A Note from the Collection Coordinator

I am excited to share that the papers of Gwendolyn Kiste are the newest addition to the Horror Studies Collection! Kiste employs a neo-Gothic sensibility in her writing, evoking authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Jane Austen while grounding her stories within modern settings and issues. She frequently explores the sense of being an outsider and highlights female protagonists and the perils women must navigate within our world.

Her debut novel, Rust Maidens, follows a group of young women afflicted by a mysterious disease. The steel and heavy industry collapse that defined the Rust Belt serves as the backdrop. While set in Cleveland, through the vivid sense of despair and uncertainty brought about by the closing mills, the story could just as easily take place in Pittsburgh. The novel earned Kiste the 2018 Bram Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in a First Novel.

Kiste's other works include the story collection And Her Smile Will Untether the Universe and the novellas Pretty Marys All in a Row and Boneset and Feathers. She also writes nonfiction pieces examining the history of horror. Originally from Ohio, Kiste now lives in Western PA, making her the first local author to deposit her works with the Horror Studies Collection. Her archive includes edited drafts and manuscripts of her works, which will allow researchers to examine and understand her creative process. We are very excited to have her materials join the growing archives here at Pitt!

Earlier this month, the Living Dead Weekend returned to Monroeville Mall after a hiatus in 2020. The
well-attended event was a success – it was great to see so much of the Romero family in person again after so long. The celebration focused on the *Day of the Dead* and *Return of the Living Dead* films, as well as *Dawn of the Dead*. One major highlight included a dedication of Romero Court, the promenade area where the bust of George currently stands (in front of JC Penny and Dick's Sporting Goods). Additionally, the Living Dead Museum relocated back to the Mall from Evans City and is now open for visitors.

**Planning is underway for fall events and programming, including the relaunch of the Horror Studies Webinar Series. Stay tuned and stay scared!**

- Ben Rubin, Horror Studies Collection Coordinator

Author Gwendolyn Kiste stands beside Horror Studies Collection Coordinator Ben Rubin who holds the Bram Stoker Award she included in her donation!
Fresh Cuts from the Blog

Visiting scholar Adam Charles Hart shares freaky and fantastic behind-the-scenes highlights on our Horror Studies website.
George Romero's Zomboid

In 2006, Romero wrote several treatments for a proposed television series called, alternately, Zombisodes and Zomboid. The script is a cartoonish burlesque on zombie movies whose hapless undead protagonist is slashed, shot, blown up, crushed, run over, and otherwise punished over and over again.

Read more about Zomboid
Dead Reckoning: the origins of *Land of the Dead*

In 2005, after a 20-year hiatus, Romero returned to his zombie universe with *Land of the Dead*. The film was the biggest budget entry into the Dead series and featured Pittsburgh in its most prominent role despite being the first of the series filmed entirely outside of the region. The film continues the bleak tone of *Day* as it depicts a stratified Pittsburgh with the rich living in safety and luxury within the fortified and barricaded Golden Triangle of Downtown Pittsburgh, while the rest of society toils amongst slums outside the gates with threats both human and undead.

[Read more about the Land of the Dead](#)
Keep an eye on the [GARF website](#) for news about future programming!

Collection Contact: Ben Rubin, btr9@pitt.edu, 412-648-8194
Media Contact: Sharon Blake, blake@pitt.edu

**Archives & Special Collections at Hillman Library**
320 Hillman Library
University of Pittsburgh
3960 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

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