



COE COLLEGE

# BIBLIOPHILE

WINTER 2018



A newsletter for the members of the Coe College Library Association

## LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

# Daughter of Joseph H. Kitchin donates his World War I letters to Coe Archives

Joseph H. Kitchin, who taught violin and music theory at Coe College for almost 40 years, saw World War I up close, working in field hospitals close to the front lines in France. The eloquent letters he wrote home to his parents provide a gripping account of his work and also of the role his violin played in easing the war's woes. One hundred years after the war ended, those letters — a gift to Coe College from Kitchin's daughter, Alice Kitchin Enichen of Rockford, Ill. — form the heart of an exhibit, "Coe College: World War I in Remembrance," now at the Stewart Memorial Library.

"I never knew about the letters until he died in 1980," Enichen said. "My mother had died and my father had remarried a lovely woman. When he died, she sent me these letters, which I typed out one summer. My stepmother told me he'd signed up to serve in the Medical Corps because he was kind of squeamish and thought it would be good for him."

This year, Enichen decided she needed to look into preserving her father's letters. She called Jill Jack, Director of Library Services, to see if Coe would be interested in preserving the letters. The answer was an enthusiastic yes.

"This is a wonderful gift and adds to the rich history of Coe student and faculty service in World War I, and the letters will be of value to our faculty and students today," Jack said at a Nov. 12 program honoring Enichen and opening the World War I exhibit at the Library. "Some 363 people from Coe served in World War I. In Kitchin's letters, he would write about running into people from Cedar Rapids and from Coe

in France, which I think is amazing and which underscores the contributions of Coe to that war. In these letters, and in the journal kept by Marvin Cone, I was impressed how each of them, in their own way, in the middle of this destructive and horrible war, were able to find joy, or at least goodness, in their surroundings."

Dr. Bethany Keenan, Coe Associate Professor of History, and Ranelle Knight-Leuth, Coe Assistant Professor of Art, delivered lectures at the Nov. 12 program, with Keenan assuring Enichen that Coe history students would be studying Kitchin's letters. In her presentation, Keenan discussed the efforts at Coe and in Cedar Rapids to help the orphans of World War I, noting how "a small college played a large, international role" in the recovery in Europe and Czechoslovakia after the war. Knight-Leuth showed and discussed the art created by eight U.S. battlefield artists during the war.

### KITCHIN'S LETTERS

Kitchin had moved to Cedar Rapids in 1916 to teach violin at the Coe Music Conservatory. The next year, after the United States entered the war in April, he enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 25. When it came time to board the ship bound for Europe, Kitchin tucked his violin under his arm — even though instruments supposedly were not allowed — and climbed aboard.



Joseph H. Kitchin in his Army uniform in 1918

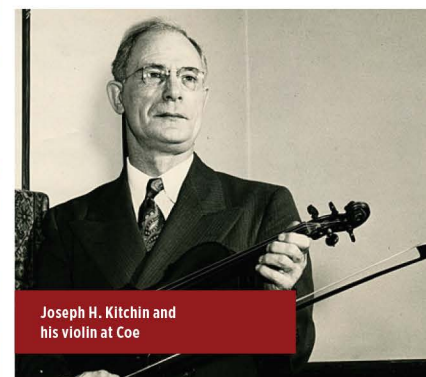
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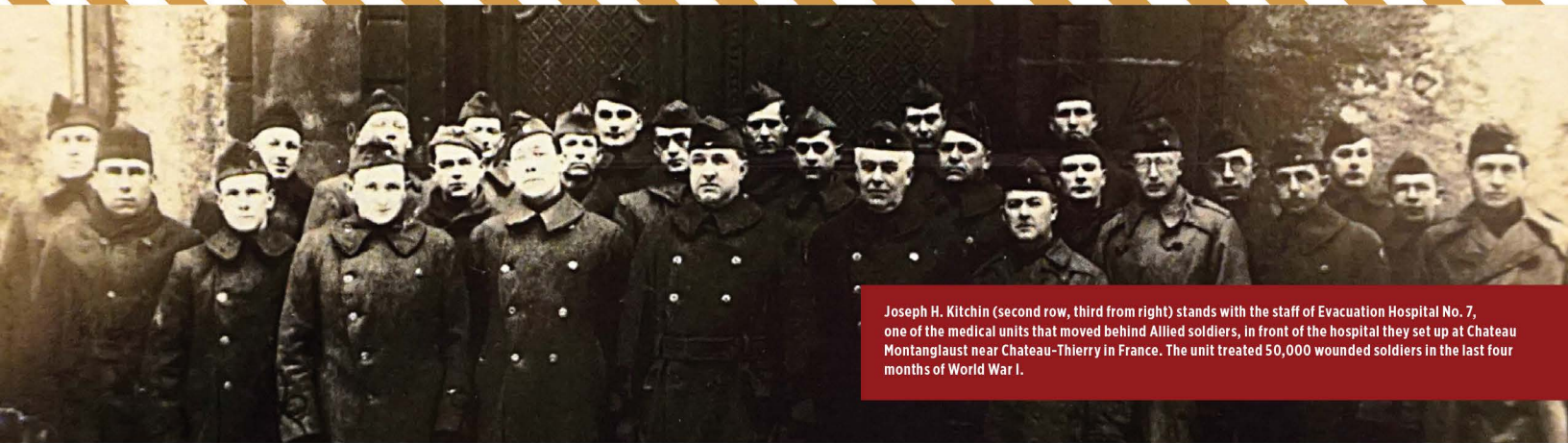
The exhibit, "Coe College: World War I in Remembrance," opened Nov. 12 in the Cone Gallery at Stewart Memorial Library. The exhibit honors the role Coe faculty and students played in the war, which ended 100 years ago. The exhibit features the letters Joseph H. Kitchin wrote to his parents while he was serving in a medical unit in France during the war and excerpts from the journal Marvin Cone, a 1914 Coe graduate, kept during the war.



