Jones collection and other library resources, this event was a wonderful way to build connections with, and between, our African and African Nova Scotian students.



Francesca Ekwuyasi, Dr. Lynn Jones, and Regina James