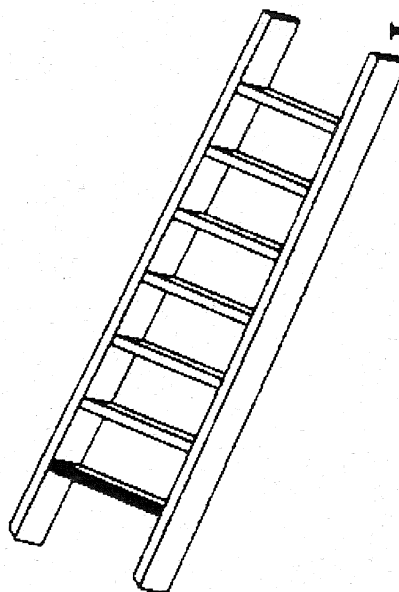




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# 1997 Annual Report



Rung on the ladder of Justice

Minnesota State Law Library: 1st

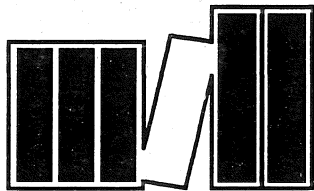
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1997 Annual Report  
Prepared by the Staff of the Minnesota State Law Library  
April 1998

Minnesota State Law Library  
25 Constitution Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55155-6102

[www.courts.state.mn.us/library](http://www.courts.state.mn.us/library)



MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY

MINNESOTA JUDICIAL CENTER  
25 CONSTITUTION AVENUE SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

MARVIN ROGER ANDERSON  
State Law Librarian

612-297-2084  
Fax: 612-296-6740

April 30, 1998

Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz  
Supreme Court Law Library Committee  
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court

Dear Justice Blatz and Members of the Court:

On behalf of the Minnesota State Law Library, I am pleased to submit our 1997 Annual Report. The report provides highlights and a brief overview of last year's operations and introduces a new logo to represent our Library.

We believe that access to justice is a fundamental right of citizens; and that an essential element of access to the ameliorative powers of the courts is access to the sources of the law. We believe that the supreme court bears a public trust to ensure that legal information is placed at the disposal of government agencies, the legal profession and members of the general public to permit them to shape their actions to the tenets of the law.

Under the supervision of the supreme court, we believe the law library has been delegated the responsibility to offer services and to maintain resources that will fulfill the court's obligation to ensure that all citizens have access to the materials that explain the legal relationship of citizen to society. Finally, in today's complex society, and in the midst of the Information Age, we believe the administration of justice cannot be separated from access to legal information and all of our endeavors are directed to its realization.

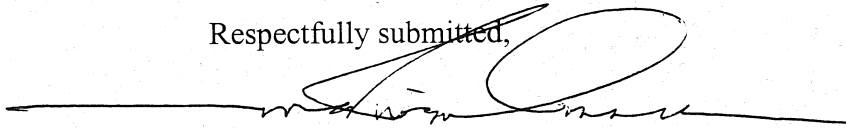
For some time we have wanted a design to reflect the crucial role the Law Library plays as regards legal information and the administration of justice. The process of selecting a new logo made us rethink our library purposes as well as our service goals and objectives. Although it has not been easy to find a symbol capable of portraying our underlying philosophy of operation, we all agreed that it was one of the most rewarding experiences we have had as a staff and well worth the investment of time and effort.

We have chosen a ladder as our logo. The utility of a ladder is immediately likened to the helpful services offered by the library and a ladder is associated with justice, as a progressive process moving from lower to appellate heights.

We realize that no single design can convey the complexity of a modern library. Our connection to our users takes many forms other than what is reflected in this logo. The staff who make direct contact with users are indispensable. Our physical space is part of the connection too. And the opinion of our users, passed by word-of-mouth, is a connection we cannot overlook. Thus, rather than seek to supplant our other connections, we adopt the ladder, with a bold first step, as a means to unify our connections and to symbolize the concept that the Library's services and resources can be that "first rung," that foundation for people needing legal information as they pursue the administration of justice. We hope you agree.

We appreciate the guidance of Justice Tomljanovich and Justice Anderson on matters before the Supreme Court Law Library Committee. We also thank Sue Dosal, Judith L. Rehak, Janet Warwick, Katherine Hanson, RITO staff and many others for their support and cooperation throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marvin Roger Anderson', is written over a horizontal line.

