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The Law School Library—A Library of Research for Lawyer, Layman, and Legislator

Arthur S. Beardsley

University of Washington School of Law

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two of the sessions. In compliance with these resolutions a joint meeting has been arranged by Pres. Cronin and the president of this association to be held upon Thursday of this week with a joint banquet in the evening. As many of our members are also affiliated with the State Library Association and as the work of the two associations is similar, this joint meeting promises to be both beneficial and pleasant.

We are meeting this year in the great northwest. We are here because we need the enthusiasm of the west and want that section of our country to be better represented in the association. The legal profession has always been more conservative than most callings in life. What it needs is the spirit of the west. Our association ought to be represented in every western library. We ask the law-librarians from the west to join us in larger numbers and give us of their enthusiasm and we will in return reward them with the best there is in library service.

In closing I desire to thank all of the officers of the association for the co-operation which I have received from them during the last year. It has made my work very pleasant. Not only the officers, but the members of the association, whenever I have called upon them, have responded cheerfully. Especially do I desire to express my gratitude to those who have assisted me in making the programme of this conference a success.

THE LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY—A LIBRARY OF RESEARCH FOR LAWYER, LAYMAN, AND LEGISLATOR.*

By ARTHUR S. BEARDSLEY, Law Librarian University of Washington.

In discussing the merits of this question our minds readily turn to the idea of a law library wherein the lawyer can find his cases and his statutes and where the legislator may find legislative reference material and possibly aid in drafting of his bills.

The theory of such a library has been discussed before you several times. I hope to present to you a different phase of the question.

So let us drop from our minds these common concepts of decisions, statutes, digests, texts, etc., all of which are admittedly essential to any law library, and endeavor to visualize the development of a law school library for similar purposes but with greater resources and I trust more extended opportunities of service.

We will probably agree that the college or university as a seat of learning must develop and maintain library facilities commensurate with the standing before the world which the institution's progress has earned. The library, and of course we include the law school library, is one of the indices of an educational institution's efficiency, and as such, we expect it to grow and expand by adding to the richness of its collections, material of ever increasing importance and usefulness. We expect the college library to take the lead in gathering for future reference the materials valuable for research which, on account of their cost, most other libraries cannot afford or which they cannot justify adding to collections of the type and character which they already maintain. May we not then say that the college library is primarily a library for intensive study and research.

*Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries at Seattle, Wash., in July, 1925.

There is still another characteristic of the college library which is its semi-public nature. Excepting those which are privately endowed, the law school libraries are in part supported by public funds and to that extent, subject to reasonable regulations, are semi-public libraries. Of necessity, however, the primary purpose for which they exist must remain tantamount to the interest of the general public.

Having thus characterized the college library as one semi-public in nature and created for purposes of intensive study and research, let me proceed to define its scope and to establish its limitations. I maintain, ladies and gentlemen, that it is manifestly essential that the law school library, of all college libraries, should definitely determine its purposes and fix clearly its policies. These policies, and the functions which will be performed in pursuance thereof, must in turn determine the individuality of the library in question and stamp it with its individual marks of distinction. This can only result where the law librarian has gained the vision of a law school library as one rich in source material, such as records, documents, reports, and historical collections all of which constitute the fundamental bases and sources of the science and philosophy of the law.

If the law be the pedestal upon which the structure of society is builded, then the law library must needs contain those books which deal with all human actions and the relations of Man's contact with his neighbor. If it be true, that all knowledge can be divided into ten general classes, then the law library of liberal and extensive definition must contain books on natural science and invention, the social sciences, the economic, financial, business and the professional groups, for with law as the pivot of social development all sciences must revolve in an orbit about her.

We would not have you feel that too great a responsibility is being placed upon the law library nor too large an infringement is being made upon the fields of the general library. We must conceive this plan only in relation to the limitations first determined, to which we have just referred.

Speaking in this connection before this association in 1915, Dr. Wire, Worcester County Law Library, said:

"I firmly believe in each library having a fixed policy and living to it. . . . Is it not better for a library to develop systematically along fixed lines and within a limited area of usefulness, than to wander along buying here and there and having a ragged series of gaps instead of a well ordered set of volumes on our shelves. It is not better and more satisfactory to realize our functions and our limitations and standardize our libraries as much as possible?"

No library need buy everything offered by the overzealous salesman. In fact the contrary is the case. With definite ideals and objects as the guide to its usefulness, much must be turned down. As an example, if you will pardon a personal reference, until conditions warrant the purchase of the Irish, Scotch, Australian, and Colonial decisions by both the King County Law Library and the University of Washington Law Library, we have agreed that the former shall purchase in these fields and we in others; until such a time as both libraries need to carry complete subscriptions to the Shepard Citation service, we have agreed that the former shall carry these subscriptions and that we will bear a

portion of the cost, receiving the supplements from them as fast as the new ones arrive. These are evidences of how two libraries may economize in their expenditures without injuring their effectiveness. They also indicate our suggestion of limitation of the field of service. As a result the University of Washington Law Library has been enabled to expend its energies toward building up special collections, such as opinions of the attorneys-general of the various states, bar association reports, a collection of trials, a collection of legal biography and memoirs, a collection of periodicals, and publications of the various learned societies, all of which supplement the necessary collections of case and statute law and constitute the liberalizing elements in a law library whose scope has previously been definitely determined.

For example, in the past few years, many small school and county law libraries have been started. It is obviously certain that but a small fraction of these can now hope to obtain complete sets of Bar Association Reports, Periodicals, or State Session Laws.

The early ones are gone or will be gone before they are able to buy them. To my mind, it is wrong for these libraries to attempt to begin the collection of books within such limitations. They are not only wasting their time, but also their money, and will acquire at best but fragmentary and ragged collections. Would it not seem better to choose their specialities from fields still open, and leave to their larger neighboring libraries the privilege of aiding them through the development of the inter-law library loan service.

I trust that I have made my thought clear.

The law school library of today, more than ever before, must be more than a mere collection of laws and cases, it is impressed with a greater privilege, but at the same time it is charged with a greater responsibility. To meet this it must in turn specialize within its already limited field, which becomes specialization within specialization. The direction of its growth also must not be a mere fancy of its librarian but must be based upon some study of the peculiar local and community needs and conditions.

There is a danger of making our library a museum for ancient and rare specimens. Rarity in itself is a poor basis for choice; and antiquity is equally as bad. Yet both are well worth considering if the other element of actual usefulness be present. We must keep our law libraries alive but in order to do so, we, ourselves, must be alive and energetic, working in the present but looking to the future.

The nature of our libraries—more research than circulation—makes us reserved, with the result that we often tend to lose sight of the opportunities of extended endeavor and to close the avenues that open to greatest service. This is both dangerous and wrong. Dangerous, because it leads to pitfalls and ruts; wrong because it deprives the public of that service to which they, whose servants we are, are entitled.

Co-operation and assistance are elements essential to any public service. A patron enters the law library and asks if we have so and so on a certain subject. Our answer is either yes or no. If the latter, generally the interview is closed. The same person entering the public library inquires what they have on a certain subject, and at once the librarian is afforded an opportunity to display his skill. If the patron desires further aid the catalogues are consulted and other titles