

#### EPISODE 233: ANNA MILHOLLAND – GOOD READS FOR THE NEW YEAR

---

##### Female Voice

From William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business, produced by the William & Mary School of Business and its MBA program. Offered in four formats: the full-time, the part-time, the online, and executive MBA. For more information, visit [wm.edu](http://wm.edu).

##### Ken White

Welcome to Leadership & Business, the podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. Sharing strategies, information, and insight that help you become a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host, Ken White. Thanks for listening. The holidays and the new year, a time to relax a bit and recharge your battery. It's also an opportunity to break away for a while and read or listen to a good book. But go online or into a bookstore, and it's easy to be a little overwhelmed by all the choices. To help you cut through the clutter, we invited Anna Milholland to join us. She's the business Librarian at the McLeod Library at the William & Mary School of Business. She oversees the library, works closely with faculty and students, and manages the databases, books, publications, and the library team. To help you choose a good book that you'll enjoy, we asked her to recommend six books of various genres that are relevant and interesting. Here's our conversation with Anna Milholland, Business Librarian at the William & Mary School of Business.

##### Ken White

Well, Anna, thanks so much for joining us. Happy holidays. Great to have you here.

##### Anna Milholland

Thanks, Ken. Thanks for having me. Happy holidays to you, too.

##### Ken White

Thanks. We just had this huge conversation before we started to record about what children, especially little girls, want for Christmas. Mine are big now. Yours is little. How fun. What a great time of year.

### **Anna Milholland**

Yes, it really is the most wonderful time of the year. Actually, one of my books correlates to it being the most wonderful time of the year, not for gifts, but for a different reason, because we talked about sports a little bit, too. A little bit of a spoiler.

### **Ken White**

But how funny. I mean, here you are, the Librarian of the school library, and of all things, we were talking about the American Girl dolls and all the books. Yeah, what a fun time. Yeah. But thanks so very much for joining us. As I mentioned in the intro, it's a good time of year to maybe get a few minutes and kick back and read a little bit. But before we get into your recommendations, for those who haven't been in a library for a while, things are a little different. How would you describe the McLeod Library and what goes on there?

### **Anna Milholland**

Yeah. So, the McLeod Library is situated in the heart of Miller Hall. It's on the second floor of our building. We do a lot in the library, so we always have the books. We will always have the books, and we continue to collect those because we want to ensure that the books that our students and faculty have access to our state-of-the-art current dynamic. We want our collection to live alongside the research that our faculty are conducting, as well as the courses that our students are taking and what's happening in industry. This is a constant ongoing endeavor. At the same time, so many of our resources are digital. We have something like 60, I think, databases that are specifically for business. These include things like SWOT analysis and industry-related reports. But then we're also using raw data all the time to help our students and faculty conduct that research and be successful in their classes. At the same time, we go into classes and teach. We partner with a number of faculty to deliver information literacy sessions whereby we help students along the research process, from information discovery to analysis to creating new knowledge. We work with both undergrad and grad students across all of our programs to do that.

### **Ken White**

Yeah, you do go into a lot of classes and explain what's going on. Are students surprised, or do they know?

### **Anna Milholland**

I think they know. So William & Mary really strong culture of having librarians enter the classroom as part of our COLL 100 and 150 program, which is part of our commitment to liberal arts. These are the introductory courses that students would take when they arrive at William & Mary. Librarians will introduce themselves then and come in and also help students become acquainted with the resources that our library offers and also help them develop the skills that they need to be successful here in conducting research.

## Ken White

One more question about libraries before we get went into your recommendations. What's a hot topic in your profession? What are you talking about when you have your conferences and when you interact with colleagues?

## Anna Milholland

Everybody's talking about AI. I just went to a conference back in September, which was focused on Biblum metrics. That is how we evaluate research and the impact of that research across a field or discipline. We dedicated an entire day of that conference to generative AI and how it could leveraged as part of this work. It's everywhere. Everywhere.

## Ken White

Every business, every sector. Yeah, no doubt. Well, great. Again, thanks very much for being here. We ask you to share six recommendations with us. Let's start. What's your first recommendation?

## Anna Milholland

Initially, Ken, we talked about it being the most wonderful time of the year. We talked about sports a little bit. We talked about the holidays, but frankly, it's also basketball season. Just a little bit about me: I grew up in North Carolina, and basketball there is religion. I felt the energy of those tobacco road rivalries from a really young age, and I feel like the love of the game is really encoded in my DNA. Lately, I think we've all benefited from Caitlin Clark and Angel Reece's rivalry. It's legendary at this point, and it's done wonders, I think, for the WMBA and for women's sports in general.

