

THE LIBRARY—BACKBONE OF THE LAW SCHOOL

Maurice Leon, Librarian

A law school without a law library of its own is incongruous today, but for many years after its founding the University of Wisconsin College of Law had only a small and shabby collection of treatises it could call its own.

These were the early days when the College existed precariously in downtown Madison, sometimes in rented quarters and then in the State Capitol.

In 1874 The Wisconsin *Cardinal* reported:

The recitations, lectures, courts, etc., [of the Law College] are held in Gurnee's Block, opposite the Vilas House, where there is a small law library belonging to the University of about 150 or 200 volumes.

The law students could and did use the State Law Library in the Capitol, but perhaps the real reason why the College had no good library of its own was the complete lack of money for one. The school relied entirely upon student fees to pay all of its expenses.

In 1893, when the College of Law moved into its own "commodious" new building half way up the Hill on the campus and away from downtown, it became crucial for the school to have its own law library.

The 1891 legislative act which funded the new building also provided for its equipment. This provision and the \$1000 that the Legislature added for law books in the years up to and after 1898 gave the library its real start.

By 1905 the new Law Library had as many as 8,000 books, but this was felt to be inadequate. In that year the University Regents set aside \$15,000 to build up what was to be "a working library equal to that of any law school in the United States." Then in 1906 the *College of Law Bulletin* advertised its Library as 14,000 volumes, a tremendous increase over the previously announced count.

Ten years later the Law Library had 24,000 volumes; in 1926,

35,000, and by 1938, it had 50,000 volumes.

Back in 1906 the College bulletin also proudly boasted that there was now a regular librarian in charge of the collection. This was Mrs. Sophie M. Briggs, who was to remain in charge for thirty years.

Although the official descriptions of the old stone law building continued to speak glowingly of its "accommodations," it was not long before its occupants discovered that the building was not designed to accommodate a growing book collection.

The second floor room that was the Law Library had built-in shelving around its semi-circular walls. These and a few added free-standing stacks soon proved inadequate, so a balcony was built on one side and this, too, was quickly filled.

By the time Dean Lloyd Garrison arrived in 1932, the situation was almost impossible. The books spilled out into the corridors, which soon became book-lined, and then on into faculty offices.





In 1937 Mrs. Briggs retired and an energetic young librarian and lawyer from Milwaukee, Philip G. Marshall, replaced her as Law Librarian.

During these depression years the state had no money to build. The Law School was not to be denied its need, however, faced as it was by an unceasing inundation of books, and with a loan from the Vilas Trust to match a federal PWA grant, a five story library wing was constructed on the east side of the Law School.

Several generations of later law students have reason to remember the Vilas Trust loan, for a ten dollar special library fee had to be added to law tuition to repay it. It was not until the 1960's that the money was repaid and the extra charge abolished.

Once the building was ready, the whole Law School pitched in to move the books on a Saturday moving bee in the winter of 1939. The crowd was led by the Dean in old clothes and rubber sneakers. Seven-

ty-one-year-old "Herbie" Page was there as well as over two hundred law students and their dates. In that one day 40,000 books were moved.

The new library wing was more than a mere book storage area to the School. It had what everyone thought was a most adequate reading room of 150 seats. It had a Burr Jones Room furnished with WPA handcrafted lounge furniture and intended for use as a recreational reading area.

Not the least of its attractions was a Ladies' Lounge, something completely lacking in the old building.

Access to the stacks was limited to faculty and Law Review editors. Since there were several faculty offices on the fourth level, admission to this area was through a door that could be unlocked only by a loudly buzzing device that aroused everyone on the floor.

With new quarters and new enthusiasm, the Law Library added a full-time cataloger and started recataloging its treatise collection. At the instigation of the librarian the library became the principal recip-

ient of a flood of federal documents from the Government Printing Office.

In 1941, a scaffolding was stretched across the north end of the reading room and artist-in-residence, John Steuart Curry, sat or walked on it while painting his giant mural "The Freeing of the Slaves." Underneath, surrounded and enfolded by painter's drop cloths, the circulation and reserve desk attendants carried on business as usual. Funds for this spectacular painting were donated in honor of Judge Augustus Backus of Milwaukee.

