THE HISTORY OF THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Lori Hagen
INTRODUCTION
In 1867, Act. No. 1211 provided for the purchase and support of a county law library to be kept in, or near the courthouse for the use of area citizens.
1. Percival Digby 1885 – 1907
2. John Oscar Emrich 1907 – 1956
7. Patricia Horvath 2016 - Present

LIBRARIANS AT ACLL
1. Percival (Percy) G. Digby 1885 – 1907

‘A Human Catalog’

Mr. Digby’s possessed a phenomenal specialized memory and ability to promptly wait upon a bar numbering almost a thousand practitioners enabled him to attend to every detail of the office single handed.

He conceived the idea of becoming a human catalog by keeping in his mind the contents of each volume as it was added to the collection in order that he might be indispensable to the courts.

The library grew from 1,500 volumes in 1880 to nearly 29,000 and was the largest law library in the world.
2. John Oscar Emrich 1907 – 1956

Upon the death of Percy Digby, J. Oscar Emrich was elected Mr. Digby's successor. He had three assistants and a stenographer who were constantly employed in writing the cards for the catalogue. He instituted the table, bells and light system, described later, rearranging the books on the shelves, oversaw the rebinding 7,000 books, as well as installing a law student branch library in the Pittsburg Academy Building.

He had served this library faithfully for more than fifty years, beginning his career in February, 1908, when he was first employed as a page. In November, 1910, Mr. Hamilton became Assistant Librarian. He held this position until his appointment as Librarian in December, 1955, when he succeeded Oscar Emrich. Always pleasant and helpful, Mr. Hamilton's dedicated service to the Allegheny County Law Library was appreciated and will long be remembered. He died on May 22, 1964.

Caroline Brede
Assistant Law Librarian
University of Minnesota
Kirke Wilson was born in Pittsburgh in 1917. He was graduated from Grove City College in 1940. He pursued many interests including a law degree, a library science degree and extensive archaeological field work. He was a student at Grove City College and worked for the Works Project Administration. He wrote other materials documenting his archaeological field work regarding 19th century structures in western Pennsylvania.

During his tenure, Mike introduced the first ‘automated’ circulation system. He also pioneered the first conversion of print documents to microfilm occurred. Federal Depository status was added.

Sadly, the ‘Bingo’ board for requests was discontinued.
After graduating with a library science degree, Joel Fishman’s first professional job was at Seton Hall University School of Law (1973-77). He then became the head law librarian at Allegheny County Law Library (March 1977- November 1999) before joining Duquesne University Center for Legal Information as the Assistant, then Associate, Director for Lawyer Services (Nov. 1999-June 2016).

Dr. Fishman is a prolific author with more than 300 publications including books/pamphlets, book chapters, articles, and book reviews in various library, history, and law review periodicals. Through the library, he has published more than 50 books of court reports, bibliographies, indexes, legislative histories, etc.

Among his numerous awards, he has recently been chosen as the 2016-2017 recipient for the Bethany J. Ochal Award for Distinguished Service to the profession for the Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries.
In July, the Allegheny County Law Library was pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Patricia Horvath as the new Associate Director for Lawyer Services at Allegheny County Law Library. Ms. Horvath served as the Associate Director for Resources and Finance at Duquesne University Center for Legal Information. She brings many years of experience, with both academic and law firm library managerial experience to the position. Additionally, many in the local and National legal research communities are familiar with Ms. Horvath through her active participation in professional organizations like the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association (WPLLA).
The first courthouse, completed in 1794 in Market Square, was home to the Court Of Common Pleas until it was sold in 1841.
ACLL was here until the Courthouse fire in May 7th, 1882 and stayed in the rebuilt Courthouse until 1918
ACLL’S THIRD HOME –
THE CITY-COUNTY BUILDING

ACLL moved from the 2nd floor of the rebuilt Allegheny County Courthouse to the 9th floor of the City / County Building July 1, 1918.
Copper plate circa 1907-1950?

If you look closely at the end of the table on the floor....

... you will see a spittoon!
Allegheny County Law Library Main Reading Room

Both Prints Courtesy of Sergey Zlotnikov
A view of the Main Reading Room
Where are the ceiling lights and desk lamps??
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUMES IN THE LIBRARY.

- Total December 31, 1907 .................................................. 19,653
- Accessions during the year 1908 ........................................ 750
- Accessions during the year 1909 ........................................ 834
- Accessions during the year 1910 ........................................ 1,899
- Accessions Jan. 1 to Nov. 1, 1911 ................................. 1,171
- Total to November 1, 1911 ............................................... 24,307
Pittsburg Legal Journal
November 11, 1911 in an extensive article talks about the new efficient system of…

TABLES, ELECTRIC LIGHTS AND CALL BELLS
WHO’S GOT THE BUTTON?

Attorneys would push these....
…while sitting here...
...which would light up this for seat location...
...and THIS for table location, so that...
... people such as these would know who needed assistance at which table and seat and would deliver materials that were asked for...
The attorneys never had to leave their seats, ‘thus eliminating all noise and confusion as well as insuring greater efficiency in supplying the books’. J. Oscar Emrich
This tablet honors those responsible for the quarters allotted to the Bar Association and to the Law Library, when this building was erected.