Marvin Roger Anderson  
State Law Librarian

cc: Chief Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr., Court of Appeals  
Associate Judges of the Minnesota Court of Appeals  
Other Supreme Court Staff and Government Agencies

*"Just wanted to say I took a look at the State Law Library web page today and was impressed. A nice clean, uncluttered and organized look with a lot of content."*

*Patron E-Mail - January 1997*

## THE ELECTRONIC LADDER?

In 1997, the Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL) embraced technology to a greater degree than ever before. One critical way to give the appellate courts and the public the greatest access to legal information is now through the MSLL website.

The Library website premiered in January 1997 at

[www.courts.state.mn.us/library](http://www.courts.state.mn.us/library)

Intern Morgan Wilson, who came to MSLL from Australia, was instrumental in developing the website and launching it. He e-mailed the Library as follows:

*"It is gratifying to view the Library's web site from Australia, and to hear it praised by staff and students at the School of Information, Library and Archives Studies at the University of New South Wales."*

March 1997

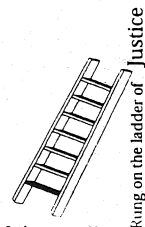
Since its inauguration, the site has grown 150% in size, and in December a "quick index" was added to help people navigate through all the pages. Statistics show that people appreciate the pages linking to legal research sites, especially Minnesota legal resources. But, by far, the most popular part of the Library's web site is the opinion archive with its full-text searching ability.

A true collaborative effort, the opinion archive won recognition at the Metronet\* 4th Annual *Capitalizing on Collaboration*

program. The opinion archive would not have been possible without the cooperation and participation of the Minnesota State Court System, which provides the electronic version of the opinions; North Star, which provides the physical location for the archive; and the Minnesota Office of the Attorney General Library staff, who initially archived the opinions before the website was launched. Nina Platt (of the A.G. Library staff) provided expert assistance in designing the archive indices and recommending the search engine.

### Electronic Services Librarian

This year marked the accomplishment of a long-term Law Library goal -- the creation of a new Electronic Services Librarian position. Along with serving as the "Webweaver" for the MSLL website, the Electronic Services Librarian will provide training and consulting in the efficient and effective use of information technology for library staff and library users. The creation of the position at this time is especially critical in light of MnLINK, the statewide library information network currently under development. The Electronic Services Librarian will be monitoring the development of MnLINK and facilitating the transfer of the Library's online catalog to the new system.



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\* Metronet is a multi-type cooperative system serving over 700 libraries.

*"A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life."*

*Henry Ward Beecher*

## JUSTICE STARTS HERE

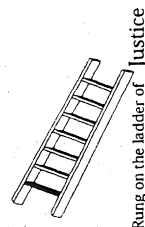
In order for patrons to take full advantage of the books, government documents, and other materials the Library collects, the items must be cataloged and placed in rational order. Indeed, cataloging materials is the first step in providing meaningful access to the collection. MSLL not only catalogs its own collection, but other state government libraries and county law libraries as well. Once these collections are cataloged, they can be accessed through the online catalog at MSLL, making more items available to court and public users. A well-managed, "clean" catalog means that MSLL is prepared to make the switch to the new MnLINK system that will link the Library with the University of Minnesota, public libraries and others in one seamless catalog.

Cataloging in 1997 took a new twist with the advent of "hot linking." Now, when a patron searches the MSLL catalog on the Internet, she has a chance to link directly to the item. For instance, if a patron is searching for a particular government document in the catalog, she may see a "URL" to an Internet site that contains the entire text of the document. By clicking on this "URL," she links directly to the full-text of the document. Thus, the patron may look directly at the full document without ever leaving her computer. MSLL is promoting maximum use of government documents through this innovative cataloging technique.

MSLL completed a major self-study of its Government Printing Office (GPO) Depository Program in 1997. The self-study was required by GPO to

demonstrate compliance with its requirements, particularly in the area of public access. Of twelve Minnesota depository libraries completing the study, seven will be inspected in 1998. MSLL is not on the inspection list, indicating GPO's confidence in the way MSLL makes government documents available to all users.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the Briefs Project, wherein MSLL collects, organizes, binds and microfiches all state appellate court briefs for published opinions. Attorneys, the courts, other law libraries and the general public rely on this vital service for briefs that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.



