

Renovation Smartens Up Oklahoma City University Law Library

by Patti Monk and Judy Morgan

The ABA Bricks and Continuous Renovation Conference in February 2000 emphasized the inevitability of constant change in facilities. This pertains not only to new bricks-and-mortar additions to buildings, but also to new additions to the infrastructure of buildings. The Oklahoma City University Law Library, in its desire to be involved in law-school information, wherever in the law school that information is located, handles the technology for the law school and law library. Since technology is always changing, renovation is constant.

The front of Oklahoma City University's Sarkeys Law Center, built in 1994, is posted on our Web page at <http://www.okcu.edu/law>. The OCU Law Library Tower is in the background. The floodlit tower, crowned with a gold star, is an Oklahoma City architectural landmark. The library, built in 1952, was renovated in 1995 with a networked computer lab and network ports throughout the building. Carrels with network connections and electrical outlets were added in 1999.

The Sarkeys Law Center, named for the foundation that gave a substantial grant for the building, is built into a hillside, resulting in a split-level effect from the back, with a second-floor patio and first-floor plaza containing comfortable outdoor furniture for student use. The library has investigated the use of wireless technology, especially for the patio and plaza areas of the law school.

Under the direction of the law library, technology renovation began in the law school in 1997. Network ports and telephone connections were installed at the front of all classrooms for professors' use and at the counsel tables, podiums, and judges' benches in the small courtroom and Homsey Family Moot Courtroom. One classroom had been originally equipped with electrical outlets for laptops. Electrical

outlets in some rows were added to additional classrooms in 1999.

After a delegation from the law faculty and law library attended the Bricks and Continuous Renovation Conference, a "Smart Classroom" with a ceiling-mounted digital projector and a "Smart Lectern"



The Sarkeys Law Center (foreground) houses classrooms, law school administrators and the law review. The Oklahoma City University Law Library (background) implements and oversees the law school and law library's technology needs.



Top photo: Homsey Family Moot Court Room in the Sarkeys Law Center.

Right photo: Patio and plaza in the Sarkeys Law Center.

with built-in Elmo (a brand of "visual presenter/document camera"), computer, and video cassette recorder were installed in a large classroom. A sound system was added a few months later. To keep costs down, a local audiovisual firm was used and a SMARTer Kids Foundation Grant covered the cost of a SmartBoard. The next step will be the purchase of a wireless control panel to control the Elmo, digital projector and VCR, thus giving the professor more freedom to move throughout the classroom. The architectural detailing in the ceiling at the front of the classroom, although visually

pleasing, caused the screen to fall in front of the lectern. The wireless touch control panel allows the professor to step from behind the lectern and emerge closer to the students.

The library has encouraged use of the smart classroom and the portable SmartBoard, digital projectors, Elmo and VCRs in the law school classrooms, the library computer labs, and library special collection room by sponsoring well-attended faculty technology demonstrations conducted by law professors for their colleagues. The first tech teaching demonstration used PowerPoint and the VCR. This demonstration included showing a clip from the film "My Cousin Vinny" to support treatment of expert testimony. A legal research and writing professor demonstrated her use of the Elmo to discuss students' writing samples and to work with legal research materials.

As dean of the law school in 1994, Robert Henry raised money to build the Sarkeys Law Center. Since then, Judge Henry, now a member of the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, has returned to conduct oral arguments in the Homsey Family Moot Courtroom.

Other Oklahoma state courts have also held appellate and trial proceedings in the courtroom. Recently, during oral argument to the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals, counsel used the PowerPoint technology. Law students in the Litigation Practice Sequence course use the Elmo and

SmartBoard with PowerPoint in their mock trial presentations to judges and juries.

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