Suddenly the country was in World War II and the draft depleted the student body. The library staff left to take war-connected jobs. When Miss Verna E. Baertschy arrived to become acting librarian, a few students were running the shop.

After the war ended, Mr. Marshall went into the practice of law and Miss Baertschy became the Law Librarian. The library resumed its pre-war activities with the return of the veterans and the rejuvena-

tion of the Law School.

However, as the law student population of returned veterans climbed to 800, it became obvious that something more was needed in the way of space for studying and research. In addition, that old bug-aboo of librarians became evident in the stacks. Where was the library going to put all the books? The stacks built to accommodate over 100,000 volumes were beginning to get crowded.

In the more affluent years of the 1950's, money was made available so that a new large wing was attached to the south end of the now "old" library in 1961.

Potential book capacity was now tripled. The Law Library became "open" to student use and all levels could be utilized for studying and research. Twenty-two enclosed carrels were built along the walls; the new building also included a number of offices. Throughout the addition, over three hundred new study spaces for students became avail-

able, though many will eventually be replaced by stacks.

The library staff had scarcely time to move into its own new quarters in the addition before the old Law School was demolished and the faculty and staff moved into the library until a new school was built.

The new basement was divided between the Dean's administrative offices and the student lounge and locker facilities. Every available office as well as two typing rooms became faculty offices. The second floor study space was used for temporary offices.

A few classes were even held in the old reading room behind a sound-proof curtain. It was a compliment to the construction of the old reading room that sound carried so badly there that a temporary public address system was needed to enable the students in the back to hear the instructor.

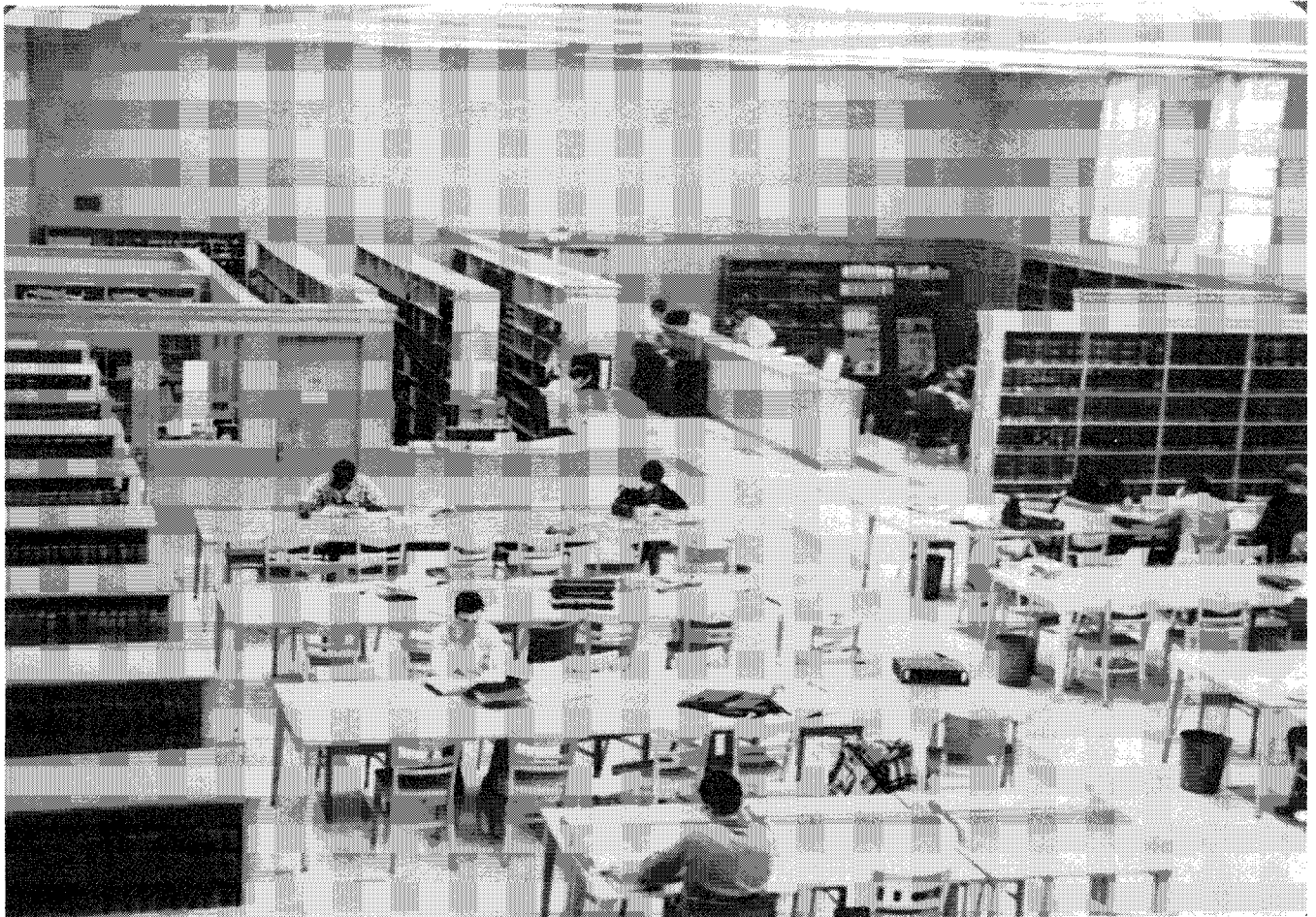
It was only after the Law School faculty and staff moved into the new Law Building in 1965 that the

