



2001 Annual Report

Focus on the Future: The Library Responds

"The next step for the judicial branch is to prepare for our future challenges by setting and maintaining our strategic priorities."

Chief Justice
Kathleen A. Blatz

Access to Justice Children's Justice Public Trust and Confidence Technology

These are the four areas the Minnesota Supreme Court targeted in 2001 as priorities for the Judicial Branch to focus on (see [Focus on the Future](#)). The Minnesota State Law Library (MSLL) has accepted the challenge the Court has given us and has reviewed our programs and accomplishments of 2001 in light of the Court's strategic plan. We are pleased to see that many of the Library's existing programs support the Court's plan, and some new initiatives show potential to further the plan.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

STATE LAW LIBRARY PRIORITIES:

- Continue to provide top-notch service to all patrons of the library, including county law libraries and prisoners.
- Work with the court to provide space for court functions without impacting critical functions of the library.

At the same time the court is seeing increasing caseloads and the need for more judges and staff, the State Law Library has seen an increase in *pro se* patrons. For clients of the court system who have to wait to be heard, we provide access to information regarding both substance and procedure. Patrons with and without attorneys use our collection and reference services to research everything from bias in the courts to the color of brief covers.

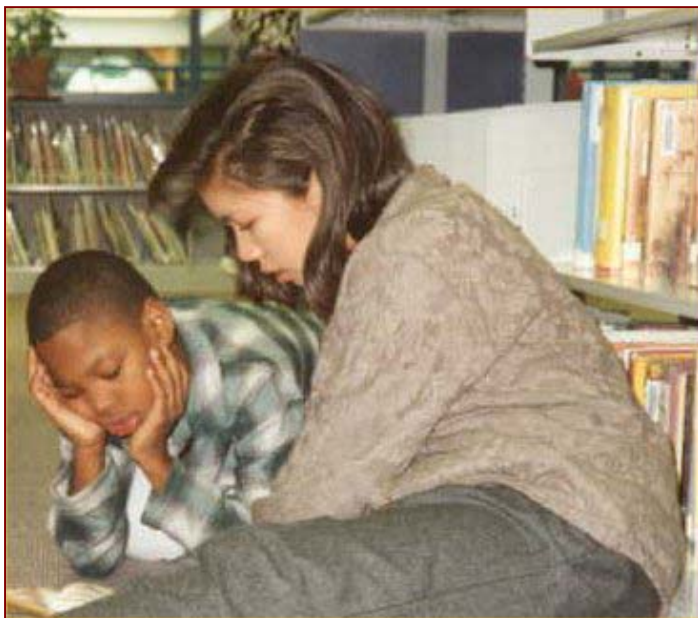
In terms of access to justice, ***two long-standing library programs are exemplary.*** The [County Law Library Program](#) (CLLP) supports the information needs of trial judges and their staffs by advising and assisting Minnesota county law libraries in their missions. The [Law Library Service to Prisoners Program](#) (LLSP) assists Minnesota inmates with their legal information needs.

In a more concrete way, the judicial branch transformation to an increasingly state-funded branch of government has physically impacted the Minnesota State Law Library. The strategic plan includes developing and maintaining adequate personnel, financial and service infrastructure in order to ensure the provision of, and access to, justice. With the addition of large numbers of administrative staff to the Judicial Center, the Library provided some space to offices and consultants and anticipates doing more in 2002. We have worked closely with the Court to determine how much space must be retained in order for the library to continue to adequately accommodate library personnel and provide vital information services.

CHILDREN'S JUSTICE

STATE LAW LIBRARY PRIORITIES:

- Sponsor "Everybody Wins" lunchtime reading program.
- Amend collection development plan to emphasize information on children's justice.
- Publicize children's justice resources via court e-mail and "Court Communicator".



While this Court initiative addresses primarily trial court procedures, the State Law Library's continuing sponsorship of the **"Everybody Wins" lunchtime reading program** will continue to inspire judicial branch employees to keep the best interests of children at heart. Each Tuesday, Minnesota Judicial Center, Attorney General's Office, Federal Court, and other capitol area employees visit a reading "buddy" at [Benjamin E. Mays Magnet School](#) in St. Paul. The hour is spent reading to and sharing the joy of reading with second grade students at the school. The program has brought positive PR to the Judicial Branch, but more importantly, has shown youngsters a friendly, "human" side of the court system.

