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Highlighting Health and Diversity: Curating Digital Exhibits to Promote Online Resources Across Cultural Months

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Comments

Presented at the [Medical Library Association Annual Meeting](#) in May 2024 in Portland, Oregon.

Highlighting Health and Diversity: Curating Digital Exhibits to Promote Online Resources Across Cultural Months

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries have increased their efforts to support and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at their institutions. One method to accomplish this goal is by providing culturally diverse resources and services to support teaching and learning. Medical and health science libraries may find that culturally diverse health resources are rare in existing resources and materials. To highlight the available resources and historical hallmarks, two health science librarians created digital exhibits to promote these available tools across widely recognized thematic cultural heritage and awareness months.

The idea to curate and develop digital exhibits came as an alternative to the physical exhibits being curated at the main library at our institution. While our health science library did not carry a physical collection covering competent healthcare for diverse populations, there were relevant titles in our eBook collections on caring for diverse populations. To further enhance the digital exhibit, we highlighted individuals and historical events that have led to significant achievements or developments in providing quality care to each population, highlighted across cultural months.

We currently have digital exhibits for:

- APIDA Heritage Month
- Black History Month
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Hispanic Heritage Month
- LGBTQ Pride Month
- Native American Heritage Month
- Women's History Month
- World AIDS Day
- World Autism Month



METHODS

We identified and chose thematic heritage and awareness months based on those being recognized by other Chapman University offices and by consulting the following resources:

- Library of Congress
- The University of Buffalo Office of Inclusive Excellence

Rather than creating a LibGuide or webpage to display the resources, we used Scalar to create an interactive and visually rich exhibit. Scalar is an open-access platform designed for universities to publish long-form scholarly content. The digital exhibits we created included the following elements:

- Cover image
- Introduction to the theme
- eBooks and Journals provided by the library
- Online resources (such as professional organizations, advocacy groups, government websites, and sources for data and statistics)
- Biographical summaries of relevant significant figures
- Timelines of milestones
- Glossaries
- Data visualizations

We found and selected eBooks and journals within our collection by completing keyword searches, limiting to recent publications, and reviewing titles, summaries, table of contents, and authorship to ensure relevance and suitability. We identified additional resources, guidelines, and statistics based on those highlighted by local, state, and federal government websites and reputable professional organizations.