## Ken White

No doubt.

## Anna Milholland

In that vein, I want to share the first book that's on my list of holiday reads. It's called the Basketball 100: The Story of the Greatest Players in NBA History. I love college basketball the most. I actually don't watch a ton of NBA, but this one is a fun read. It's by the Athletic. David Aldrich is one of the authors, as well as John Hollinger. It's a brand-new book. It was published in late November of 2024. You'll have to buy or borrow the book to figure out the rankings, methodology, who the greatest of all time is. I'm not going to spoil that. But I did want to talk about two players, particularly in how they were featured in the book. I had the great privilege of watching Chris Paul as a high school athlete, and watching his leadership on the court was really an experience that I'll never forget. He was a brilliant and fierce competitor, and this book characterizes him as having a compete until the death leadership approach. But more importantly, I think he spent his summers going back to North Carolina and really giving back to the

community of basketball there. He helped the growing waves of point guards develop, including players like Steph Curry, which I always just think is incredible. He's beloved in Winston Salem and Forsyth County, and he's also known for his philanthropy within that local community. I read an article from 2022 that shared that he gave every December 2022 graduate of Princeton Salem State University \$2,500, which would be deposited over the course of the year into their Greenwood account. He supports Black business, he supports HBCUs. He's an incredible person, I think, and really just an amazing leader on and off the court. Also, I'm going to read an excerpt from the book about one more player. This is a leader who transcends time and rule changes and the three-point line, and that's Bill Russell. Here's the excerpt. Russell was so much more than the winningest player ever. He was a selfless superstar. He was an indomitable competitor. He was a civil rights advocate who would ultimately receive a 2010 Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was a brave man challenged by evil too many times to count. He was your idol's idol, kindle, for the growth of the game. He is the guy that made the ultimate difference, Bill Walton said. I just think that's an incredible quote from Bill Walton, but also just an amazing descriptor of somebody who really changed the game and was a leader within their field. I know we're here talking about business books, but I think leadership is such a core element to cultivating a great business, a great organization. I think about leaders like Chris Paul and Bill Walton and how they really live their values.

### **Ken White**

I would say the majority of CEOs and leaders we've had on the podcast do two things. They work out daily, and they played sports growing up. So, yeah, the connection is right there. No doubt. Excellent. The Basketball 100, fantastic. Greatest players in the. That's fun. Fun read. I think for all ages, actually.

### **Anna Milholland**

Yes. It's really fun, and the metrics are interesting, too.

### **Ken White**

Good.

### **Anna Milholland**

If you like numbers, this is a great book. If you like Basketball, it's a better book. If you love principled mindset and principled leadership, it's fantastic.

### **Ken White**

Terrific. All right. Number two, what's your second recommendation?

## Anna Milholland

Just a little bit of a spoiler alert. I didn't intend for everything to be related or on a theme of principled mindset or leadership, but a lot of the books that I found, actually, this is an element of all of them. The next book is *How to be Enough: Self Acceptance for Self Critics and Perfectionists*. It's by Ellen Hendriksen, who is a clinical psychologist who holds a PhD from UCLA, completed training at Harvard Medical School, and who's on the faculty at Boston University. The book begins with a character study of two men, Walt Disney and Fred Rogers. Disney, we all know, is the famous animator and innovator, and he's remembered as being a mix of visionary determination and intense perfectionism. I learned from this book how deeply he was involved in the production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. He really was a hands-on, frankly, a micromanager, leader. The product that he delivered was beautiful and incredible, and revolutionary, and he was still unsatisfied with it. Then, contrast that with Fred Rogers, who was also a perfectionist and held himself to exceedingly high standards, but who recognized the importance of connecting not only with children, with his audience, both on-screen and off, but also with his team. He heard his team, he listened to them, he was flexible, he acknowledged mistakes, but he ensured that his workplace was also a place where compassion was shown, where he demonstrated that and where employees demonstrated that with each other, that they were understanding of mistakes, that they acknowledged the humanity. Anyway, reading this book has really helped me, as a manager and a leader, reflect on the work culture that I want to create within my own department. As a disclosure, I supervise another professional employee as well as a group of students and the kinds of ways that I think I want our library to be a place that cultivates a culture with high expectations while just appreciating our humanity.

