2017

Law Library Guide 2017–2018

Kresge Law Library, Research & Teaching Team

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The Notre Dame Law Department was established in 1869. The first published mention of a law school library was not until 20 years later when the Columbia Law Times described the small library of 2,500 volumes as “spacious, well-lighted,” and “well-ventilated.”

In these early years development of the law library’s collection and staff was slow. The Law School did not appoint the first law librarian, John Whitman, until 1925. His selection coincided with the Law School’s accreditation by the Association of American Law Schools. By 1930, after more than 60 years of existence, the library had only grown to 10,000 volumes. This modest collection did not require a large staff. In fact, in 1942, a single librarian, Lora Lashbrook, oversaw the entire operation while serving concurrently as teacher of research methodology, law school registrar, and secretary to both the dean and the faculty. Marie Lawrence succeeded to the post of librarian in 1945. She guided the collection for almost 25 years. At her retirement the library stood at 69,000 volumes — still quite small by American Bar Association standards.

The enlargement of the library’s physical space in 1973 came under the leadership of the next librarian, Kathleen C. Farman. Expansion was made possible in part by a gift from the Kresge Foundation for whom the library is named. In 1985 the University committed itself to building a library that would support the scholarship of the highest order, and it needed a librarian to spearhead that campaign. Roger F. Jacobs, then the librarian of the U.S. Supreme Court, became the fifth Notre Dame law librarian. During his 21 years of leadership, library staff, seating, and shelf space more than doubled. The total physical area of the library is 8,600 square feet.

The primary mission of the Kresge Law Library is to provide the necessary scholarly foundation for legal research and to provide space for independent and collaborative study for Notre Dame Law School faculty and students. The Law library supports the curricular and scholarly interests of the Law School by acquiring and providing access to electronic and print resources, and by offering formal and informal guidance in their use. Secondary, the law library supports the legal research requirements of the larger University community. The library occupies four floors. Enter through the main entrance adjacent to the north end of Eck Commons. (Eck Commons is the bridge connecting Bolchini Hall of Law and Eck Hall of Law.)

The library seats 550 people, 152 at individual study carrels. Six professional librarians, eight support staff, and numerous student assistants comprise the library staff.

Welcome to Notre Dame Law School's Kresge Library. This library guide will inform you about the library's services, policies, and physical layout. If you have other questions, please ask the staff for assistance. The staff is here to help you.

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