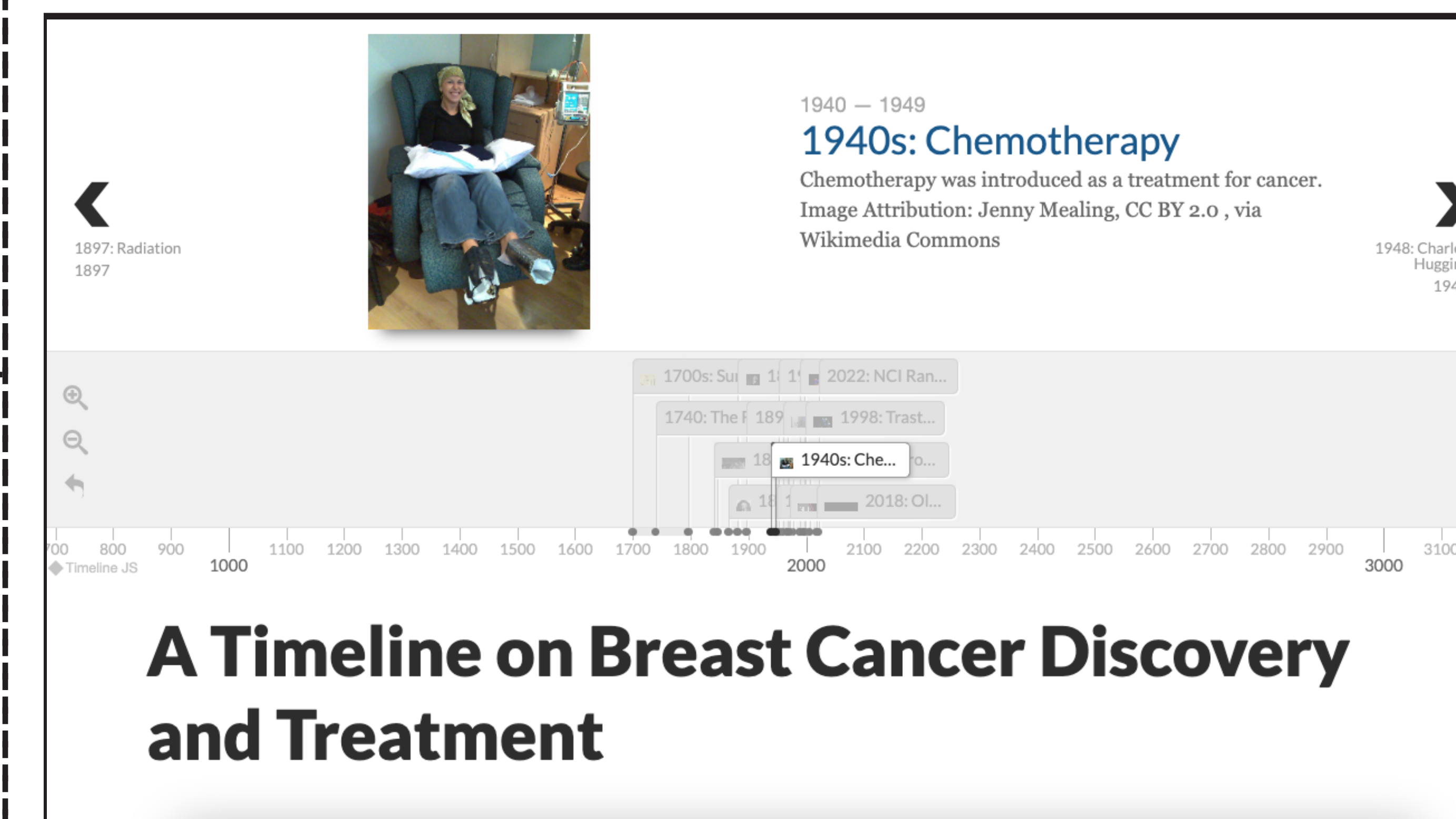
The digital exhibits were marketed to our campus community through:

- Digital signage
- Library newsletters
- Library blog posts
- Social media (e.g., LinkedIn)

