Wm. Shakespeare's
First Folio
1623
First Time in Idaho
2016

The Works of William Shakespeare,
containing all his Comedies, Histories, and
Tragedies, truly reprint, according to fol.

...
To commemorate the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death during 2016, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC has launched an ambitious initiative to loan an original 1623 edition of Shakespeare's First Folio to one location in each state, for the period of one month. Special Collections Faculty at Boise State’s Albertsons Library developed a successful application for the loan, with support from the Arts and Humanities Institute, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Boise Public Library, Idaho Council for Teachers of English, Idaho Humanities Council, Idaho Public Radio, and naturally, Idaho Center for the Book. Idaho Commission for Libraries and Boise City Department of Arts and History have subsequently joined forces with the project.

The national tour is titled First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare, in acknowledgement of the fact that the book was the first collected works of Shakespeare; the first and arguably most significant collected works by any playwright ever; and the sole source of some of Shakespeare’s most beloved works, including The Tempest, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, 12th Night, As You Like It, and others, which would have been lost to the world if they hadn’t been published in the 900-page tome that is the Folio.

The Folio will be exhibited at the Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery, in Boise State’s Ron and Linda Yanke Family Research Park, 220 East Parkcenter Boulevard. We are planning many programs which will be free and open to the public, including a carnivalesque opening ceremony on Saturday August 20; a keynote lecture by Folio expert Eric Rasmussen (see below) on Thursday, September 1; performances, lectures, family and educational activities. In addition to the Folio, the Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery will also feature an exhibit honoring the 40th anniversary of Idaho Shakespeare Festival, and other related displays designed by Boise State students. Community and school groups will be welcome on an advance-reservation basis.

As far as we know, this exhibit will mark the first time that the Folio has ever been exhibited in Idaho—and we’d love to hear from you if you know otherwise. More to the point, if you would like to be involved in creating a program or event to honor the Folio, or if you’d like to volunteer as a docent or host while the Folio is here, please contact us at firstfolio@boisestate.edu. For more information and for program updates, visit http://archives.boisestate.edu/shakespeare2016.php. You may also contact Project Director Gwyn Hervochon, Archivist and Librarian in Special Collections at Boise State’s Albertsons Library, at (208) 426-1674.

First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare, on tour from the Folger Shakespeare Library, is a national traveling exhibition organized by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, and produced in association with the American Library Association and the Cincinnati Museum Center. First Folio! has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor, and by the support of Google.org, Vinton and Sigrid Cerf, the British Council, and other generous donors.

**Keynote Speaker: Folio Expert Eric Rasmussen**

Eric Rasmussen, Professor and Chair of the English Department at University of Nevada-Reno, will be the keynote speaker for the First Folio! programs in Idaho. His talk is scheduled for Thursday September 1 at Boise State’s Yanke Center; for more details as the date approaches visit http://archives.boisestate.edu/shakespeare2016.php

Rasmussen is author of The Shakespeare First Folio: A Descriptive Catalogue (with Anthony James West; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.) In his online biography, Rasmussen relates, “[In 2012] I published The Shakespeare First Folio: A Descriptive Catalogue. This 1000-page catalogue raïsonné is the result of two decades of research during which Anthony James West and I located 132 surviving copies of this immeasurably important book—a remarkable 72 more than were recorded in Sidney Lee’s census over a century ago. A research team of UNR graduate students...then examined every copy in situ worldwide and prepared full bibliographic descriptions of each. I also published a trade book offering a narrative account of this field research, The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios, which has reached a wide (and surprisingly appreciative) audience.” One online reviewer described The Shakespeare Thefts as “Detailed, humorous and absolutely fascinating, this is an impressive piece of detection work, a startling insight into human covetousness, and a delicious slice of Shakespearean lore.”

Rasmussen is also author of The Royal Shakespeare Company’s Complete Works of William Shakespeare (with Jonathan Bate; New York: Random House; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and has authored and edited many other publications in print and online, relating to Shakespeare, Medieval and Early Modern Drama, Renaissance Literature, Bibliography and Textual Criticism.
Shakespeare's First Folio, open to its title page and seen in its natural habitat, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. This image, and the image of the Folio (open to List of Actors) incorporated on the front cover and on the interior left panel appear courtesy of the Folger Shakespeare Library.