



THE NEW LIBRARY

By the Numbers

11.7
miles of shelving

56.8
miles of voice
and data wiring

500,000
collection
capacity
(in volumes)

779
public seats

180
computers

827
data ports

13
video ports

14
group study rooms

1
instruction lab

2
seminar rooms

115,000
sq. feet

2
technology-
enhanced
classrooms



The Dream Becomes

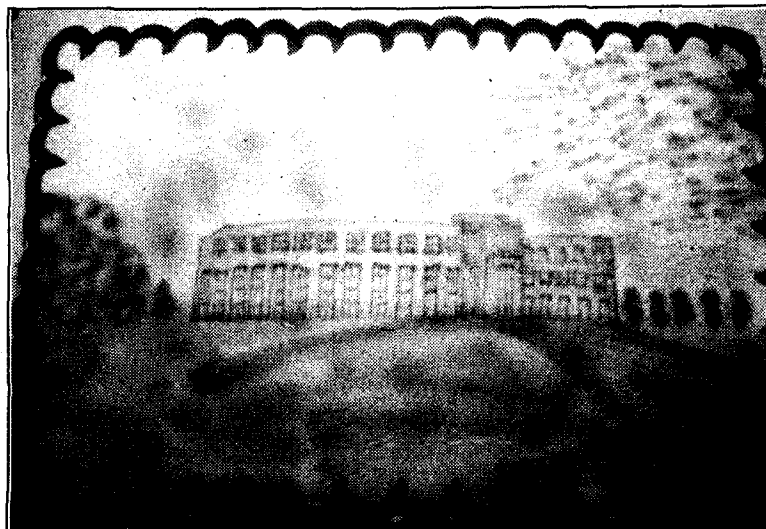


Photo by Matthew McKeown

Getting the new library was "no piece of cake."

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B. Shill picked up the ball eight years ago and has scored a glorious touchdown for the team.

According to Hand, he is one of the "founding fathers" of the Library of the Future. Hand sat on the task force responsible for recommending a new PSH library more than 20 years ago.

Hand remembers that the Penn State Capital Campus Library Task Force, formed under then-Provost and Dean Robert McDermott, believed a new library was needed to legitimize PSH's academic programs.

The space available in the Olmsted building was not adequate. A new library building would help attract students, faculty, and the community to campus.

Hand added that the task force felt a new library would "accent the presence of Capital Campus."

For more than a decade, the task force and then the physical plant committee, chaired by Hand, lobbied continuously with "discretion and sensitivity to anyone who would listen" to gain approval for the new library.

The approval process is complicated. According to Hand, the administration of an institution the size of Penn State University must consider a "large number of legitimate needs and objectives and assign relative priorities within a given financial situation."

Meanwhile, Hand noted, PSH grew in stature within the PSU

world. "PSH offered a wide array of degree programs and was ahead of its time in meeting the needs of working people seeking degrees, especially advanced degrees, who couldn't afford to be full-time students," Hand said.

Finally, the lobbying effort paid off. PSH's Library of the Future was added to Penn State University's Capital Improvement Plan and then the Pennsylvania State Capital Improvement Budget.

While that move was a victory, adding the new library to the plan was one big step in an even bigger process.

According to Shill, in 1990 the library was subject to a line-

item veto by Gov. Casey. Then, in November 1992, Casey approved the project, but not the funding. Finally, on his last day in office, Jan. 13, 1995, Casey approved the library funding. Then, Gov. Tom Ridge froze budget expenditures when he took office.

The approval process really ended only two years ago. In March 1998, Penn State University President Graham B. Spanier released the funds needed to begin construction.

Meanwhile, Dr. Shill had been appointed PSH Library Director in 1991. So, in addition to his regular responsibilities, Shill's tenure has been filled with planning committee meetings, architectural drawings, piles of furniture catalogs, countertop samples and upholstery swatches.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held April 30, 1998 and construction began Aug. 30, 1998.

A little over a year later, the construction process officially ended in October.

With construction complete, the team shifted their attention to shelves, furniture, and coordination of the daunting task of moving the entire collection, some of which had been in storage, to the sparkling new building.

During the massive final task of moving, which began Dec. 8, Shill kept his team informed through regular, detailed e-mail updates.

The e-mails outlined specifics on such divergent topics as expected technology connection dates, color choices for solar shades, and hand soap installation in the restrooms. Each e-mail ended with an expression of thanks and support.

The team's cohesion paid off. According to Shill, he frequently would think of a task only to find another team member had already taken care of it.

Gloria Clouser has been a member of that library team since Dec. 1, 1975 and had the honor of shelving the first book in the new library, the Jan.-March 1962 volume of Analytical Chemistry.

Clouser has seen many changes in the past 25 years. She has worked under three directors, watched walls come down in Heindel Library to open the floor plan, and in 1981 watched the "tool shed" go up.

That metal structure was meant to be a five-year Band-Aid for the library's overcrowding. Clouser then described 19 years of leaky roofs and squirrel invasions in that section of the

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Photo by Matthew McKeown

A view of the miles of new shelving.