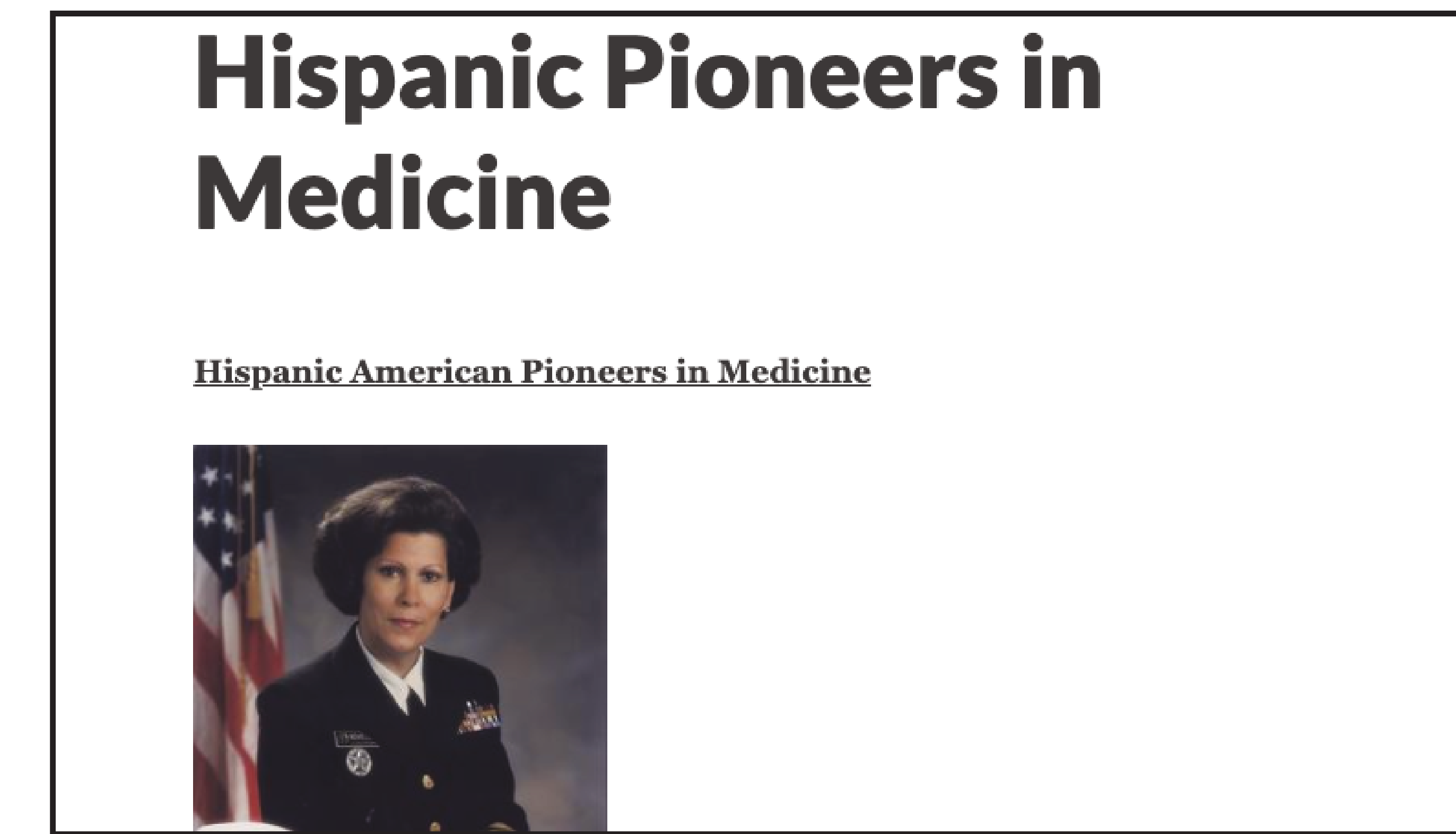
EXHIBIT SAMPLES



Each exhibit has an introductory image designed by library staff to illustrate a component or symbol from each cultural or health awareness month. These images are also used for outreach and marketing.



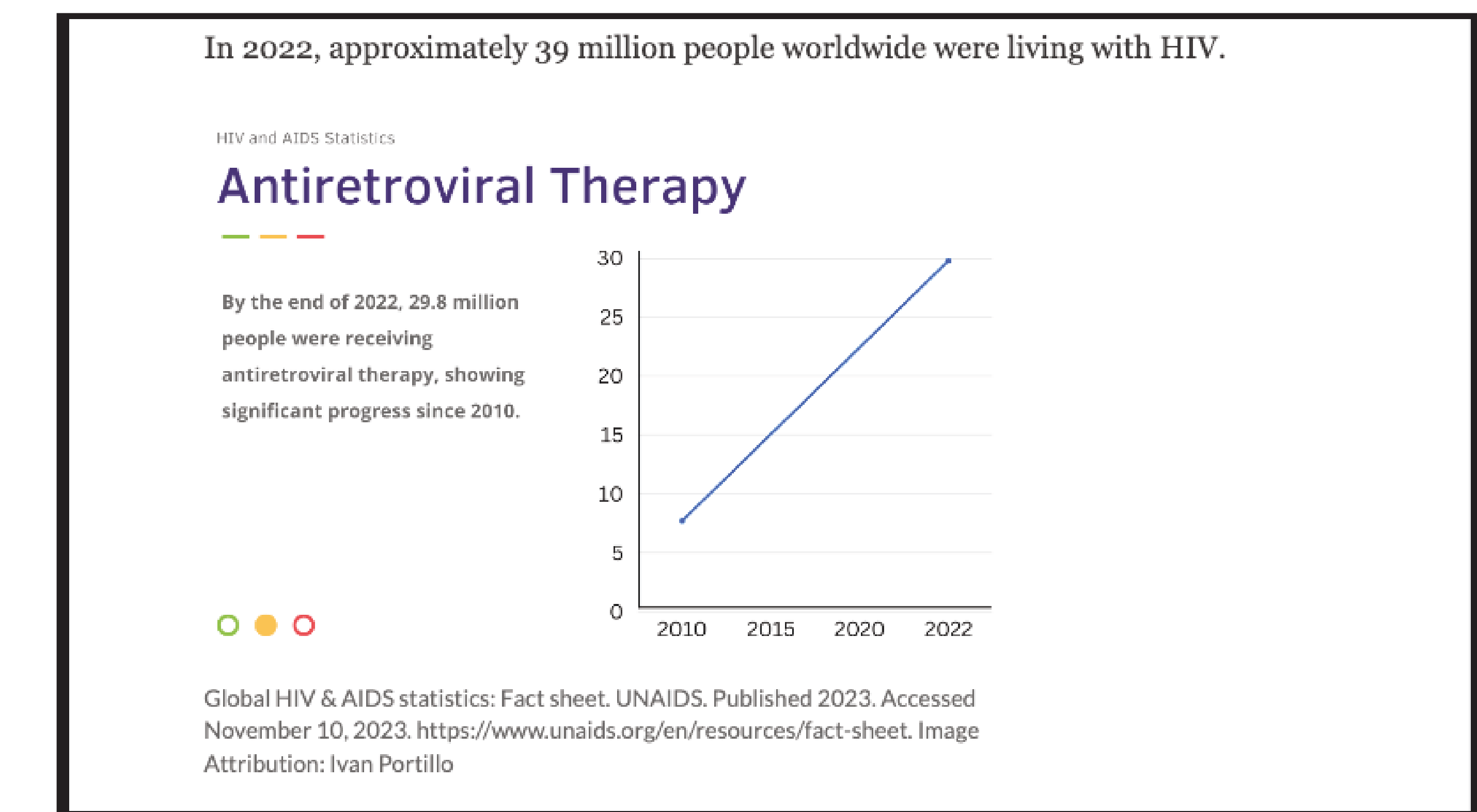
The timeline module in Scalar has helped to illustrate the impact and evolution of diseases covered during health awareness months.