Alice Kitchin Enichen of Rockford, Ill., speaks at the Nov. 12 program opening the World War I exhibit at Stewart Memorial Library. Enichen, the daughter of longtime Coe music instructor Joseph Kitchin, donated the letters to Stewart Memorial Library that her father wrote home during World War I.



Joseph H. Kitchin and his violin at Coe



Joseph H. Kitchin (second row, third from right) stands with the staff of Evacuation Hospital No. 7, one of the medical units that moved behind Allied soldiers, in front of the hospital they set up at Chateau Montanglaust near Chateau-Thierry in France. The unit treated 50,000 wounded soldiers in the last four months of World War I.



This shows part of the "Coe College: World War I in Remembrance" exhibit at the Stewart Memorial Library. The exhibit featured the letters of Joseph H. Kitchin and the contributions of other Coe students and faculty to the war effort.

He wrote letters to his parents in Chicago at least once a week, sometimes mentioning his need for violin strings. His mother, a German immigrant, and his father, an English immigrant, saved the letters, which would eventually go to Kitchin and then to Enichen, his only child.

Trained by the Army as an anesthesiologist, Kitchin worked in Evacuation Hospital No. 7, one of the medical units that moved behind the soldiers as they crossed France into Germany. He was at the Chateau Montanglaust near Chateau-Thierry in France, which treated 50,000 wounded soldiers between June 14 and Nov. 11, 1918, the day the war ended. The medical unit's work was recognized with both the French Croix de Guerre and a separate commendation from the American Expeditionary Forces awarded by Gen. John J. Pershing, the American commander.

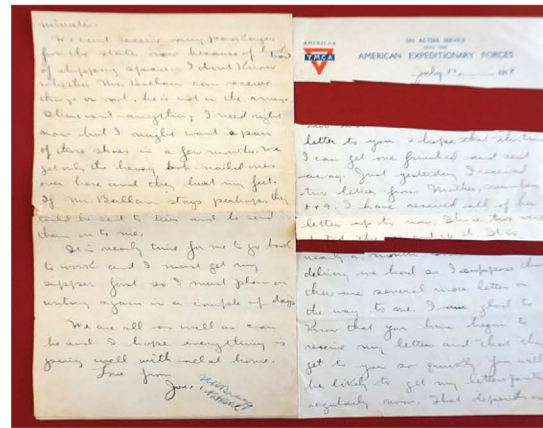
Enichen said her father "would have seen the worst of the worst" during the war. "It was a big hospital. There was that poison gas, yelling and soldiers you couldn't do anything for. They didn't have enough food. If you weren't seriously injured, you were put on a train and sent back into the interior where there was more food."

In a June 23, 1918, letter, Kitchin wrote, "The patients who came in Sunday night were mostly gassed. Some were burned and some had inhaled it. It is terrible stuff and causes more suffering than shot wounds. ... In the operating room, there are four tables going all the time, night and day. Sunday, the receiving wards couldn't take care of all the patients as they came in, so they were laid out on the grass, and the doctors and nurses worked on them there."

