



Librarians Share the Ins and Outs of Library Renovation

by Paul D. Healey

Welcome to the third annual *AALL Spectrum* architectural issue. Once again we have selected a few interesting building or remodeling projects that highlight what is possible — and sometimes what can go wrong — when a law library faces significant changes in its physical space. The projects in this issue represent a variety of library types that took a number of different approaches to space planning and renovation.

Jean L. Willis and Amy Hale-Janeke describe how the San Diego County Law Library dealt with staff and users when a significant portion of its space was remodeled. Willis and Hale-Janeke explain that communication with both staff and users was key to how they kept the library open and functioning as much as possible while renovations were going on around them.

Innovative thinking is a necessity for librarians facing building projects. Libraries not only have to work with budget cuts and space reductions but also fill new functions and play new roles. James Milles writes about how the University at Buffalo law library creatively produced an information commons by combining its reading room and computer lab — without undertaking a major construction project. The incremental

and cost-effective changes significantly transformed the 30-year-old building into an attractive, user-friendly facility.

Renovating a library is one thing, moving it is another. Moving any library is a difficult process. But academic law libraries are often the biggest law libraries, so moving them therefore takes the most planning and effort. Kelly Christianson tells how the University of Nevada at Las Vegas law school and law library moved from their temporary quarters in an old elementary school into the renovated former main library on UNLV's main campus. She notes one bright spot in this move: In addition to providing more space, the new facility was originally built as a library. So the law library could be placed on the third floor without problems with the load-bearing capacity of the floors.

Firm librarians probably face the specter of a library move more often than many other types of institutions. Kelly Devlin discusses what is surely a librarian's nightmare: Moving her firm library meant reducing floor space and splitting the remaining collection between floors. The planning process included a significant weeding project.

One of the great qualities of most librarians is their willingness to go to great lengths to obtain information and to share that information with others. Robert Genovese exemplifies that quality with his Design Features for Law Libraries Web site. In anticipation of a building project at the University of Arizona's law library, Genovese took a sabbatical to visit and document the design choices and innovations at more than 20 law libraries. The resulting pictures are posted on the Web site as a resource for librarians. I will leave description of the project to him, but he deserves kudos for providing this service.

We hope that these articles provide you with information and inspiration. A library building or remodeling project is a huge event in the professional life of any librarian. As with many situations in life, the more information you have, the better off you'll be.

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