Individuals who have played a critical role in the health care for each culture or disease covered during the month, are highlighted with a brief bio. References are linked to library resources to learn more about the individual.



Local, federal, and professional organizations are listed to provide readers with additional resources for further statistics and guidelines to help patients and groups highlighted in the month's exhibits.



Data visualizations are created for exhibits to illustrate impact and stories for certain topics. Statistics are referenced and linked from reputable organizations or government agencies.



Handbooks and monographs carried in the library's ebook collections offer faculty and students with information on how to better treat or support the cultural groups or patients covered in each month's exhibit. Historical titles that detail the past and key individuals are also highlighted in the books list.

DISCUSSION

The initial implementation of the digital exhibits received positive feedback and praise for highlighting cultural heritage months that weren't being previously celebrated at the Health Science Campus, compared to our counterpart at the main campus. The positive feedback inspired the creation of additional digital exhibits to focus on health awareness months and additional causes currently not being represented at the institution. Faculty have also discovered library resources that may have previously been lost due to our expanding online resources. These resources were not specifically purchased by the Health Science librarians, but were included in our existing subscription packages, while others were discovered through local and federal agencies. Each exhibit needs to be updated annually to ensure that access to online resources are still active while also updating data visualizations to display current statistics.

While we have only received positive feedback, one of the limitations we have found with the use of Scalar for our platform for our exhibits, is that they don't provide the ability to view statistics for the digital exhibits. The ability to track statistics on views or clicks, would help that we are properly promoting the digital exhibits and which topics are more popular amongst the Health Science campus. Other platforms will be considered in the future that provide similar functionality as Scalar.

The digital exhibits still accomplish our goals of highlighting the library's culturally diverse resources and recognizing cultural heritage and awareness months.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Each exhibit would not be possible without the contribution of Rinker Campus Library Assistants, Amie Fillet and Sara Flournoy. Their contributions include creating the introductory images for each exhibit and locating individuals who should be highlighted.

Thank you to Associate Dean, Julie Artman, for reviewing each exhibit and providing thoughtful feedback so that each group is well represented.

A special thank you to the current and past members of the Leatherby Libraries Outreach and Marketing team, Alyssa Castanon, Essraa Nawar, and Caylin Schmenk for creating blog posts and marketing each exhibit via social media.