It was grueling work. Kitchin wrote about moving a base hospital in four hours, laboring through the rain and the mud. In a July 17, 1918, letter, he wrote, "We started at one in the afternoon and worked straight through without any interruption until seven the next morning ... we have been working constantly and almost without rest."

We have the privilege of serving behind the most active sector on the front and for several days we have been flooded with patients."

After the war, Kitchin returned to Coe to teach. He married Flora Mackay, a pianist, Coe graduate and Cedar Rapids native who also would teach at Coe. Kitchin founded the Cedar Rapids Symphony in 1923, conducting it until 1952, and reorganized the Coe student orchestra in 1924,



A censor cut away sections of this letter — from Joseph H. Kitchin to his parents in Chicago — to remove any mention of where Kitchin's medical unit was located.



A sign post opens the World War I exhibit in the Cone Gallery of the Stewart Memorial Library.

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Joseph H. Kitchin (far left) stands in an operating room at Evacuation Hospital No. 7 in 1918. Kitchin, who enlisted in the U.S. Army and was promoted to sergeant, was trained as an anesthesiologist. He wrote home about the long hours and also the honor of treating wounded soldiers.

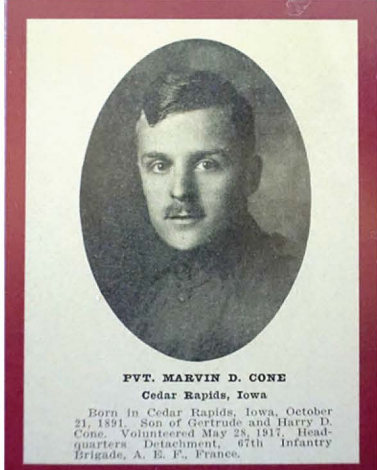


THE WAR AND THE COLLEGE



*If anyone thinks that war work is confined to the camps and trenches let him read of the various activities going on at Coe and other colleges. Whatever the college yell is in words its spirit is "Win the War." Everything in college life centers about this slogan: the class-room, faculty meetings, chapel exercises, athletic field, and social halls, breathe the spirit of loyalty. The girls are knitting, the boys are drilling, teachers are doing double duty that others may serve in the camps,—all are conserving. Red Cross, war gardens, thrift stamps, liberty bonds, French orphans, and Belgium refugees, these are the absorbing activities of the campus.*

The student newspaper, the Coe College Courier, reported in May 1918 that "everything in college life" was focused on winning the war. "The classroom faculty meetings, chapel exercises, athletic fields and social halls breathe the spirit of loyalty. The girls are knitting, the boys are drilling ... all are conserving."



PVT. MARVIN D. CONE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, October 21, 1891. Son of Gertrude and Harry D. Cone. Volunteered May 28, 1917; Headquarters Detachment, 67th Infantry Brigade, A. E. F., France.

Marvin Cone, a 1914 Coe graduate, is shown in 1918 in uniform. Excerpts from his journal are included in the World War I exhibit at the library.

conducting it until he retired in 1957. He started other ensembles and also organized a musicians union when the radio began playing their music. The Daehler-Kitchin Auditorium in Marquis Hall is named in his honor.

Reflecting on his letters, Enichen said, "It seems to me that the man who wrote those letters was very different than the man I knew as my father. He was a pretty quiet man, comfortable around musicians but not necessarily with other people. I often wonder now if he had post-traumatic stress."

She added she's glad her father had his violin with him during the war. "If you wanted to hear music, you had to make it," she said, noting that after the Armistice, her father wrote of being able to practice his violin two to four hours a day. She's happy, too, that her father's letters and legacy will be preserved in the George T. Henry Archives in the Library.

"I hope," she said, "they will be valuable to students."

**Jill Jack**  
Director of Library Services

**"In these letters, and in the journal kept by Marvin Cone, I was impressed how each of them, in their own way, in the middle of this destructive and horrible war, were able to find joy, or at least goodness, in their surroundings."**

**Title:** Coe College: World War I in Remembrance  
**Dates:** Nov. 12 through December 2018  
**Where:** Coe College Stewart Memorial Library, main floor Cone Gallery

**Includes:** Excerpts from World War I letters by Joseph H. Kitchin; journal kept by Marvin Cone, a 1914 Coe graduate and artist; pictures, postcards and news clippings from the war years; material on the German flying ace, Manfred von Richthofen, known as "The Red Baron," from the J. Malcolm Garcia '79 collection.