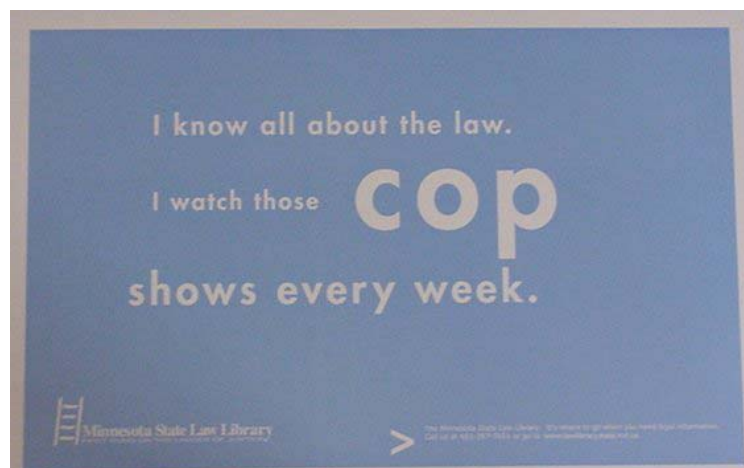
The library will emphasize juvenile concerns in its collection development plan. We will obtain titles that will help the courts address this significant issue. In instances where titles have to be discontinued for cost reasons, we will retain titles pertaining to children's justice as much as is feasible. The library will continue to publicize the acquisition of titles in this area.

PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

STATE LAW LIBRARY PRIORITIES

- Continue library outreach to public libraries.
- Advertise “Ask Marvin” service so that more patrons are aware of it.
- Support the Court’s “Constitution Day” program.
- Provide high quality reference service to all patrons of the library.

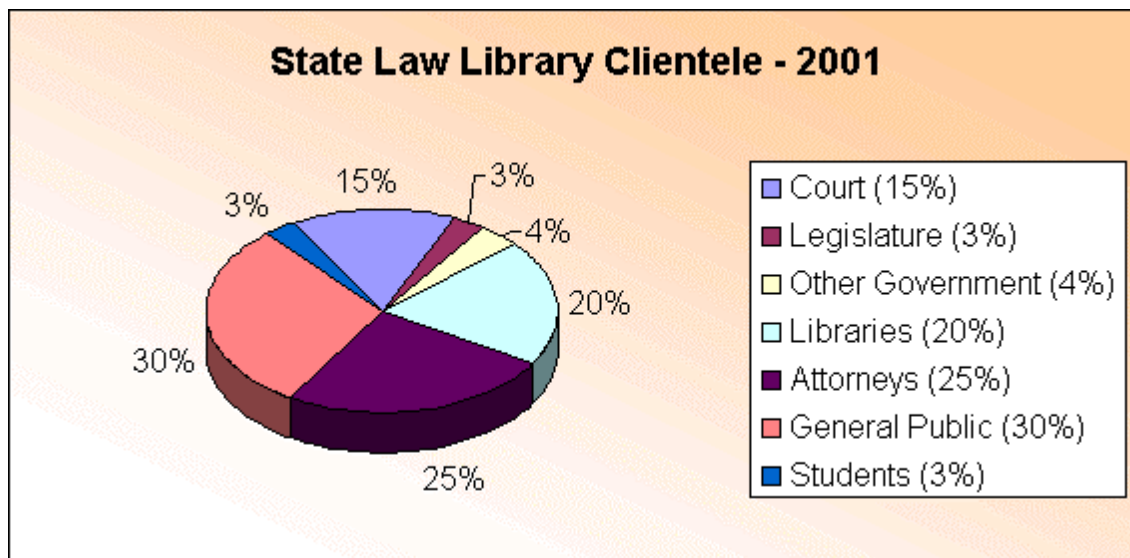
This strategic priority, which emphasizes availability of information, educating the public and communicating the importance of the Judicial Branch, **goes to the heart of what a public law library is all about.** In 2001 MSLL administered a [Minnesota Library Association Foundation](#) grant in an effort to get the word out to public librarians throughout the state that MSLL is available to them and their patrons. A local advertising firm provided pro bono design work for a set of [posters](#) that advertise MSLL in an eye-catching way. The posters were mailed to every public library and branch in the state in May 2001.