Chairman: J. Oscar Emrich, Librarian
Ed. B. Lee, Architect
J. G. Chalfant, County Engineer

First Occupied: July 1, 1918
Presented by: B. V. Imbrie, Esq.
October, 1952

Landmarks and Historical Society Plaque
THE LAWSUIT TO KEEP THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY LAW LIBRARY OPEN...

Judge Judith Friedman and lawyers including Allen Brunwasser, Paul Boas, and Andrew Forsyth, III, were opponents to the closing of the Law Library as proposed by County Commissioners who were hoping to save $750,000 yearly by closing the library.

As a result of the 1867 statute, the library, by law, was not allowed to be closed OR when partnered with Duquesne, the collection was not permitted to be integrated to the campus library since the statute stated that the County Law Library needed to be housed in proximity to the courts.
The Allegheny County Law Library is managed by the Duquesne University Center for Legal Information through a unique joint-library partnership. Based on an agreement between Duquesne University and Allegheny County, the two libraries offer legal research collections and services that meet the needs of the legal community as well as the public of Allegheny County and western Pennsylvania. This agreement has been in effect since 1999.
Thank you to Associate Dean Frank Liu and Duquesne University Law School for agreeing to the task of management assistance and refurbishing the Library (including air-conditioning)!
Library Improvements Over the Years

- **1960s** Microfilm/fiche began to be purchased for library along with film reader
- **1963** First photocopier placed in library
- **1977** First microfilm/fiche reader printer placed in library
- **1977** Library collection first cataloged by Library of Congress Subject Classification
- **1977** First automated circulation system installed
- **1977** Congressman Joseph Gaydos provided federal depository status to the Law Library to obtain Federal publications for free
Library Improvements Over the Years

- **1981** State Education grant to catalog both County and Duquesne’s collections
- **1982** Allegheny County Law, History, & Genealogy Publication Series began (includes Allegheny County Divorce Decisions (12 volumes) and Judge Wettick’s Allegheny County Discovery Opinions (8 volumes); more than 50 volumes published
- **1985** State Education grant to purchase more than 20 fax machines for academic/county law libraries in state
- **1987** State Education grant to create an OCLC Serial Catalog for all libraries within state
- **1987-95** Lexis Reseller Sales Program as vendor to small firms
Library Improvements Over the Years

- **1987** Purchase of Innovative Interfaces Inc. acquisitions module
- **1986** Microfilm/fiche electronic catalog installed in library to hold over 100,000 books on film/fiche
- **1991** State Education grant for remote access database for academic/county law libraries
- **1994** Completed purchase of all modules for an electronic library for public use
- **2000s** Library added Lexis and Westlaw databases for patron use
- **2001** Library began offering Continuing Legal Education courses
Library Improvements Over the Years

- **2002** AIR CONDITIONING!! No more oversize fans blowing papers all over the desks or patrons turning them on and off because of the noise
Library Improvements Over the Years

- **2013** Wi-Fi took awhile because of security risks to the court’s Wi-Fi
- **2013** Library became an official PA CLE provider
- **2014** The BrightSign was added in the hallway for basic news, hours, holiday closings, and CLE announcements
- **2015** Scannx Flatbed Scanner added. Scans can be saved to USBs, Smartphones, Dropbox, Google Drive or printed
- **2016** Added Remote Access to FastCase for firms with less than 60 attorneys and individual card members
- **2017** Renovations to the Main Reading Room and Computer Lab. The lab now has an integrated podium, more comfortable seating, carpet and room-darkening blinds for Continuing Legal Education classes and other presentations
COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

COMMUNITY CITATION OF RECOGNITION

AWARDED TO

Allegheny County Law Library

In Recognition of its 150th Anniversary

On April 15, 1867, Governor John W. Geary signed Pennsylvania Act No. 1211 into law, providing for the purchase and support of a county library to be kept in, or near, the courthouse for the use of judges, attorneys, and area citizens. Today, 150 years later, the Free Law Library is located on the 9th floor of the City-County Building and is open to the public and legal professionals. In celebration of its 150th anniversary, an event including Duquesne University President Ken Gormley and Duquesne Law School Associate Dean Allegheny County Law Library Director Frank Liu, will be held to provide members of the legal community the opportunity to see the library’s recent upgrades and renovations. On behalf of the nearly 1.3 million residents of the county, I congratulate the director and staff of the Allegheny County Law Library, as well as its users, on this anniversary, rich in history.

Presented on this 10th day of November, 2017

Rich Fitzgerald
RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE
PROCLAMATION FROM TOM WOLF PENNSYLVANIA GOVERNOR
150 YEARS AND STILL PROVIDING OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY!

CONCLUSION
RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Joel Fishman with his detailed and irreplaceable memory of the events and sources
- All the staff over the years who helped make what the Law Library is today
- Dean Frank Liu & Duquesne Law School for supporting the Law Library from 1999 to date
- Detre Library at the John Heinz History Center for their files on the ACLL Librarians
- James Hill, Assistant to Mayor Peduto for displays and contacts
- Daniel Buczynski and Miller Creative for the Celebration logo
- The Perrine Family for the Courthouse keys and Articles about Percival G. Digby
- Prints from the Copper Plates Courtesy of Sergey Zlotnikov
- Rich Oziemblowski and the dedicated County workers who helped us beautify our space
- The staff at both ACLL and DCLI for their assistance in this endeavor of improvements