Ranelle Knight-Leuth  
Assistant Professor of Art



Bethany Keenan  
Associate Professor of History

# OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

## VIRTUAL REALITY COMES TO STEWART MEMORIAL LIBRARY



**Laura Riskedahl**  
Head of Media Technologies Department

Imagine flying over Rio de Janeiro, then walking along its streets. Or perhaps New York City. Or your hometown. Or walk into Van Gogh's "The Night Café" painting and stroll around the artist, the billiard table, the woman sitting in the corner. Or perhaps enter the world of Grant Wood's "American Gothic."

There's no denying the wow factor of Virtual Reality, a technology now available in the Stewart Memorial Library's Media Technologies Department. It's at the cutting edge of learning technology, while also being a bit – well, a lot – of fun.

"A ton of classes have visited and used it, and the students are blown away by the experience. It has so many things it can do," says Laura Riskedahl, Head of Media Technologies Department.

"They've completed assignments in art, infrastructure, economics and geography using it. A researcher coded and built a 3-D protein molecule with it. One man showed his wife the neighborhood where he grew up. Another man visited the area where he'd studied abroad."

And while Google Earth offers a street view of a neighborhood on your laptop, VR lets you walk down that street for a 3-D experience. The Coe Board of Trustees recently checked it out, and, like other visitors, were visibly impressed by VR's possibilities, Riskedahl says.



**Linda Hummel**  
Media Technologies Assistant

The VR technology uses the HTC Vive system and a high-tech computer. It's set up in the lower-level film preview room, and using it requires putting on a VR headset and going through an orientation session with a staffer. "And then it's just practicing," says Media Technologies Assistant Linda Hummel, who's been heavily involved in learning and teaching VR. "The functionality of different programs is different, but it's pretty intuitive."

As student familiarity with VR technology grows, its availability will increase, too, Hummel adds. Right now, access is mainly Monday through Friday, with Friday set aside as a game day, where Beat Saber, which combines light sabers and music, is proving popular. Also, YouTube offers a number of nature-related experiences — think mountaintop vistas or roaming a savanna with lions.

Media Technologies is looking forward to acquiring wireless headsets, ones that don't require a computer, in the near future, Riskedahl says. Other possibilities: 3-D camera capable of VR filming, and the ability to create something in VR and then build it with the 3-D printer in the Library's MakerStudio.

"It's the future," Riskedahl says. "We're very pleased to be able to offer this to our students and staff. The students move so quickly through these worlds. A lot of them already are really good at it."

## MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

### NEW NAME FOR AUDIOVISUAL DEPARTMENT

The Stewart Memorial Library's Audiovisual Department was renamed this fall as the Media Technologies Department.

"The name more accurately reflects the work the department has been doing for some time," says Jill Jack, Director of Library Services.

The department, located in the Library's lower level, serves Coe's multimedia needs, providing classroom technical support and equipment. It's also where students and staff go to check out DVDs, CDs, VHS tapes and LPs, as well as digital camcorders. It has a media preview room and also houses the new MakerStudio and VR Room. Laura Riskedahl is head of the department, assisted by Linda Hummel and student workers.



Nathan Dvorak '19 demonstrates the new Virtual Reality headset and paddles in the VR Room in the Stewart Memorial Library's Media Technologies Department.

## BARBARA FELLER DISCOVERS WAUBECK'S RENAISSANCE MAN



Barbara Feller

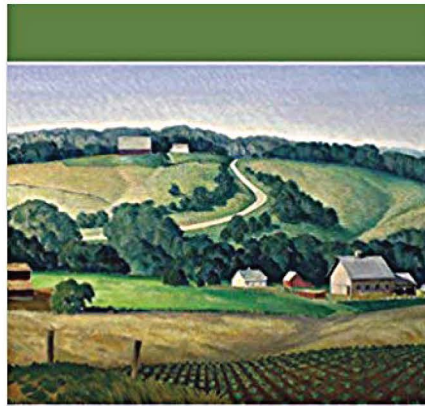
Barbara Feller was digging through a box at The History Center in Cedar Rapids, looking for something that might intrigue the middle schoolers coming for a tour. She found a box holding a photograph of Jay G. Sigmund, a long poem he'd written about the history of Cedar Rapids and a 1933 letter he'd written to a fan. In that letter, he mentioned his love of Waubeek. Where's that, she wondered, knowing she'd found a little mystery for the middle schoolers to solve.