## Ken White

Yeah, great. Growing up in Pittsburgh, all of us didn't realize that Fred Rogers was all over the country. We thought it was a little TV show locally. Little did we know. Yeah, incredible. Disney and Roger's great. How to be enough.

## Ken White

We'll continue our discussion with Anna Milholland in just a minute. Our podcast is brought to you by the William & Mary School of Business. The Financial Times, Bloomberg Business Week, Princeton Review, and US News & World Report have all named the William & Mary MBA program one of the best in the US and the world. If you're thinking about pursuing an MBA, consider one that has world-class faculty, unparalleled student support, and a brand that's highly respected, the William & Mary MBA. Reach out to our admissions team to learn which of our four MBA programs best fits you: the full-time, the part-time, the online, and the executive MBA. Check out the MBA program at William & Mary at [wm.edu](http://wm.edu). Now, back to our conversation with Anna Milholland, Business Librarian at the William & Mary School of Business.

## Ken White

What's third?

## Anna Milholland

Third, *Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines* by Joy Boulamwini. Right now, we're all talking about AI. I was looking at the Gartner hype cycle for generative AI just yesterday with a Mason faculty member, and Gartner is predicting that composite AI, which is in its early mainstream stages, is going to plateau in two years. Just in general, for our readers who want to learn a little bit more Composite AI allows organizations that may have limited data to be able to use their rich human experience to harness and scale AI. Right now, it's considered to be the key foundation for developing AI applications. It's being leveraged for a lot of really interesting things like personalized medicine and fraud detection, sports analytics, HR analytics, because it has this capability to draw from all of these disparate sources and do some predictive analysis that can then help drive strategy. Joy Boulamwini is a computer scientist based at the MIT Media Lab, and her book, in particular, talks about. It sort of goes beyond the typical discussions of these existential threats that are posed by big tech, and she highlights her own powerful journey. She talks a lot about. We know about the benefits of dinner to AI. She's also highlighting a lot of the challenges in that what she calls the coded gaze, which is a reflection of systemic biases that are just embedded in technology. We all have biases, and I'm not here to assign this moral value or really talk about it a lot. In fact, even in business, we have our biases down to the way that we cite our resources in a paper. That's a bias. Biases have to be transparent in order for us to interrogate results that tools like generative AI are producing. Dr. Boulamwini really talks about these and interrogates these in this particular book. I think it's a really useful read for anybody who's interested in AI and is looking to deploy that within their organization. Or is it deploying it?

## Ken White

That's everybody. Everybody, yeah. Very good. *A Basketball 100*, *How to be Enough*, and *Unmasking AI* are the first three. What's your fourth recommendation for our listeners?

## Anna Milholland

My fourth is a biography. It's on *Great Fields: The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain*. I'm actually reading this one right now; it's by Ronald C. White. I think this particular book offers some really valuable insights into the essence of true leadership, particularly in these times of crisis. It's the story of a college professor, termed Brigadier General for the Union, who exemplified courage, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to duty. If you've read *The Killer Angels* or you've seen *Gettysburg*, I have to say I've seen it multiple times because both my father and brother and extended family are all, I would say, military history aficionados. I've seen this movie. Chamberlain really inspired and motivated his men at the Battle of Gettysburg

in a fight that I don't think they thought they would win. The book really talks about Chamberlain's tactical intelligence, his dedication to education and personal growth, and just his humility and honor, as well as his really strong moral compass. So, read the book. It's really beautifully written so far, and I'm enjoying it a lot.

**Ken White**

It's On Great Field or On Great Fields?

**Anna Milholland**

On Great Fields.

**Ken White**

Fields, right? On Great Fields. Excellent. Yeah. The biography of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. Oh, very good. Number five.

**Anna Milholland**

All right, The final two books are fiction. I told you before that I was going to deviate a little bit from our non-fiction because there's some research out there that suggests that reading fiction can really help us grow our empathy. It can help us boost creativity. It for me, it's certainly a stress reducer. With the holidays coming up, I don't know about you, but they can feel a little bit overwhelming. And so can solitude if you're not with a number of people. I think reading a book serves as a escapism, and reading fiction, in particular, does that. The fifth book that I'll share is called Blackbird Oracle. It's by Deborah Harkness. I think it's the fifth book in her series of books that are her All Soul's trilogy. These are fantasy and historical fiction, all combined into one. They feature witches, vampires, demons, humans, all living alongside each other in modern Oxford, France, New England, and then there's also some time travel to Elizabethan England. I love these books. Anyone who's seen a Discovery of witches will recognize these characters and the time travel, the adventure, the smart women. I mean, they're wonderful books. I love them. I met the author at a library conference about, I guess it's been about 12 years ago, and she was just delightful. And these books are just. They're really accessible, and they're fun.

