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 1882 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 continued on page 18

Library director Regina Smith says the renovations at Jenkins Law Library cost $1.2 million.
Law students from Temple, Penn, Villanova and Rutgers-Camden were recognized at the Quarterly Meeting for their pro bono efforts.

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.

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.

Legislators Meet with Committee

Pennsylvania lawmakers (seated from left) Josh Shapiro, Kathy Mandernino 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. Chirico; 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.