She'd also found a personal "obsession" that would lead to her first book, "Road to Waubeek: Discovering Jay G. Sigmund" (Ice Cube Press, 87 pages, \$14.95). Feller, the wife of Steven Feller, the B.D. Silliman Professor of Physics at Coe College, shared that journey and what she learned about an Iowa Renaissance man — whose life intersected with a number of 20th century notables — in a Nov. 13 program in the Perrine Gallery at Stewart Memorial Library. At the program, people learned about Waubeek, a hamlet on the Wapsipinicon River about 30 miles northeast of Cedar Rapids, where Sigmund was born in 1885. Though he made his living as an insurance salesman in Cedar Rapids, he maintained a second home in Waubeek, where he'd take his wife, Louise, and their three children on the weekends to search for native artifacts and to enjoy the scenic bluffs and rolling hills along the Wapsipinicon River.

Feller tells of the day in 1928 when Sigmund took a young Cedar Rapids artist named Grant Wood to visit Waubeek. They went on a walk while Wood — then in his mid-30s — talked about searching for a style for his paintings. As Sigmund's daughter-in-law related the story to Feller, Sigmund suggested Wood "paint the beauty of Iowa" and not copy the painters in France, where Wood had traveled to soak in the Impressionist style so popular at the time.

Pointing to some quilts hanging on a clothesline, Sigmund said, "Look at those colors." Wood took the challenge and painted those quilts — and went on to fame ... by painting Iowa. That "Quilts" painting hung in Sigmund family homes for years and is now on permanent loan to the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Later, Sigmund would emcee gatherings at the art colony Wood founded in Stone City, and he introduced the artists there — like Marvin Cone — to Waubeek. And those artists would paint Waubeek.

"He put Waubeek on the map," Feller says.



### Road to Waubeek

Discovering Jay G. Sigmund

Barbara Feller

At the time of Sigmund's walk with Wood, Sigmund was better known locally than Wood. He was a well-respected businessman in Cedar Rapids. He wrote poetry, short stories, little "chap books" for Coe, and plays, including five with Betty Smith, who went on to write "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn." He was on the Cedar Rapids Public Library board and a founding member of the city's first art museum at the library, in the building that now houses the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. He introduced his paperboy, **Paul Engle '31**, to poetry, long before Engle went to the University of Iowa to study and direct the Iowa Writers' Workshop and co-found the International Writers' Workshop.

"He was absolutely amazing, very inspiring to people, but always kind of behind the scenes," Feller says. "He loved people. He wrote poems about history and native culture, where the Wapsipinicon, Anamosa and Waubeek got their names. He knew hardship, too, and wrote about the farm auctions during the Great Depression, the lives of women and Prohibition. When he died in a hunting accident in 1937, his death was reported on page 1 of the local newspaper with a 2-inch-high headline."

Feller, a now retired teacher who also worked in museums for 25 years, admits she "became compulsive" in ferreting out the details of Sigmund's life. "I had to get his story out there again," she says. "It took me years, but, over time I collected all of his books and have prints of many of the works of art he inspired. His works are out of print but I'd like to see them back in print. I also found a copy of his unpublished novel, *Purple Washboards*, which would be great to get published."

To learn more about Sigmund — and the Cedar Rapids woman who resurrected his legacy — you can find Feller's book in Cedar Rapids at the Coe College Bookstore, The History Center, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Next Page Books and Barnes & Noble, at Beaverdale Books in Des Moines and online at [IceCubePress.com](http://IceCubePress.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).



