

1-1-2010

From the "Creek" to the Capital

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Recommended Citation

Olivia L. Weeks, *From the "Creek" to the Capital*, *AALL Spectrum*, May 2010, at 20.

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"Creek" to the Capital

Campbell Law School Library becomes the intellectual heart of the Capital's legal community

By Olivia L. Weeks

On a hot, sunny day in mid-August of 2009, the first of many 18-wheelers left Buies Creek, North Carolina, and made its way to the Campbell University School of Law's new home in Raleigh, the state capital. After more than 30 years in the rural, rustic community of Buies Creek located 30 miles south of the capital, the law school's new home is now two blocks from the state capitol, the state supreme court, court of appeals, and federal courts.

The law school was established in 1976 in the oldest building on campus, Kivett Hall. When the doors to this new law school opened on the Buies Creek campus, the library occupied 11,702 square feet. As enrollment grew, so did the need for additional library space. In 1991, the university built Wiggins Hall, which more than doubled the square footage of the library.

In 2007, the unforeseen happened—the foundation of Kivett Hall was compromised and the law school lost two of its classrooms as well as a courtroom. A difficult decision had to be made: would the law school try to reinforce the foundation of the existing building, build a new law school in Buies Creek, or relocate to Raleigh, the country's largest state capital without a law school?

Faculty members, university administration, and the university board of trustees conducted a feasibility study, and on October 4, 2007, the board announced that the law school would relocate to 225 Hillsborough Street in Raleigh with plans to open its doors in fall 2009.

A flurry of activity followed the announcement. A building committee composed of faculty members, students, and the director of the library was formed. The university administration retained Shepley Bulfinch Richardson & Abbott of Boston and Small Kane of Raleigh to design and oversee the renovation of the law school's future home. The real challenge was converting an existing office building into an esthetically pleasing, functional law school with a state-of-the-art library as its intellectual center.

Needs, Wants, and Challenges

At the planning stage, the library director asked students, faculty, and library staff to submit their needs, wants, and wish lists. The students' responses—of particular importance because the library was to be a place for them to feel comfortable sharing ideas, studying, and learning—focused on more study rooms, study tables, and comfortable seating. Library staff wanted adequate work and office space, and the faculty wanted the addition of an attorney resource room. As the principal designer, Joseph Billie of Shepley Bulfinch successfully worked with all of these needs, wants, and wishes to design a library that is warm, welcoming, functional, and quietly elegant.

Renovation of the building took 10 months, from December 2008 until September 2009. During that time, members of the library staff faced challenges of their own. In the "Creek," security was not an issue; therefore, the library did not have a security system. Moving to Raleigh, however, meant a system had to be put in place and all of the library's volumes had to be tagged with RFID security tags before the collection was moved.

A second challenge arose in taking a collection that had been housed on six different levels of the Buies Creek facility and determining how these materials would be housed on just two levels in the new library. The staff also had to move the collection so that materials from special collections (housed on separate floors of the old library) could be seamlessly integrated into the principal treatise collection. The library staff met all of these challenges—in fact, the last book was tagged a week before the collection was moved.

Making the Move

On August 17, 2009, the move began. The shelving was already in place in the new library, so only the collection had to be moved. At 8 a.m. that Monday morning, an 18-wheeler was loaded with the first of the collection to be moved. (As Director Olivia Weeks watched that first truck leave on its journey to Raleigh, her one prayer was, "Please

God, don't let it turn over!") This was the first of many trucks to make the trip from Buies Creek to Raleigh over the next two weeks. Thanks to endless hours of planning and preparation, and the expertise of an incredible moving company, the move was seamless—every book made it to Raleigh (and not a single 18-wheeler turned over).

The library staff was involved with each step of the move. Half of the staff remained in Buies Creek to supervise the loading of books while the rest was on site at the new library to oversee the placement of the collection. Moving the collection into the new library was a challenge at times; new furniture for the entire building was being moved in at the same time, meaning the parking of trucks for unloading had to be orchestrated, as well as the use of the freight elevator. Despite these challenges, the move was completed on time.

Beautiful Results

The end result is a library that truly has the "wow" factor. Occupying 25,000 square feet, the library is housed on the first two floors of the law school. Panoramic windows on all of the outside walls bring in an abundance of natural light while offering students beautiful views of the city.

The main entrance to the law library is located on the second floor of the law school. When visitors enter, they immediately see the strikingly beautiful circulation/reference desk and reserve shelving shaped to reflect the octagonal tray ceiling directly above. The reserve shelving is in an enclosed bookcase with glass-fronted doors; all of its millwork is custom-made of makore, an exotic African hardwood also used for the end panels of the shelving.

A grand central staircase connects the first and second floors of the library. Above the staircase is a pendent chandelier that is both artistic and functional. At the bottom of the staircase is a second circulation/reference desk servicing patrons who enter on the library's first level.

