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 President France A. Córdova; 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 Córdova — 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.
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).