ABOVE: Barb Davis

## BARB DAVIS JOINS LIBRARY STAFF

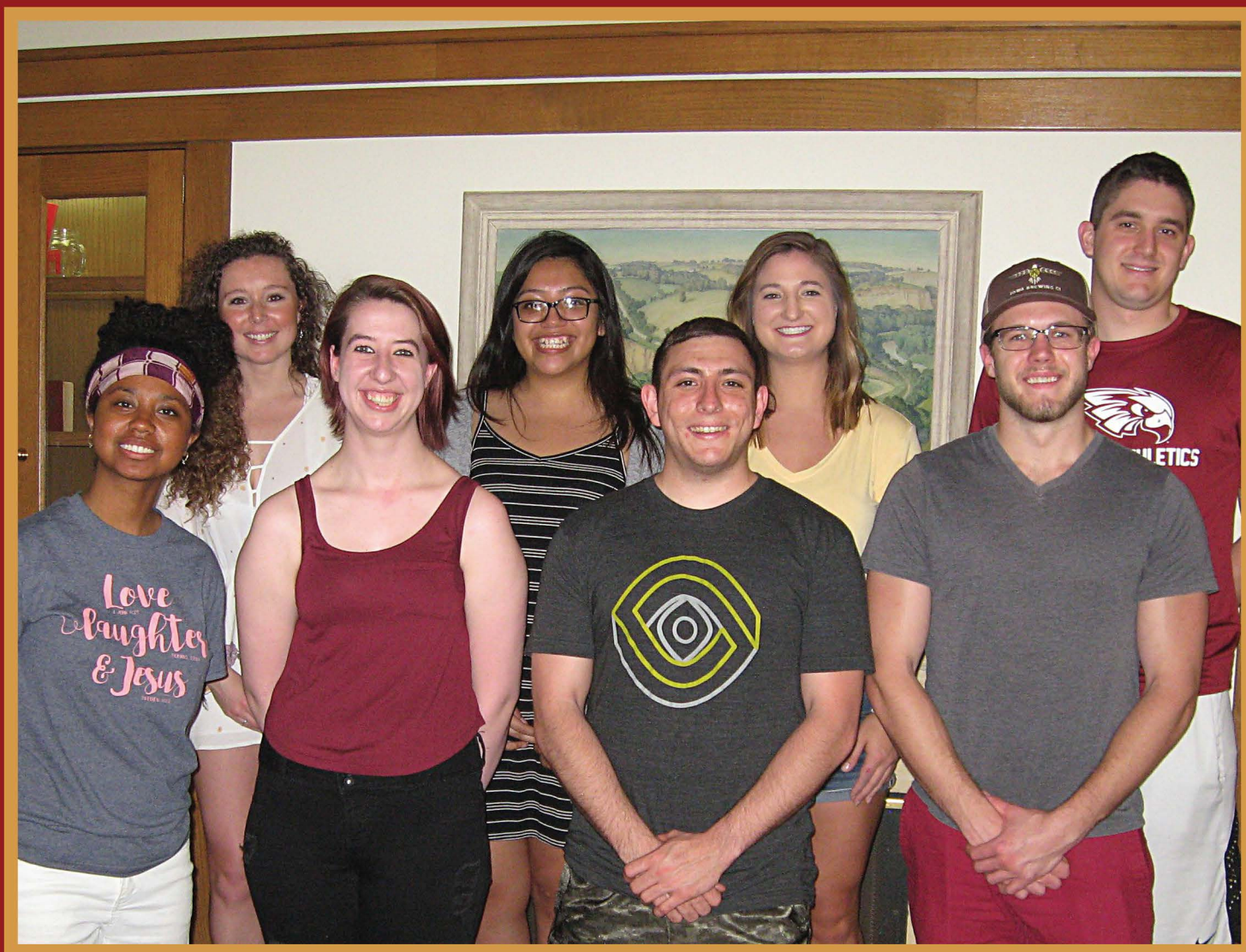
Barb Davis has joined the Stewart Memorial Library staff as Reference Assistant and Interlibrary Loan Supervisor. In that position, she assists Elizabeth Hoover de Galvez, Head of Reference, with the library's reference collection and helps Coe faculty, staff and students with reference questions and resources. Barb has a long-term goal of making sure the library's reference collection stays up-to-date, which is no small task.

In addition to reference services, Barb manages the library's interlibrary loan department, which includes supervising the library's student workers who fill most interlibrary loan requests, and assisting with the more difficult requests. In addition, Davis and her student workers create book displays in the Library and develop "passive programming" for students. An example of the latter, she says, was a papel picado paper craft students could pick up at the reference desk for the Day of the Dead, a holiday celebrated in Mexico around Halloween. "It's a way to make a student's visit to the library a little more interactive ... and to show the library can be fun, too," she says with a smile.

Davis previously worked at public libraries in Cedar Rapids, North Liberty and Williamsburg and is currently the director of a small public library in Oxford, Iowa, just west of Iowa City. She also worked at a library for the blind in Jefferson City, Mo., and at an academic library in Valley City, N.D. She holds a master's degree in library science from the University of North Texas.

Davis and her husband, Byron, live in North Liberty with their daughters, ages 6 and 9.

"I'm definitely enjoying the Coe campus," Davis says. "It's beautiful, and the library is gorgeous, with lots of foot traffic. It's a very nice environment."



# Congratulations!

**Eight Coe College students, who were Library student workers during their Coe years, graduated in May 2018.**

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They are (from left, front row) Tuesday Staderker, Sam Jankowski,  
Lindo Castillo and Brody Standord; and (from left, back row)  
Sidniann Rummans, Karina Sevilla, Colleen Johnston and Zach Serovy.