**Ken White**

I can think of someone on my list who would go for this. Yeah.

**Anna Milholland**

Harry Potter. This is for you.



### Ken White

There it is. Yeah. Wow. I think you made the connection. Very interesting. Very interesting. Black Bird, Oracle. Wonderful. And your sixth and final again, this one's fiction as well.

### Anna Milholland

This one's fiction as well. This one is called Cloud Cuckoo Land. It's by Anthony Doerr. This is not a new book. Well, it's relatively new. I guess it was published within the past five years or so. It's one of my favorite books of all time. It's this treatise on the value of books, on the value of culture and humanity, and how all of these things and the preservation of these things are constantly at war with societal and technological weapons. I would say, ultimately, it's a survival story. It's a love letter to readers, scholars, librarians, anyone who loves books, loves reading, and loves knowledge, and creates that. It features five characters over the course of centuries, from the fall of Constantinople in the 1400s to this futuristic society in the 2200s. All of these people interact with this fictional historical tests that has managed to survive the perils of time. There's also this element of generative AI with the ChatGPT-like library. I think that for anybody who is engaging with AI and just thinks that that's fascinating and interesting, this book will also be of value and interest to you.

### Ken White

Cloud Cuckoo Land.

### Anna Milholland

Yeah. Anthony Doerr is the Pulitzer-winning Prize author of All the Light We Cannot See. For anyone who enjoyed his writing in that book, this is again another wonderful choice for the break.

### Ken White

Am I right or wrong in assuming that that is someone who would like that would also like Black Bird Oracle?

### Anna Milholland

I don't know that they would.

### Ken White

Oh, interesting. Okay.



### **Anna Milholland**

These are totally different books for. I think if you're a reader and you consume everything, then you'll love both of these books. I think that if you are looking for a particularly tough intellectual read, Cloud Cuckoo Land may be the book for you.

### **Ken White**

Excellent. The Basketball 100 is the first. Second recommendation from Anna is How to be enough, then Unmasking AI, On Great Fields, Blackbird Oracle, and Cloud Cuckoo Land. I'm going to throw one in that I just finished reading.

### **Anna Milholland**

That's great to hear.

### **Ken White**

The Anxious Generation, which you probably read it.

### **Anna Milholland**

It's on my reading list, actually.

### **Ken White**

If you're in a higher education, you read it, or if you're managing young people, you've got to read this. It's by Jonathan Haidt. It talks a little bit about the young folks right now, young people and young adults, and the role social media, helicopter parenting, and smartphones played in the increase of mental illness. We see it in higher education, of course. I'm sure high school folks see it. I've talked to so many managers and leaders who are seeing it, and it just explains everything. Yeah, really interesting. It's one of those books that just doesn't complain, but says also we've got some ways to help and to fix as well.

### **Anna Milholland**

That's fantastic. I feel like that prescription is really needed.

### **Ken White**

Yes, exactly. Because I was thinking, oh, wow, great, tell me what we already know. But no, there's some ways out. I wanted to toss that in. But thank you so much. Yeah, these are absolutely, absolutely terrific. You're going to do some reading over the break?

### **Anna Milholland**

I am going to do some reading. I have, so as a librarian, and I have an account with Netgalley, which allows me to get some books before they come out in print. I already have some books on my list. There's actually one that was, I think it's published by

Harvard Business Press, that's about the strategy of Taylor Swift, which I just think sounds really interesting.

### **Ken White**

It does.

### **Anna Milholland**

Yes. I'll let you know how it goes.

### **Ken White**

That's our conversation with Anna Milholland, and that's it for this episode of Leadership & Business. Our podcast is brought to you by the William & Mary School of Business, home of the MBA program offered in four formats: the full-time, the part-time, the online, and the executive MBA. Check out the William & Mary MBA program at [wm.edu](http://wm.edu). Thanks to our guest, Anna Milholland, and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White, wishing you a safe, productive, and happy New Year.

### **Female Voice**

We'd like to hear from you regarding the podcast. We invite you to share your ideas, questions, and thoughts with us by emailing us at [podcast@wm.edu](mailto:podcast@wm.edu). Thanks for listening to Leadership & Business.