

Renovations Complete at Jenkins Law Library

by Jeff Lyons

When it came time to renovate the Jenkins Law Library, library director Regina Smith had one thought in mind – make the library a destination for lawyers.

“We wanted to make the library a place where someone on their way to Federal Court could stop in and have a cup of coffee and relax,” she said of the facility at 833 Chestnut St.

The library has added more comfortable seating, a spacious reading room, more natural light and new wired carrels to provide easy access to the Internet. They’ve also raised the ceiling height to 12 feet, which allows the library to display more artwork.

The renovations, which cost \$1.2 million, were included in the lease that Jenkins recently renewed at 833 Chestnut St. The project began last August and was completed in April.

One of the most noticeable differences is all the extra natural light that filters into the facility. There are large windows along the western and northern sides of the library. Smith said the library’s 41 employees now all have ready access to the brighter conditions, and the staff has been concentrated into one area.

The improvements also include wireless zones throughout the library, which will allow visitors to connect to the Internet with their laptop computers. Smith said there’s a new conference center that can accommodate as many as 50 people. “The computer learning center, where we hold our CLE seminars, has been increased in size to fit 20 people, where it used to hold 16,” said Smith.

“We replaced all the furniture. Everything’s new but the stacks,” she said, adding that the idea of renovation was to get more public space.

Another new feature is a leisure reading area with a lending collection of fiction donated by Harold Cramer, former Chancellor of the Bar Association and chair of the Board at Jenkins.

The 38,000-square-foot library occupies most of the building’s 12th floor. The library also has added 1,700 square feet in the concourse of the building’s basement, which contains older treatises and items from before 1950.

The library also has a coffee bar, and visitors are permitted to bring their coffee out into the public areas.

Smith says the library had about 20,000 live visitors last year and approximately 100,000 virtual visitors to its Web site, www.jenkinslaw.org. She said the library has about 9,000 dues-paying members.

The Law Library Company of the City of Philadelphia was founded in 1802 by some of the most prominent lawyers of the time. They formed a corporation so they could jointly purchase a collection of legal materials with which to practice law. Shares of stock

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Photo by Jeff Lyons

Library director Regina Smith says the renovations at Jenkins Law Library cost \$1.2 million.



MAY CLE COURSES

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QUARTERLY MEETING

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ple in attendance at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown that she comes from a family of “conservative Irish Catholic Republicans that has a fair share of lawyers and judges in it. When a Republican president is in the Oval Office, my brothers are not full of brotherly love. They hate my column when Republicans rule” because of what she writes.

Dowd said her family reminds her that “my dad’s dying wish was for me to become a respectable lawyer, not a muckraking journalist. Even if I had become a lawyer, I probably would have been the Ally McBeal variety, wearing inappropriate outfits and using the legal system as a dating tool,” she said.

Dowd said she had a soft spot for Philadelphia because this is where President Bush and Dick Cheney made their debut at the Republican convention in 2000.

“I was here to welcome them with a column about Mr. Cheney, the head of W’s vice presidential selection committee, picking himself to be vice president. The headline was ‘A babysitter for junior,’ which may explain why I no longer have a White House pass,” she said.

“At the time, I wrote that Cheney was an ‘avuncular Tom DeLay,’ but now that I’ve gotten to know Tom DeLay, I realize I may have been too hard on old Dick. It’s a frightening thing to contemplate that the future of America’s jurisprudence now rests partly in the hands of a former exterminator from Texas, who early in his career was known as “Hot Tub Tom” for his cavorting in Austin during his salad days in the state Legislature,” she said.

“Now, ‘Hot Tub Tom’ wants to put judges around the country on the hot



Law students from Temple, Penn, Villanova and Rutgers-Camden were recognized at the Quarterly Meeting for their pro bono efforts.



Board of Governors Vice Chair (from left) Daniel-Paul Alva meets with Board members Marla A. Joseph, Rudolph Garcia and Joseph A. Prim before the April 11 Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon.



Board of Governors member (from left) Marsha A. Levick meets with Association Secretary Kathleen D. Wilkinson and Vice Chancellor Jane L. Dalton before the April 11 event.

seat at a time when judges are already an endangered species, with so much violence against them. Mr. DeLay has been itching to take on the third branch of government for years,” she said.

DeLay was a harsh critic of the decisions by judges not to intervene in the case of Terri Schiavo. She said DeLay spoke up as a champion of Schiavo’s cause at the same time has was under a siege of bad publicity. DeLay was scolded by the House Ethics Committee several times in the past year.

Dowd said DeLay and other hard-

line Republicans have been demanding the impeachment and punishment of judges who make decisions that go against the President and the congressional majority.

“Those who support such moves think of an independent judiciary as a charming affectation and have a similar view when it comes to evolution,” she said.

Angered over some fellow Republicans’ decision to cut the budget for the Johnson Space Center in his legislative district in Houston to pay for veterans’ programs, Dowd said DeLay

got so “bug stampin’ mad” that he refused to bring the bill up for a vote until the money was restored. “And only after nearly every other federal program was forced to take a slight across-the-board cut so the money could be shuttled back to NASA did he relent. And this year, he’s making darn sure it won’t happen again. He forced an entire reorganization of the decades-old appropriations system to prevent a repeat. He may appear to be a crackpot at times but he’s not a man to be underestimated by any means,” she said.

Legislators Meet with Committee

Pennsylvania lawmakers (seated from left) Josh Shapiro, Kathy Manderino and Mark B. Cohen met with members of the Delivery of Legal Services Committee on March 23. Also at the meeting were (standing, from left) Larry Frankel, legislative director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, state Rep. Daylin Leach; Chancellor Andrew A. Chirls; and state Rep. Greg S. Vitali. State Rep. Babette Josephs also attended the event. The meeting presented an opportunity for legislators to learn about the work of public interest organizations and how the organizations might help in the legislative process.



Photo by Jeff Lyons

JENKINS

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in the company were sold for \$20 and annual dues were \$2.

In 1827, the Law Library Company merged with the Associated Members of the Bar and became known as the Law Association of Philadelphia. Eventually this organization became known as the Philadelphia Bar Association, and in 1931 the library’s name was changed to the Law Library of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

The library was operated by the Bar Association until July 1, 1967, when the Theodore F. Jenkins Memorial Law Library was established with court approval to carry out the provisions of the will of the late Madeleine Hart Jenkins. It was her wish that her late husband, Theodore Finley Jenkins, be memorialized in a manner that would benefit the Bar and the public.

Smith, who has been at Jenkins for 22 years, is pleased with the renovations. “The idea was to get more open space. Since we’re a nonprofit, we can’t look like the Taj Mahal. But we can still look nice, and we do,” she said.