From Archives to Center
Dorothy Gruich

The Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, aims to promote the history of psychology and related human sciences to the broadest community possible. It is home to the Archives of the History of American Psychology, the National Museum of Psychology, and the Institute for Human Science and Culture.

The Archives of the History of American Psychology (AHAP) was founded in 1965 when University of Akron professors Dr. John A. Popplestone and Dr. Marion White McPherson created a central repository for the papers of
psychologists and primary source materials related to psychology. With support from The University of Akron Board of Trustees, AHAP started in the University Libraries, moved to Simmons Hall in 1968, and then to the Polsky Building in 1994 where it was housed for sixteen years. Through Drs. Popplestone and McPherson’s leadership, the AHAP became the largest repository of its kind in the world.

In 1999, Dr. David B. Baker became the second director of the Archives and brought an exciting vision of growth, with increased visibility and support for the collections a major priority. In 2005, Roadway Express donated a building to the University to serve as the new home of what would become the Center. With the support of the Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation and Drs. Nicholas and Dorothy Cummings, the Center opened in August 2010.

After much work and support by many, the National Museum of Psychology became a reality in 2018. Featuring permanent exhibits on the history of psychology as a profession, a science, and an agent of social change, visitors of all ages can explore the theme of “What Makes Us Human?”

Founded in 2013, the Institute for Human Science and Culture explores the human condition through collections and educational activities that span the arts, humanities and sciences. With the support of Jim and Vanita Oelschlager, the Institute moved into the third and fourth floors in 2019. The state of the art space includes three large exhibit galleries, classrooms, offices, and archival storage. The Institute fosters
hands-on, experiential learning where students work directly with artifacts, media, and documents that tell stories of the human experience from different time periods and different cultures.