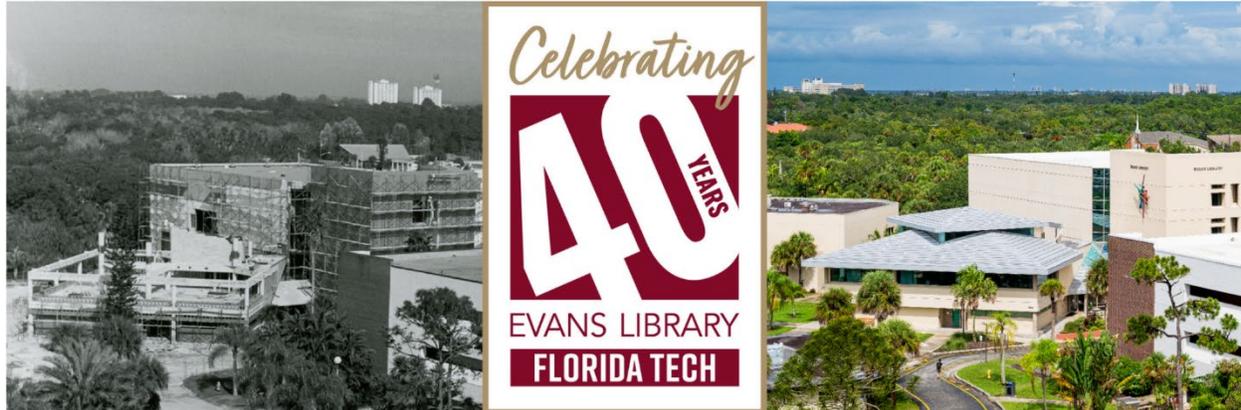


# 40 for 40: Celebrating Forty Years of Evans Library

Nancy Garmer  
Associate Dean, Evans Library  
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The John H. Evans Library, the third library at Florida Institute of Technology (Florida Tech), opened in 1984 and celebrated its grand opening in January 1985. When Jason Martin became library dean in August 2024, plans were already underway to mark the library’s 40th anniversary. Former interim dean and current associate dean Nancy Garmer had initiated discussions with the Office of Advancement and Creative Services to commemorate the milestone. Together, the team transformed the anniversary into a fundraising opportunity, branding it ‘40 for 40’ and inviting supporters to contribute in celebration of Evans Library’s 40 years.

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, programs and outreach highlighted the library’s evolution, contributions, and impact on the Florida Tech community. University Marketing and Creative Services designed commemorative logos, an email header, and an interactive webpage featuring a welcome video from the new Dean of Libraries, a calendar of anniversary events, historical photos, and a message board for sharing memories. Florida Tech staff, faculty, alumni, emeriti, a former Dean of Libraries, and even university mascot Pete the Panther posted celebratory and nostalgic messages.

Current School of Arts and Communication professor Dr. Natalie Dorfeld shared this tribute, “Happy Anniversary, Evans Library. Thank you for your friendly staff (Good morning, Nancy, Chelsea, and Bill). Thank you for fun events (Who doesn’t love puppies and kittens during finals week?). Thank you for creating wellness (Campus needs more plants, yoga, funky art, and hammocks).”

Today, the Library looks dramatically different from its 1984 appearance. To showcase this 40-year transformation, “Then & Now” photo displays were placed throughout the building, each featuring a QR code linking to images of the original spaces. These visual comparisons highlighted not only the evolution of the Library’s physical environment but also reflected the broader shift in libraries and society as services and resources have increasingly moved online.

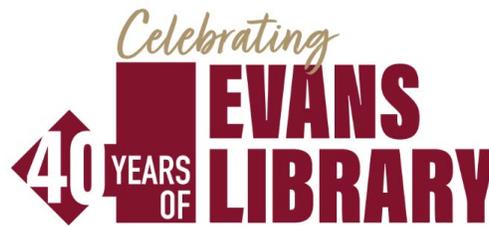
The Florida Tech Board of Trustees kicked off the celebration in October 2024 with a tour of Evans Library following the Board’s quarterly meeting. Travis Proctor, then Board Chair, had not visited the Library since his undergraduate days in the 1990s. He was

surprised to see how much it had changed - Evans Library is no longer [your mother's library](#). The tour was an opportunity to showcase the work of a modern library, highlight innovative learning spaces such as the [Digital Scholarship Lab \(DSL\)](#), and share some of the interesting research conducted by Evans Library faculty librarians, including student perceptions of AI in learning.

University Historian Gordon Patterson treated the Board to an engaging overview of [“The History of Florida Tech Libraries.”](#) including lively stories about the two previous library buildings on campus. His talk was later recreated in the DSL’s video and podcast studios and is now available in the Library’s [Scholarship Repository](#), along with other 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary artifacts such as the [“History of the Library in Photos.”](#)

A series of events followed throughout the year, highlighted on both the 40th anniversary webpage and listed on the back of a commemorative postcard featuring a black-and-white photo from the 1985 ribbon-cutting ceremony. These postcards were distributed at each event, while invitations were sent through the Office of Advancement’s email platform to manage RSVPs and collect supporter contact information.





### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Thursday, Nov. 7, 2024**

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF BREVARD**

Florida Lore: An Evening with Master Storyteller Dr. Caren Neile

**Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025**

**BREAKING BARRIERS RECEPTION**

Meet Dr. Jason Martin, Dean of Evans Library

**MLK COMMEMORATION**

**Friday, Feb. 21, 2025**

**10TH ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN**

**Wednesday, March 26, 2025**

**EVENT HORIZON: THE NEXT 40 YEARS OF SPACE  
AND BEYOND CEREMONY**

FIND MORE DETAILS AND  
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In November, the Library co-hosted the Community Foundation of Brevard’s Florida Humanities “Florida Lore” storytelling presentation. In January, Evans Library introduced its first-ever Breaking Barriers Reception, held just ahead of the university’s annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration.

In previous years, attendees were invited to the Breaking Barriers Lounge on the Library’s third floor to view the mural and interpretive sign about Julius Montgomery, Florida Tech’s first Black student. The new reception expanded that experience—honoring Montgomery’s legacy, connecting with Dean Jason Martin, Ed.D., and celebrating with fellow guests. The event drew a strong turnout, with guests mingling, learning about the Library, and reflecting on Montgomery’s impact before the formal program at the Gleason Performing Arts Center.



February marked the 10th annual African American Read-In at Evans Library—recognized by *Florida Today* as one of the Space Coast’s most significant Black History Month events. The 2025 program celebrated the Harlem Renaissance and the enduring influence of Black culture. More than 150 attendees gathered to hear Florida Tech alumni, faculty, students, and community members honor Black luminaries through spoken word, poetry and music.

The celebration concluded with a ceremony recognizing winners of *Event Horizon: The Next 40 Years of Space and Beyond*, a student contest sponsored by the Astronauts Memorial Foundation. Students were invited to share their vision for space exploration over the next four decades. Florida Tech President John Nicklow and retired astronaut Bob Cabana—also a contest judge—presented awards to business student Robert Gadomski for his winning project, *SpaceCast*, and honored Kozmo Colina and Eseroghene Oguma with honorable mentions.



This year-long celebration reconnected alumni with the Library, energized loyal donors, and set the stage for future fundraising. The original ribbon-cutting for the 1984 Library took place in January 1985, marking a new chapter in Florida Tech’s history. Moving forward, each January we will celebrate Evans Library’s birthday with a brief message and fundraising appeal to our community. Just as we honored this milestone, the tradition will continue—linking past and present and reminding us that libraries are more than buildings; they are living spaces that grow, evolve, and bring people together.