library was able to utilize many of its facilities for student and research use. The former home of the administrative staff in the library basement became the offices of the *Wisconsin Law Review*. The typing rooms were reinstated. A long range water law project of the U.S. Department of Agriculture moved in.

A new degree program, Master in Legal Institutions, brought a continuing occupancy of research carrels and offices by foreign graduate students and scholars.

Within the last year the old Burr Jones Room, its former function replaced by other facilities, became five new offices. Here are presently lodged the various shifts from the University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru, engaged in a Ford Foundation sponsored project to adapt the legal education system of the United States for use in Peru.

New programs in the Law School as well as other factors beyond the control of the library began to have other noticeable effects upon us. It had been obvious for



years that legal research of law-in-action was no longer exclusively limited to traditional legal materials. The library began to acquire related materials in economics, sociology, psychology, government and business.

A strong but narrow interest in foreign law was developed by two specialists on the law faculty. To handle the carefully controlled acquisition program, a Foreign Law Librarian was added. She is now cataloging much of this material and foreign law titles are now represented in both the Law Library and in Memorial Library's Union catalog.

An increased student body and an expanding development of seminars brought increased pressures for not only more kinds of books but for more copies of important reporters and law reviews. New areas of legal education and research have been developed in the fields of criminal justice, poverty, environmental law as well as in other aspects of federal, state and local administration.

Financial aid from the Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice created a Criminal Justice Reference and Information Center in the basement of the Law Library. Manned by its own personnel, the Center has the task of collecting the multifarious and highly fugitive material in the field, and indexing it so that it can be found and used by both the School's researchers and law enforcement personnel throughout the state. A large bibliography and supplement, listing by subjects the available pamphlets, periodicals, books and documents in the Center, was compiled and distributed to interested officials and agencies throughout the state.

The most exciting current subject area today is the ballooning field of environmental law. Through Extension Law and cooperating faculty we were able to hire in 1970 a half time Environmental Law Librarian to ride herd on the outpouring of legal and related materials in this field and spot those items most useful for our faculty and students.

In August of 1969 Miss Verna Baertschy retired as Law Librarian.



Gloria Holz, Circulation Librarian and Maurice D. Leon, Librarian

Her place was taken by Maurice Leon, Associate Librarian since 1956.

While the latter developments and changes occurred, the Library moved quietly into a methodological change that will have permanent effect upon its collection.