Minnesota State Law Library: 1st

# 1997 Numbers



**1,087 serial titles  
received**

**1,224 new titles  
cataloged**

**1,857 briefs  
processed**

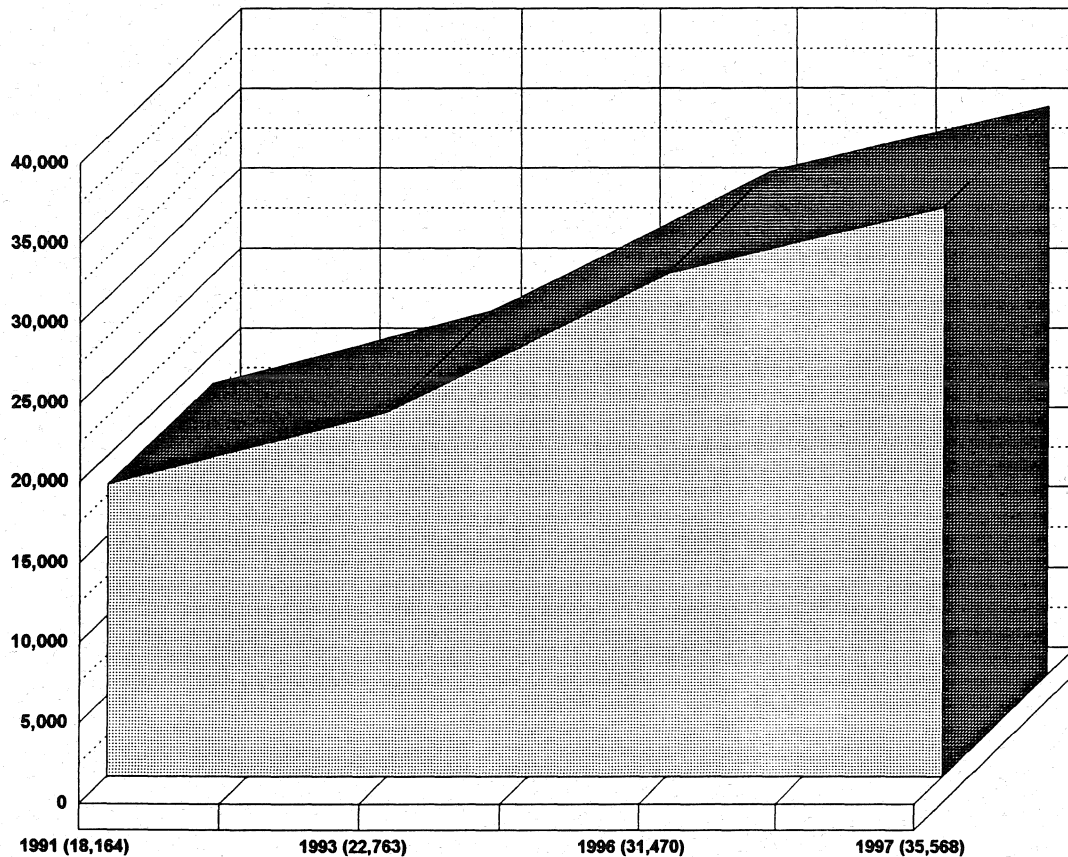
**2,280 trial  
transcripts received**

**4,705 volumes added**

**14,173 government  
publications received**

**18,042 microfiche  
added**

# Reference Requests 1991 - 1997



Reference requests have increased 196% since 1991, the first full year that the Law Library was in the Minnesota Judicial Center.



*"This is my favorite library in the state. The staff are helpful and knowledgeable and the surroundings are great!"*

*Patron Comment - November 1997*

## A BOOST ONTO THE LADDER

One of the most essential means of access to legal information is through the reference services of MSLL. In addition to traditional reference assistance given to patrons, the staff spends more and more time assisting patrons in using technology to meet their reference needs. Whether it's giving the Minnesota Legislature's website address over the phone, or sitting down with a patron and working through the search protocol for one of many CD-ROM titles, reference staff are constantly challenged to keep their technology skills current. Yet despite its many advances, technology will not be replacing print anytime soon. In fact, many attorneys will use the Internet to locate information but then ask for the print copy to cite to. MSLL is able to offer information in multiple formats.

The most dramatic change in Public Services within the last few years has been working with the general public. There was a time in the past when most patrons were individuals trained in the law. Now, students from local law schools or paralegal programs working on assignments, *pro se* patrons handling their own cases, and many others are all frequent users of the Library who require special attention and extra time. It is difficult to achieve a balance between the sophisticated user, such as a judge, and the novice user, but the reference staff maintains that fulcrum.

