

THE PATH TO NEW SPACE IS PAVED WITH ...

by Paul Healey



Welcome to the second annual architectural issue of *AALL Spectrum*. Physical space is an omnipresent concern for libraries. In spite of the growing belief that everything is online, law library space is becoming more precious rather than less. Our architectural issue focuses on newly built or recently remodeled library spaces, places where various conflicting forces of space and funding and speculation about the future have to accommodate each other.

Librarians care passionately about their libraries. They care about the collection and the physical space in which it resides. In doing so, librarians can find themselves facing a number of hurdles when dealing with building projects. Non-librarians don't always understand what libraries do and what they need space for. Others may honestly believe that books are disappearing and that libraries can easily give up space. In for-profit organizations, the library is often not

seen as a profit center, no matter how much it contributes behind the scenes to profit-making activity. The obstacles to acquiring prime library space are political, financial, physical, emotional and cultural.

The point of featuring these library projects in this issue is not to simply show off some shiny new libraries — although it does that as well. Rather, these articles

relay the inherent trials and triumphs that accompany any sort of major library renovation or remodeling.

Our writers work in a variety of institutions and dealt with differing projects. They learned a lot, and most would say that the outcome was successful.

Public law libraries often have to fit in with the needs and designs of a governmental body. In addition to the politics of finding and funding library space, unique architectural issues often plague a project. Joe K. Stephens of the Oregon Supreme Court Library not only dealt with all of the usual issues in remodeling a public law library, but he had to contend with having the architects quit in the middle of the job as well. Sandra Marz, who has been with the Washoe County Law Library for 22 years, explains how her library spent 20 years in funding limbo before it could move into a beautifully remodeled space in the old county jail. Julie Tessmer of the Wisconsin State Law Library relates how the experience of being forced out of the library's old space into temporary quarters affected the planning of the new permanent library. It was one of the few blessings of being forced to move a library twice — surely any librarian's nightmare.

Academic law libraries have confounding factors for remodeling as well. From large collection sizes to the constraints of the academic schedule, remodeling or building an academic law library is a major undertaking. Moving an academic law library across campus takes flexibility and planning, as Stephanie Midkiff learned. In her article, she explains how the University of Oregon Law Library staff handled the move of the collection, from renting oversized book carts to supervising temporary laborers. Mitchell Counts and Robert Linz tell us about building a law library from scratch for a brand new law school.

It's always wonderful to see how other law libraries remodel or move into new space. Many law librarians volunteered to write about their libraries' renovation projects for this year's issue, and we selected a few that represent a broad cross section of both projects and libraries. We are grateful to them for writing about their experiences. We hope that you will find the stories here informative and useful.