Although large legal libraries came into existence and expanded in the last one hundred years, no all-subject classification scheme devised ever provided an adequate coverage for law. After intensive prodding by law librarians, the Library of Congress finally began a "Law" schedule in 1968. The U.W. Law Library immediately adopted the plan.

This means that within several years every book in our entire treatise collection will have its own new call number which will locate similar subjects together on the shelves. The retrospective cataloging of the Library of Congress has aided enormously, making it possible for us to reclassify titles at a minimum of cost and time.

The Law Library is also slowly and carefully inching its way into the use of micro-reproduction. Care is required because technological developments radically change processes and machines every few years.

Before World War II the 35 mm. roll film was standard for reducing and storing information. Then came opaque microcards and microprint using various sized cards and much smaller reductions. Today cameras are busy putting up to 1000 pages of books on small sheets of film, microfiche, from which hard copy can be reproduced. We know, however, that lawyers and students continue to have a strong bias in favor of solid, full-sized books that can be spread out in front of them on a table.

Yet, with the continued proliferation of print and near-print, the problem of both accessibility and storage will weigh more and more towards buying the little used items in microreproduction or storing the now out-dated cases and documents in similar form in filing cases. Modern print-out machines that produce hard copy of microreproduced material are on the market. Small lap-size viewers with glareless screens are also available.

Libraries must consider how often they can ask for more and more money to build larger and larger buildings to house books. A favorite statistic used in the library world is that research libraries double their holdings every fifteen to twenty years. The U.W. Law Library, though a relatively small library

among major law schools, now has 131,000 accessioned volumes and thousands of additional unbound and uncounted documents.

A Law School Library such as ours is a service facility. Space for books competes with space for studying, research, typing, leisure reading, conferences, bull sessions, job interviews, faculty and research offices, carrels and seminars. There will come a time when many lesser-used books will have to be reduced in size because the life-sized copy will be an expensive luxury.

The most vexing and constant problem facing the Law Library over the last years has been its book budget. Although the University of Wisconsin Law School has the second largest enrollment among the Big Ten Law Schools, it stands at the bottom in money spent for law books whether in total or per student.

In 1969 our actual expenditures for Law Library books was \$103 per full time student. The next lowest expenditure per law student was by Illinois with \$157. Ohio State spent the most, \$261 per law student.

In recent years, the Law Library has been caught in the inflationary spiral. Its book budget has remained constant for about seven years, while law book prices have risen about 50% and are reported by the Association of Law Libraries to be continuing to rise at 10% per year.

The library must preserve and contain the useful past record of the law and must be able to obtain current works describing the operation of the law today. If legal research must, in Dean Oliver Rundell's words, be . . . "very largely thinking in terms of the more or less indefinite future," the Library must be guided by faculty discernment as well as budgetary restrictions. New subject areas, old subjects revisited, changes in Library technology, as well as new methods of servicing our patrons, will all play their role in the future of the Law Library.

Save The Day
Saturday, May 1, 1971
Law School's Annual
SPRING PROGRAM

9:00 A.M.—MOOT COURT FINAL ARGUMENTS
WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT

9:00 A.M.—WLAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND BOARD OF VISITORS

11:45 A.M.—ALUMNI LUNCHEON AND CLASS REUNIONS
*Classes of: 1921, 1926, 1931, 1936, 1941, 1946, 1951,
1956, 1961, 1966.*

*Special Reunion Classes: 1931, 1946.
Distinguished Faculty and Alumni Awards,
Wisconsin Center.*

4:00 P.M.—AWARDS PRESENTATION AND
RECEPTION FOR AWARD WINNERS
Room 225, Law School

6:00 P.M.—COCKTAIL PARTIES, HOLIDAY INN #2

7:30 P.M.—DINNER DANCE, HOLIDAY INN #2

ALL STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND GUESTS

WELCOME

MAKE RESERVATIONS FOR
LUNCH AND DINNER, ROOM 209
LAW SCHOOL

JOIN THE WISCONSIN LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

