

# Purdue President, Trustee help inaugurate Women's Archives

*"We can all continue to learn from the women who have made an impact on Purdue."*

SUSAN BULKELEY BUTLER

Purdue Libraries Archives and Special Collections celebrated the inauguration of the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives with a reception and exhibit during Women's History Month in March.

Established in 2006 with a generous gift from Purdue alumna and member of the Purdue Board of Trustees Susan Bulkeley Butler, the Butler Women's Archives contains some of the Archives' most prestigious collections.

Materials in the Butler Women's Archives include the George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart Papers, a gift from Sally Chapman; papers of former deans of students and deans of women Helen Schleman, Beverly Stone, and Dorothy Stratton; and the papers of Virginia Claypool Meredith, known as the "Queen of American Agriculture" and Purdue's first female trustee, among other collections.

The reception featured remarks from

Purdue President France A. Córdoba; Susan Bulkeley Butler (BS '65, HDR '99); Betty Nelson (BA '73), dean of students emerita; Sally Watlington (BA '60), captain, U.S. Navy (retired), and Fred Whitford, author of a biography of Virginia Claypool Meredith.

"The mission of the Butler Women's Archives is to document the pioneering women who helped shape Purdue's and Indiana's history," says Stephanie Schmitz, special projects archivist. "It was such an honor to have trailblazing women — especially Susan Bulkeley Butler and France Córdoba — there to help us celebrate the inauguration of this valuable research archive."

In her remarks, Butler stressed the importance of the preservation of documents and papers highlighting women's contributions to Purdue and the state of Indiana. "We need the Purdue history conserved here, so that people all over the world can take advantage of these materials," Butler commented. "We can learn from people who came to Purdue, people who had an impact on who we are at Purdue today."

Butler charged everyone in the audience to go home, sort through their memorabilia, and send all the materials that showcase their relationship to Purdue or their time at the University to the Purdue Archives and Special Collections.

Two other women featured at the reception had already tackled that very challenge. Betty



**MARKING AND MAKING HISTORY.** Susan Bulkeley Butler is presented with a framed commemorative poster from the inaugural exhibit of the Butler Women's Archives by Libraries dean James L. Mullins and Tamara Morse, a fellow Purdue alumna and benefactor, financial consultant, and Butler friend.



**LIVING HISTORY.** Purdue Libraries inaugurated the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives with a reception and exhibit during Women's History Month in March.

Below, author Fred Whitford signs copies of his biography of Virginia Claypool Meredith, Purdue's first female trustee. Whitford drew on materials in Purdue's Archives to write the book *The Queen of American Agriculture: A biography of Virginia Claypool Meredith*, which was published as part of the Purdue University Press's Founder's Series.

Third photo below: Enjoying the celebration, from left, are presenters Sally Watlington, captain, U.S. Navy (retired), Betty Nelson, dean of students emerita, biographer Fred Whitford, Sammie Morris, head of Archives and Special Collections, and Susan Bulkeley Butler, the Women's Archives benefactor.

Nelson, dean of students emerita, and Sally Watlington, captain U.S. Navy (retired), presented materials to Sammie Morris, head of Archives and Special Collections. Both women have become the keepers of photos, papers, and memorabilia from the "heritage chain" of deans of women and deans of students that served at Purdue from 1933–1995, including Helen Schleman, Beverley Stone, Barbara Cook, Betty Nelson, and Dorothy Stratton, and they both recognize the importance of preserving these documents in the Butler Women's Archives.

The reception concluded with author Fred Whitford discussing his biography of Virginia Claypool Meredith, Purdue's first female trustee. Whitford drew on materials in Purdue's Archives to write the book *The Queen of American Agriculture: A biography of Virginia Claypool Meredith*, which was published as part of the Purdue University Press's Founder's Series.

"This is why we need a women's archives," commented Butler, "so that stories like Virginia Claypool Meredith's can be told, and so that we can all continue to learn from the women who have made an impact on Purdue."



For more information about the Susan Bulkeley Butler Women's Archives, including a complete list of the collections and access to digitized materials, please visit [www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/womenarc](http://www.lib.purdue.edu/spcol/womenarc).