Graduate assistants and archival interns perform important work for the Library. Drawn chiefly from the archival education program and the departments of Applied History, History, and Library and Information Science, these students also receive valuable training and experience while performing their work for the Library. We are very proud of these individuals. Many of them have gone on to forge rewarding careers working in archives and special collections repositories.

Chuck Barber and Kelly Gilbert each had extended graduate assistantships with Modern Political Collections. Jean Bischoff was employed on the grant helping to catalog the Library’s extensive photograph collection and performed an internship with Modern Political Collections. We asked each of them to describe their current positions and write a bit about how their experience at the Library has helped them in these positions.

Kelly Gilbert

I am a Research Archivist at the Library of Virginia in Richmond, where I assist patrons in both archival and general research. We hold a large variety of state archival materials, from seventeenth-century land grant records to twenty-first century governor’s papers. Many researchers pursue genealogical interests, so we hold vital statistics and census records as well as a number of private papers collections and family bible materials. I also work on collections-related projects, including arranging maps and developing a guide to local election records. I serve on both the Cartographic Focus Group and the Virginia Historical Resources Center Focus Group.
I worked at Modern Political Collections from 1999-2002. The processing work I did there helps me to interpret the various databases and finding aids we use to help patrons locate material. Furthermore, working with political papers gave me an appreciation for the functions of state government that continues to serve me as I work in a state archive.

**Chuck Barber**

*MLIS 1994*

Head, Manuscripts and Assistant Head,  
Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
University of Georgia

As Head of Manuscripts I am responsible for the daily running of the Manuscripts Section of the Hargrett Library. This includes the acquisition of materials, supervising the processing of collections, and in some instances digitizing these collections.

As Assistant Head of the Hargrett Library, I am responsible for deputizing for the Department Head when necessary, for much of the daily running of the department and for ensuring that the Department Head’s wishes are carried out. The Hargrett Library includes the Georgia Collection of books and journals relating to the state, Rare Books, Archives and Records Management, and Manuscripts.

I worked at Modern Political Collections from the January of 1993 through June of 1994.

The information I learned and the experience I gained working in Modern Political Collections has stayed with me throughout my working life. I learned the nuts and bolts of working with collections, and that was very important. However, more importantly, I learned how a professional archivist must comport oneself in order to do a proper job. I learned how to be an archivist, and this knowledge carries
over in all aspects of my life. Whether dealing with donors, employees, or superiors I always feel I am solidly grounded by my experiences with Modern Political Collections.

Jean Bischoff

I work as the Dole Archivist at the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas. On any given day I may be found double-checking the installation of archival shelving underway at our about-to-be-completed building, doing a preliminary inventory of a newly acquired set of gubernatorial papers, or talking to Senator Dole’s Washington office about a document he needs from his 4,000 box collection (“immediately, if you possibly can”).

I began my career as an intern in the Modern Political Collections during the summer of 2000, processing the papers of a state senator. Although the techniques of arrangement, description, and access that I learned on the job were critical to managing the enormous congressional collection I oversee today, by far the most valuable lessons I learned as a student at the South Caroliniana involved the importance of relationships – establishing trust with present and future donors of collections, maintaining credibility, and communicating enthusiasm and goals effectively. Whether they involve sub-contractors at the job site or affluent political supporters interested in becoming part of the institution’s programs, the quality of an archivist’s relationships with the people involved almost always determines the outcome of a project.

From Caroliniana Columns, the newsletter of the University South Caroliniana Society
Spring Issue, 2003