Director of Libraries Peter Watson-Boone retired at the end of July, after 13 years in that position. Under Watson-Boone’s leadership, the UWM Libraries implemented a new online catalog; acquired many valuable books and periodicals; and enhanced their intellectual resources through extensive community relations work.

Watson-Boone was locally, regionally, and nationally active in library organizations, most recently serving on the Executive Committee, University Libraries Section, of the Association of College and Research Libraries. In 1991, he received the American Library Association’s Isadore Gilbert Mudge Citation for distinguished contributions to reference librarianship.

Watson-Boone skillfully coped with rising book and periodical costs, and with sometimes difficult State budgets. The UWM Libraries are intellectually richer, and the staff and resources greatly enhanced, because of him. His successful relationship with the Friends organization in no small measure contributed to the Libraries’ continued growth and well-being. We will miss him greatly.

The Friends have enjoyed had another successful year! The Friends maintained their healthy cash balance in 2002-2003 and substantially increased their total assets, while continuing to support the UWM Libraries and their programs, such as the Holzheimer Maps and America lecture series and Book FOR[us]MS. The Friends also offered programs of our own, such as this spring’s “From Television’s Golden Age: Early News Film from the WTMJ-TV Archive” and last fall’s illustrated lecture on the Yemen by Board member Gilbert Church. We again provided support for Libraries staff to attend workshops and conferences that enhance their professional development. You will find details of upcoming Friends-supported activities on the following pages of the newsletter.

The Friends accomplished a great deal during the past year. In an important step toward greater fiscal means, we established a UW System Trust Fund account. We began the second year of the Inside Inscriptions fundraising program, whereby bookplates with the names of honorees are placed inside new books for the UWM Libraries; this program has raised $1080 so far. We conducted a tour for Friends of the Library, to show some rarely-seen “treasures.” We allocated funds towards the publication of a book on acclaimed composer and UWM Professor Emeritus John Downey entitled John Downey: A Creative Profile, by Sister Marion Verhaalen. In November and April we held successful book sales on behalf of the Library. And at the recent Friends annual meeting, held June 12, the Friends elected president Bruce Fetter and vice-president Patricia Van Alyea; re-elected treasurer Rabbi Barry Silberg and Board member Gilbert Church; and elected Deborah Gardner Conta, Tyrone Dumas, John Koethe, Robert Meldman, Martine Meyer, Alderman Michael Murphy, Lolita Schneiders, and Timothy Sheehy to the Board; we appreciate their participation.

These are challenging, but exciting times. Budgets are short and demand is long. We will miss Peter Watson-Boone who served the Libraries so effectively and with such devotion; fortunately, we have Ewa Barczyk’s sure hand at our tiller (see articles below). In order to support the high level of service which the UWM Libraries have provided, we’ll need even greater effort from the Friends. I look forward to your help not just with money but with ideas. The Board, as always, welcomes your input, support, and involvement. If you would like to become involved with the Friends, contact me or one of the other Board members. Thank you for your support.

Bruce Fetter
At the program UWM archivist Mary Huesbeck spoke about the film’s processing and preservation activity, which she has headed. Director of Libraries Peter Watson-Boone introduced the selection of film chosen for the program. Segments shown included The Rex Mays Classic car race at State Fair Park Track (June 1953), Mayor Frank Zeidler’s last day in office (April 19, 1960), and Building the Mitchell Park Domes (June 27, 1962).

Possibilities for the collection’s use are many: teachers at any level could use footage for classroom instruction; footage could be used to support exhibits by museums and the Libraries; and researchers will have an almost inexhaustible data base for media-related research as well as for recent local history.

The collection is significant because it documents virtually the entire early, formative period of television broadcast journalism, the Cold War era, the civil rights and other social movements of the 1960’s, and the recent history of Milwaukee. It includes footage of the Milwaukee Braves and Brewers; the Green Bay Packers; the anti-war and civil rights demonstrations and unrest during the 1960s; local businesses such as the Pabst, Schlitz, and Miller Brewing Companies; the Harley-Davidson Motor Company; and the Allis-Chalmers Corporation. Also included are visits to Milwaukee by national and international politicians and celebrities.

From an exhibit on the preservation of the WTMJ-TV film archive.

At the annual UWM meeting, the Friends of the Library honored Professor Norman Lasca, who stepped down after eight years as Friends President. On behalf of the Friends, Bruce Fetter, the new President, presented Lasca with a certificate of appreciation and a rare 1855 map of the Arctic region. Chair of UWM’s Geosciences department, Lasca has been a long-time supporter of the Friends, also serving as Vice-President and as a Director. During his tenure as President, he brought the Friends a remarkable distance: he transformed the Board to make it truly community-oriented and he considerably strengthened the Friends’ finances. The Friends are a much more vigorous and effective organization because of his leadership. Lasca will remain on the Executive Board as Past President.

Norman Lasca accepting gift map from Bruce Fetter