The library has a total of 275 seats for a student body of approximately 400 students. Soft, comfortable seating is

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Since every staff office with an exterior wall was remediated, virtually everyone had to move their work area at least once. Our capable IT staff repeatedly moved computers, printers, and scanners, and library staff packed, moved, and then moved again. With each move, the entire work environment was severely disrupted.

Access to major parts of the print collection was affected for weeks on end. With only a few hours notice, the entire microform collection was covered with shrink-wrap plastic and made unavailable for 12 weeks. Books in the federal section were unavailable for several days during the height of journal cite-checking. Months of remediation in the compact stacks meant bound periodicals were only available intermittently, and staff transferred the entire reference collection to wooden carts to keep them safe during five months of interior demolition.

At the beginning of the 2008 fall term, the construction crew determined that a large area of unstable masonry directly over the main entrance was a danger to staff and patrons. The main library entrance closed, requiring visitors to enter through a temporary side entrance accessible via a winding walkway covered by scaffolding and shrouded with tarps. Under the eerie glow of temporary construction lighting, the law school community followed this maze through the campus police office and continued construction, complete with attendant noise, vibration, dust, and water.

Interior work continued through late winter 2008 and spring 2009. On the main floor of the library, crews built a two-story interior plastic enclosure to allow the demolition and reconstruction of the floor-to-ceiling gothic windows. Workmen pushed wheelbarrows and carts past the reference and circulation desks, leaving dust and footprints

everywhere. Demolition was so loud and dusty that at one point the reference desk was relocated to the circulation desk for several days.

The Reopening

In early summer, construction activity began to slow. Final touches were made. The infamous "punch list" heralded the close of construction and at last, early in the 2009 fall semester, it

More Photos on AALLNET

More pictures of the University of Connecticut library renovation project are available at www.aallnet.org/products/pub_sp1005.asp.

was done. On October 28, the library threw a grand reopening party.

Due to the extraordinary efforts of the library and IT staff, services kept pace with demand throughout the course of construction. The entire staff joined in an effort to provide patrons with the best services possible and a safe environment within which to use the library. Reference and access staff helped students find and use research materials that had been placed on carts, had been shifted, or was simply unavailable due to construction. Faculty research and document requests were still filled, and, when materials were unavailable, the interlibrary loan and reference staff helped find alternate print and online sources.

Acquisitions Librarian Elisabeth Umpleby continued to buy books, and her staff continued to process them as they came in. Head of Cataloging Barbara Plante kept pace with incoming materials and continued to add new electronic materials to the catalog. Head

of Access Jessica Randall and Stacks Manager Joshua LaPorte played a kind of "musical chairs" game with a collection that was being constantly shifted. And of course, Kirk and Severo ensured that the law school community was constantly informed about the status of the renovation. Under Kirk's direction, the entire library made a total team effort to keep things running at the highest possible level.

The Aftermath

The project is done. The carpet is replaced, the paint is refreshed, the mold is gone, and the façade is no longer crumbling. Staff work areas and offices have been rehabilitated. There is no more noise, no more dust, and no more disruption.

Almost inevitably, the students have rediscovered the library. Usage statistics show a threefold increase in student traffic compared to the dark days of the winter of 2008-09. Classes are being taught in the library again and the new interior space is inviting—sunlight streams in through the main floor windows, highlighting the new carpeting, furniture, and window seats. The exterior of the library is also inviting, and Kirk has had new patio furniture installed on the terrace, making it a place for students to congregate, share lunch, and possibly a story. Within the entire law school community there is a sense of renewed energy now that construction is over.

And for the first time in many years, the library's motto, no longer covered by protective scaffolding or tarps, can be seen over the entrance: *Salus populi suprema lex esto*—Let the safety of the people be the supreme law. ■

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intermingled with study tables and carrels and positioned in front of windows so that every study area has access to natural light. In addition, all study tables have lamps that provide light as well as power outlets.

A reading room is located on the first floor of the library, as well as three group study rooms. An additional five study rooms are located on the second level. Each of the study rooms is outfitted with an LCD monitor and whiteboard. In addition, the attorney resource room on the first level is open to all members of the legal community.

The library and the law school are completely wireless and have been outfitted with state-of-the-art technology.

On the second floor of the library, 10 public access computers are available for use by both students and visitors. A printing/copying center is also located on this level.

The new library was designed for students, and they are drawn to its warm, welcoming atmosphere. Students love the casual seating, and study rooms are constantly in demand. In fact, the use by students has far exceeded expectations. Melissa Essary, dean of the law school, remarks that, "while our new law library is stunningly beautiful, more importantly, it is highly functional. When I give tours, the library is always populated with students hard at work, which always warms this dean's heart." ■
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More Online

For more photos of the new Campbell School of Law Library, visit http://law.campbell.edu/news/raleigh_campaign/library_photos.html.