



# Dougherty County Law Library

## Meeting Albany's Legal Information Needs

### 2006-2007 Annual Report

#### The Library Story



Thirty-six years ago the Georgia legislature passed legislation allowing up to \$5 from each filing fee to be collected for the establishment and maintenance of county law libraries. The Dougherty County Law Library was founded in 1981, and continues to evolve in response to patron needs. The library has always had only one person on staff.

On June 15, 2007 the State Bar of Georgia awarded the William B. Spann, Jr. Award to the Law Library for its role in delivering critical access to legal information to self-represented litigants, enabling more low-income households to resolve legal problems and assisting the courts and judges to more effectively process cases.

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**Board of Trustees**  
**Dougherty County Law Library**  
The Hon. Loring A. Gray, Jr., Chair  
Kelly Boswell, Esq.  
Jimmy Brown, Esq.  
Ken Hodges, D.A.  
Evonne Mull, Clerk of Court  
The Hon. John Salter  
The Hon. Nancy Stephenson

#### The Statistical Story

- 2,526 telephone inquiries
- 3,787 walk-in patrons
- 20,188 reference questions answered
- 410 print titles owned
- 2,963 volumes available for research
- 4 legal subscription databases

#### What does that mean?

- An average of 15 walk in patrons per day
- An average of 10 telephone inquiries per day
- An average of 80 reference questions per day
- An average of 510 website visits per month
- A 12% increase in walk-in patrons since last fiscal year

"Public law libraries provide an invaluable service. Access to justice requires the ability to find the law. Without ready access to books and electronic resources to research the law, judges, prosecutors, public defenders and lawyers cannot apply the law and justice cannot be dispensed. Perhaps of even greater importance is the fact that public law libraries make the law directly accessible to members of the general public."  
Terry Lukens  
Judge, King County Superior Court  
Seattle, Washington

## The Dougherty County Law Library Story (cont. from Pg. 1)

At its most recent meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to increase the Law Library's funding from \$4 per filing fee to \$5 per filing fee. Additionally, the Board voted to increase the salary of the Law Librarian.

All of the Law Library's family law forms have been re-drafted to comply with the new child support guidelines that took effect in January 2007. This revision took about four months to complete.

Since the new child support guidelines went into effect, more patrons are doing their online calculations at the Law Library. This has resulted in more computer usage. Two computers and a network printer have been purchased for the conference room so that the two legal research computers will always be available to patrons who want to search Lexis and Westlaw.

For the 2007 Law Day Celebration, the Law Library collaborated with the Dougherty Circuit Bar Association, the Darton College Paralegal Student Association and Georgia Legal Services to host a Divorce Workshop for Self Represented Litigants.

Judge Lockette's Secretary Kisa Collier is working with the Law Library to offer an informal divorce workshop on a weekly or bi-weekly basis in the Law Library Conference Room. Kisa is willing to staff the reference desk during the classes so that the law librarian will be free to teach.

Recently the Law Library's video-conferencing equipment was connected to Darton College's equipment for a trial run. Josh Lamb, who works in Darton's IT department, helped with this effort. While the people at Darton were able to see and hear our location, we were unable to see or hear theirs. The Law Library has asked for help from both Kevin O'Lear and the IT in resolving the ongoing technical problems.

As demand for library services continues to grow, we need additional staff, especially during the busy summer months. Hiring additional staff would allow me to do necessary administrative tasks without affecting service at the Law Library. One part-time employee would make a big difference.

### Dougherty County Law Library

225 Pine Avenue. Albany, GA 31702

229-431-2133 Fax: 229-434-2672

On the Web:

[http://www.albany.ga.us/law\\_library/LL\\_index.htm](http://www.albany.ga.us/law_library/LL_index.htm)

#### Hours:

Mon.-Fri.: 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Closed for lunch each day from 12:00 -1:00 p.m.

## 2006-2007 Finances

### Income 2006/2007

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Criminal Fines & Forfeitures	\$62,524.48
Magistrate Court Fees	\$49,904.00
City of Albany	\$18,032.00
Civil Filing Fees	\$13,328.00
Interest on Investments	\$8,737.33
Copy Charges	\$4,677.95
Probate Court	\$3,360.00
Other	\$1,785.75
Interest--Checking Account	\$151.79
Donations	\$105.31
Refunds	\$89.00
Book Sales	\$37.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$162,735.11</b>

## Expenses 2006-2007

Category	Amount	Percentage
Books & Materials	87495.83	54.53%
Payroll Expenses	58806.57	36.65%
Office Supplies	3433.73	2.14%
Staff		
Development	2326.59	1.45%
Office Equipment	2314.04	1.33%
Accounting Fees	1492.23	0.93%
Office Property.		
Ins.	1476.18	0.92%
IT Dept Fees	1460.04	0.91%
Other	673.91	0.42%
Memberships	625.77	0.39%
Copier		
Maintenance	465.32	0.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>160570.2</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The Law Library's net income for 2006-2007 was \$2324.28. The numbers in the charts may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Being a good steward of the law library fund is a big challenge given the dramatic increases in the cost of legal materials. From 1997-2006, the cost of new sets increased by 70% for West publications and by 64% for Lexis publications.<sup>1</sup> This amounts to an increase of 4.5% per year for West, and 4.2% per year for Lexis. The cost of updates has increased even faster. From 1997-2006, the cost of West updates rose by 232% and the cost of Lexis updates rose by 66%. This amounts to an annual increase of 11.5% for West and 4.5% for Lexis.

Replacing print with online sources does not result in cost savings, as many believe. Assessing the value-to-cost ratio can be complex. While print takes staff time to update, online services take staff time to train users. Comparing the cost of various formats requires one to prioritize the quality

<sup>1</sup> Kendall F. Svengalis. Legal Information Buyer's Guide and Reference Manual 2007. N. Stonington, CT: Rhode Island Law Press. Pp. 17-18.

factors, and that involves some tough decisions.

## Staff Development

Attendance at:

AALL Annual Meeting

Offices Held:

Secretary-Treasurer, Dougherty

Circuit Bar Association

Committee Work:

Chair, Trustee Development

Committee

Publication in:

Dougherty Circuit Bar Bulletin

AALL Spectrum

Degree Earned:

M.L.I.S., Florida State University

## Looking Ahead

At the end of each fiscal year, I make a thorough review of Law Library operations. It is important to identify and prioritize the projects that need significant attention in the year ahead. Here are some of the initiatives that I will launch in 2007-2008:

- Re-organize the Law Library website to enhance ease of use by library patrons
- Explore opportunities to get student interns and/or volunteers to increase staffing of the Law Library
- Refine the organization of the Library's print collection to more fully conform to the Library of Congress Classification System
- Develop a written collection development plan
- Develop ongoing workshops for self-represented litigants
- Develop a workshop to train public librarians in legal reference
- Continue solving the technical issues involved in providing video-conferencing
- Continue writing articles for professional journals