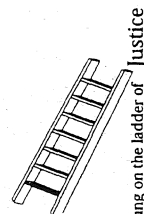
Reference questions increased 13% from 1996, the number of items circulated

increased by 14%, and interlibrary loan requests increased by 65%. As the figures indicate, reference services continue to be essential for patrons needing legal information.

## THE EXTENSION LADDER

The County Law Library Program (CLLP) and Law Library Service to Prisoners (LLSP) remained strong in 1997. The CLLP Coordinator published results of a 1996 County Law Library Survey. These results are used to determine library needs, as well as for comparative purposes. While MSLL does not feel that all county law libraries must operate in the same way, it is useful to know what other counties are doing. In 1997, 83 of 85 county law libraries participated in the program (membership fees partially fund the program), which offers advice and assistance concerning library management.

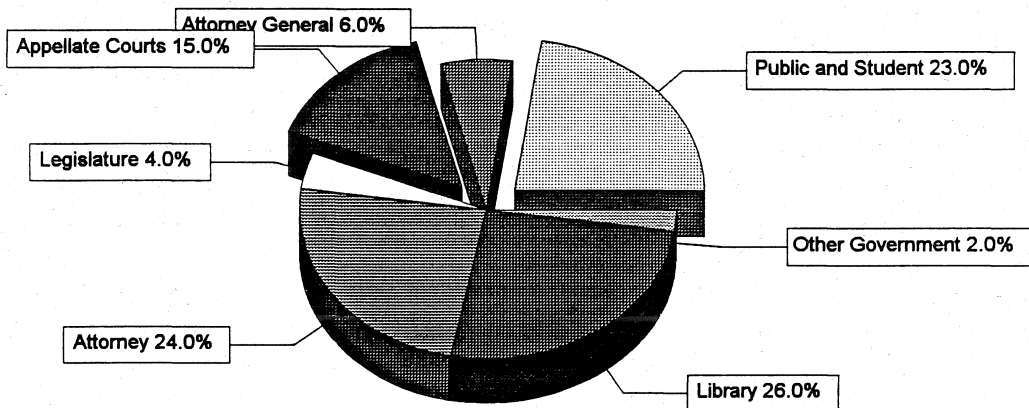
LLSP continued its long tradition of serving inmate legal research needs. The program had a record year in terms of number of requests filled, on-site visits made, and total number of inmates assisted. LLSP is funded through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Corrections.



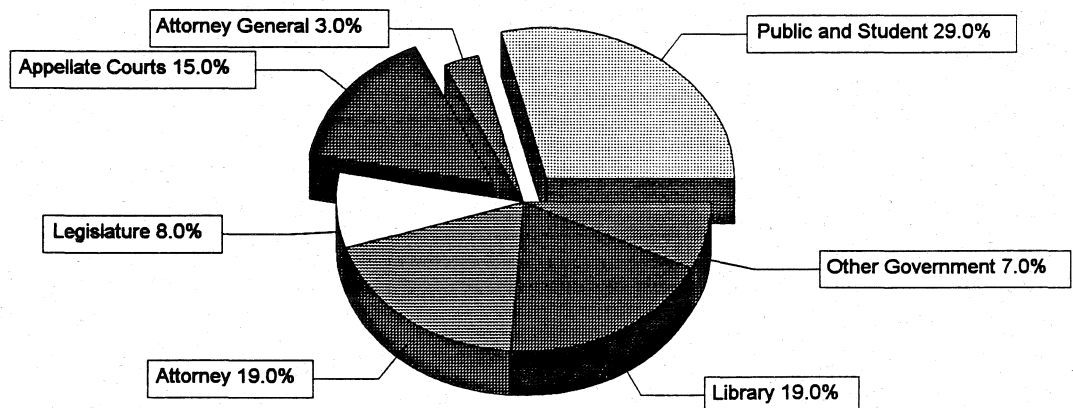
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# MSLL User Groups

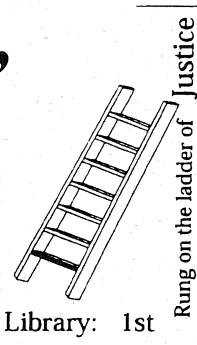
## 1991 Reference Patrons



## 1997 Reference Patrons



*"What we have tried to do in Minnesota is to make the law library the first rung in the administration of justice. We are the first place where people go to find out the rules, the statutes, and the regulations that govern the relationship between citizens and society."*



Minnesota State Law Library: 1st

Marvin R. Anderson  
November 1992

Proceedings of the National Conference on  
State Court Libraries, p. 38