“[Ask Marvin](#),” MSLL’s e-reference service, was launched in 2001. Since e-mail has become pervasive in our society, it was only natural to extend our reference services in this format. Many of our requests come from people who may never think to set foot inside a law library, and we are pleased to offer high quality reference service to these new patrons.

In 2001 MSLL continued its involvement in the Court’s Outreach effort called “[Constitution Day](#).” Library employees called teachers and attorneys to schedule times for attorneys and judges to “go back to school” and explain the judicial process to middle- and high-school students. MSLL staff was involved in the research and production of a video shown as a part of this program, and the library plans to stay actively involved in this important educational effort of the Court.

The front desk staff at MSLL demonstrates that the State Law Library is indeed “the first rung on the ladder of justice” by providing competent, professional and comprehensive library services. MSLL continued to provide reference assistance in person, by phone, fax, mail and e-mail. In addition to helping patrons with book materials, the librarians assisted patrons in using web-based services, CD-ROM titles, periodicals, videos and even microfiche. We offered weekly tours to library patrons and scheduled group tours for those who request it.



TECHNOLOGY

STATE LAW LIBRARY PRIORITIES

- Use beta-site opportunity to ensure that statewide catalog provides excellent access to law library users.
- Continue to provide the appellate courts archive of decisions.
- Use web technology to release important documents such as the library's annual report and newsletter.

At the same time the Court is embarking on a new case management system ([MNCIS](#)) and a larger state criminal justice integration effort known as [CrimNet](#), MSLL has been ***chosen as a beta site for a new online library catalog*** which will link all types of libraries throughout the state. [MnLINK](#) (Minnesota Library Information Network) will allow patrons in any part of the state to see the holdings of libraries in any other part of the state. This is especially important to MSLL because of our long-standing emphasis on cataloging county law library collections in outlying Minnesota. Indeed, of the 1670 new titles cataloged in 2001, 59% were for county law libraries. The vision for this statewide catalog is increased access to information for all people in the state. MSLL is proud to be chosen as a beta-site for MnLINK. We will be working to ensure that the end product meets the needs of patrons of law and other special governmental libraries.

[MSLL's Website](#), and especially its [appellate decisions archive](#), continues to be popular among users. In addition, the library's compilation of Minnesota city and county [ordinances](#) is linked to by many other websites and has gained a reputation for accuracy and thoroughness. This use of technology has enabled us to reach a great number of patrons around the world.

2001 Website Statistics	
Average Hits per day	4705
Average Visits per day	997
Average Unique Visitors per month	15187
Most Popular Pages	
Archive	averaging 4243 visits per month
Homepage	averaging 2502 visits per month
Minnesota Legal Resources	averaging 1415 visits per month

On May 2, 2001, MSLL's [2000 Annual Report](#) was released as an electronic document via the Library website. The multi-page report focused on "Twenty Years of Change" under the leadership of State Law Librarian Marvin A. Anderson and is rich with historical information and hyperlinks. E-publishing not only saved printing and postage costs, but also showcased the ability of the Library to produce an informative web document with humor and panache. The Library was pleased with the reception the report received and plans to continue to publish electronically. There is no doubt that the report reached a much wider audience than it did in paper format as evidenced by responses from patrons as far away as England and Australia.

"I took an online tour of your 2000 Annual Report. Well done. ... I very much appreciate the help I've received over the years from the staff, as well as the information available to me as a solo attorney."

Mike Burke, St. Paul, MN

In sum, MSLL took the introduction of the Court's strategic plan as an opportunity to re-examine our own programs and services. We were excited to discover that many of our activities already complement the blueprint the court has adopted for the future. MSLL will move forward in 2002 to enhance our programs in order to better support the priorities of the Court while maintaining its commitments as Minnesota's largest public law library.

Marvin A. Anderson
Barbara Golden
Dennis Skrade
Karen Westwood

May 6, 2002

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