THE ROBERT PENN WARREN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES

In 1989, the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities was awarded a $480,000 challenge grant from the NEH to assist in establishing a permanent endowment for the program. The grant had to be matched 4:1 with funds from the private sector, which helped to leverage an additional $1.9 million. This award signifies the nationally recognized achievements of the center and helps to ensure its long-term future. The center facilitates interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences, hosting annual faculty fellows, including one visiting faculty member from outside the university. It also has an annual graduate fellowship program. The center often collaborates with partners from across the campus and Nashville to provide opportunities for humanistic excellence.

The Robert Penn Warren Center celebrated its 25th anniversary in September 2013. The event included the premiere of Speaking for the Humanities, a documentary highlighting the history of the Warren Center and the significance of the humanities in society and at Vanderbilt. The documentary includes interviews with members of Congress and footage from the NEH’s Capitol Hill advocacy day.

TWO VANDERBILT RESEARCHERS AWARDED NEH GRANTS TO SUPPORT BOOKS

In December 2014, two Vanderbilt faculty members received grants from the NEH. Marshall Eakin, professor of history, was awarded a grant to complete his book Shadows of the Soul: Brazilian Identity in the Twentieth Century. Humberto Garcia, associate professor of English, was awarded a grant to support research for his second book project, Romanticism Re-Oriented: Indian Authors and English Literary Culture, 1770–1830.

SYRIAC GAZETTEER PRESERVES ENDANGERED MIDDLE EAST CULTURES

Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities has allowed Vanderbilt scholar David A. Michelson to preserve key moments in the development and interaction of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other religions. Michelson is the general editor of The Syriac Gazetteer, an online geographical dictionary launched by Syriaca.org to document and save ancient and medieval Middle Eastern cultural heritage, now threatened by civil war and political instability.

DIGITIZING BROADCAST HISTORY

The Vanderbilt University Television News Archive is the world’s most extensive and complete collection of television news. It has been recording, preserving, and providing access to television news broadcasts of national networks since August 5, 1968. NEH funding is currently being used to digitize the entire one-of-a-kind collection, thus increasing its accessibility and usefulness in a modern setting. In January 2013, the Television News Archive was awarded the Governor’s Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Midsouth Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the academy’s highest honor.

XQUERY SUMMER INSTITUTE

In June 2014, Clifford B. Anderson, director for scholarly communications at the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries at Vanderbilt, hosted a two-week session for twelve participants to learn how to build projects in the digital humanities using the programming language XQuery and an open source XML database called eXist. The institute, hosted by Vanderbilt, was among the Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities supported by the Office of Digital Humanities at the National Endowment for the Humanities.