



Minnesota State Law Library

FIRST RUNG ON THE LADDER OF JUSTICE

Annual Report: Highlights of 2002

The Minnesota State Law Library had a very successful year in 2002, but it was not without its challenges. Below, you'll find some of the highlights of a busy year.

☰ New Leadership

After twenty-two years at the helm, State Law Librarian [Marvin R. Anderson](#) retired in September of 2002. A nationwide search, headed by Supreme Court Justice Helen Meyer, drew applicants from around the country. [Barbara Golden](#), former Electronic Services Librarian at the Minnesota State Law Library, was chosen to fill the position and assumed her duties in November.

Other staff changes included hiring Anna Cherry to fill a newly created Reference and Publications position, hiring Robin Horowitz for the open Cataloging Librarian position, losing Daniel Lunde, longtime Head of Public Services, to an extended medical leave, and the retirement of Library Clerk Charles Balenger. Due to the Judicial Branch hiring freeze, the Library Clerk and Electronic Services Librarian positions were left unfilled. The Head of Public Services position was also left vacant pending the possible return of Daniel Lunde. The staffs of Outreach Services and Public Services were combined into one department with Karen Westwood as the Head.

☰ Briefs Project with Minnesota State Bar Association

The Minnesota State Law Library, in collaboration with the Minnesota State Bar Association, has initiated a program to electronically scan the "Statement of Legal Issues" sections of appellate court briefs. These legal issues are now searchable via the Library website (<http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/briefs.html>) for cases decided since January 2002. The Library and the Bar Association will launch a marketing effort in 2003 to promote use of this new means to access the extensive collection of appellate court briefs at the Minnesota State Law Library.

Minnesota Legal Periodical Index *on the Web*

The *Minnesota Legal Periodical Index* is now available on the web at <http://www.lawmoose.com/> (click MLPI on the menu bar). This product indexes over 19,000 articles in nineteen Minnesota legal periodicals and provides links to more than 800 online articles and over 700 cases. The web product allows more robust searching and is more widely accessible than the previous print version.

Poised for MnLINK

The Minnesota State Law Library is eager to implement the new statewide online library catalog mandated by the State Legislature. Several scheduled “go live” dates have come and gone, but the Library staff remains ready as a beta (test) site for the system. Once some final contract points are worked out at the statewide level, the Library anticipates beginning to load records in the new system in 2003.

I appreciate you taking the time to give me one on one attention . . . it was very obvious that my assignment took priority . . . Should I require assistance in the future with my Juris Doctorate studies I will feel most confident calling upon you for assistance when the need arises . . .

Patron comment, 2002

Space Reconfiguration

In 2002 the Library gave up office space to the court system for use by the Human Resources Division. The Library lost two meeting rooms and the office space for the Public Services staff. Public Services employees moved into other office space in the Library that was reconfigured using cubicle construction.

Legal Digests Cancelled

In an unprecedented move for the Minnesota State Law Library, the Library’s executive team decided in April to discontinue twenty-nine subscriptions to legal digests. It became apparent early in 2002 that the publisher, Thomson West, was revising the digests in such a way that the cost increases for each set would quickly outstrip the budget allotted to pay for them. The decision to cancel was validated later in the year when the *AALL Price Index for Legal Publications* showed that digest costs had risen an average of 48% over the previous year. The table below illustrates that this increase followed close on the heels of a nearly 47% increase in 1999 over 1998 prices.

Digests

All state, regional, and federal digests

	Titles	Total Price	Average price	Percentage Change	Price Index
1998	57	\$25,613.00	\$449.35		100.00
1999	57	\$37,612.00	\$659.86	46.85%	146.85
2000	57	\$42,912.00	\$752.84	14.09%	167.54
2001	57	\$63,637.00	\$1,116.44	48.30%	248.46

Source: AALL Price Index for Legal Publications, December 2002.

For access to state cases outside of our region, patrons are directed to the *Decennial Digest* system and/or electronic databases.

Technology and Library Services

The Library e-reference service remained a favorite choice for many patrons. Questions via e-mail come in at all hours of the day and night from all over the world. A law librarian responds to most questions by the next business day. The Library website, especially the archived opinions section, continues to be heavily used. Online opinions are easier to search and more quickly available than they are in print. “[County and Municipal Ordinances](#),” one of the most popular pages on our site averaging more than 650 visits per month, added thirty-four more local government links. New to the website is a chronological listing of Minnesota appellate court judges and justices from Territorial Days to the present: <http://www.lawlibrary.state.mn.us/judges.html>. The Internet, licensed CD-ROM products, and our online catalog are technologies used extensively by staff and patrons in the Law Library.

I could just kiss you!!
I have read almost every one of those statutes and couldn't find what I needed. And we have been to attorneys and the whole nine yards and didn't get any help! I am forever in your debt.

*Patron comment,
April 16, 2002*

Outreach

The Minnesota State Law Library sponsors participation in the *Everybody Wins Reading Program*. Over 120 volunteers from the Judicial Center, Federal Courts, the Attorney General's Office, Education Minnesota, the Department of

Transportation, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and the Worker's Compensation Court of Appeals spend each Tuesday lunchtime reading to second grade students at Benjamin E. Mays Magnet School in St. Paul. This program, now in its seventh year, exposes children to the pleasures of reading and provides them with a one-on-one relationship with an adult role model.

Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) implemented measures to control the large jump in items provided to inmates in the past two years. In cooperation with the Department of Corrections, LLSP designed new protocols for photocopying, delivering materials and site visits. These changes are described in the [*Law Library Service to Prisoners 2002 Annual Report*](#).

Within the building, the Library once again sponsored a *Showcase Series* in the spring and fall. In its spring series, the Library presented speakers on a variety of topics, while the fall series featured talks by our new appellate court appointees Supreme Court Justices Helen Meyer and Sam Hanson and Court of Appeals Judges Natalie Hudson, David Minge, and Mimi Wright.

The Library received some positive press from a September 14, 2002 *St. Paul Pioneer Press* article titled "80-Year-Old No Stranger to City Hall Challenges."



To read the full article, please go to

<http://www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/news/local/4071113.htm>.

Pioneer Press: "Lillian Chiarella keeps the number of the Minnesota State Law Library on a Post-It note next to her phone. Her ethics complaint led to charges of misconduct against Roseville's mayor." (photo: Joe Oden, *Pioneer Press*)

Looking Ahead

The Minnesota State Law Library is proud to have a [veteran staff](#) that boasts more than 150 years of law library experience among them. In fact, the years of staff experience number more than the years of the Law Library itself – the oldest continuously operated agency in the State of Minnesota. All members of the Library staff participate in continuing education and benefit from membership in professional associations. In challenging times, the State Law Library staff is uniquely equipped to weather the storm and to proceed with new initiatives and programs for the Library's patrons. We look forward to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

[Library department statistics](#)