

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



University of South Carolina School of Law Library

A Case for Constructive Design in Library Storage

CHALLENGE

The University of South Carolina Law School is located in Columbia, the state capital. Boasting such a fine collection of legal volumes and other documents – including an amazing collection representing South Carolina legal history – is a privilege and a great responsibility. When the opportunity arose to move the law library from

a 1960s' era building into a new, state-of-the-art facility, it came with a challenge. How might a relocation into a building with a smaller square footage meet both the historic obligations of a library and the changing needs of today's student population.

SOLUTION

Associate Dean and Director of the Law Library Duncan Alford knew from experience that a smaller footprint – 38,000 linear feet, to be exact – meant that at least some compact shelving would be an ideal solution for the new library.

"I had worked on several other law libraries and was told by several directors that you either get Spacesaver shelving or you don't get anything," he said. "That's been borne out in the experiences that I've had. We had a great opportunity here to do something special."

"We worked with the library staff and their architects to create a design that maximized capacity, security and efficiency," added Patterson Pope Account Representative Kristin Ormand. "The collaborative process gives them a chance to say what they want, where they want it to be, and how they want it to work."

The new library's basement was outfitted with a Spacesaver Eclipse High-Density Mobile System. Covering more than 27,000 linear feet, it boasts cantilever bookstack shelving and covers more than 75% of the basement space. The dual-entry system also has a Zero Force Sensing Passive Safety system to protect users.

Static shelving in the collection and administrative spaces on the library's first three floors helped add volume storage space and personality. The open shelving on those floors have end panels with a subtle walnut finish, while the static shelving in the library's South Carolina Legal History Collection Room is a rich cherry.



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Duncan Alford
Associate Dean and Director
University of South Carolina School of Law Library

ACHIEVEMENT

It's customary for a new space to bring with it a new attitude. That is certainly the case here. The storage installation not only helped organize and secure a cherished collection, its smart design allowed for students to use the library in a very 21st century way; namely, as meeting and collaborative spaces.

"Everyone's enjoying the space – the aesthetics of it and the function," said Andy Kretchmar, the access services librarian. *"Even if they're not using the books, they see the brighter gathering areas and they enjoy working with one another. It's very inviting."*

"I like knowing that our students have their favorite spots to study," added Alford. *"They have spaces that are more attuned to the way they like to learn these days."*

The state's future law practitioners have a lot of work ahead of them. Creating safe, accessible study areas is Patterson Pope's contribution to that cause.

"It's readily apparent that Patterson Pope does so much more than just provide a product," said Alford. *"They are consultants, and that makes a big difference."*

