Spring 2013

A Temporary and Fond Farewell to the Edwin Dawson Rare Book Room

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Recommended Citation

Cadmus, Femi, "A Temporary and Fond Farewell to the Edwin Dawson Rare Book Room" (2013). *Cornell Law Faculty Publications*. Paper 656.

<http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/facpub/656>

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The 2013 Winter Cup Moot Court Competition, henceforth to be known as the Faust F. Rossi Moot Court Competition (see p. 68), attracted wide participation by students this year. Josh Wesneski '14 was declared the winner, Tom Curry '13 the finalist, and Chad Mizelle '13 received the Louis Kaiser Award for Best Brief.

A Temporary and Fond Farewell to the Edwin Dawson Rare Book Room

Over the years, the Cornell Law Library's Edwin S. Dawson Rare Book Room has witnessed numerous open houses, exhibits, class lectures, and even the exchange of marriage vows between two Law faculty (Professors **Emily L. Sherwin** and **Kevin M. Clermont**). With Phase I of Law School construction necessitating the complete removal of the library's rare book room, the librarian and Law Library staff hosted a final open house and reception on October 24. The open house was undoubtedly the best attended in the Rare Book Room's history, with a strong showing of support from old friends, students, Law faculty and staff, the university, and local community. Old favorites from the collection were on display, including the Scottsboro train replica used as an exhibit in the historic 1930s trial of the Scottsboro boys and trial pamphlets from the Nineteenth Century Trials Collection. Also on display for the first time were the impressive and ornate medals of **Myron C. Taylor**.

A significant portion of the current rare book collection, are materials acquired at the inception of the Law School which have become rare through the passage of time. A majority of acquisitions have been obtained through gifts and diligent purchase. With the increasing addition of materials to the collection, it

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became obvious that the library lacked the facilities to house its growing rare treasures and by the mid-seventies, the need for a rare book room was manifestly evident. At that time most of the library's rare collection pre-1700 was being held at the Olin Library. Construction of a new rare book room commenced in May 1981, and was completed in August of the same year. In 1985, the room was dedicated as the Edwin S. Dawson Rare Book Room, a gift of **Donato A. Evangelista '57** in memory of his father-in-law.

Thankfully this is not a permanent farewell and the Dawson Rare Book Room will be back. A new room is slated for construction during Phase III of Law School renovations (dates to be announced in the future). In the meantime, most of the collection has been transferred on a temporary basis to the Cornell University Library Annex, a secure state-of-the-

Faculty, staff, students, and friends of the law library gathered for the final open house and reception in the Edwin Dawson Rare Book Room.

art high-density facility with a climate-controlled environment. Library users will enjoy uninterrupted access to the collections and can request items through the library catalog, with a twenty-four hour turn-around. A small and select collection of materials are being retained in a climate-controlled and secure room in the Law School. This will enable the library to continue to showcase some materials and host exhibits. Furthermore, some of the rare book collection has been digitized and is accessible via the Law Library's website all year round. The most recent and ambitious digitization project, which started in 2011, is the Trials Pamphlets Collection, a collection of nineteenth century popular and official trial accounts whose restoration was made possible with funding from the Save America's Treasures Grant Program.

A TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT PRINT ACQUISITIONS:

In 1886, before the inception of the Law School, 4,000 volumes were acquired from the collection of a prominent Ithaca lawyer, **Merritt King**. Many of the volumes in this collection are now considered rare. Books were also gifted to the Law Library from the personal libraries of former students and Law School faculty. Some of these books have been added to the rare book collection.

In 1893, the library received a major gift when the widow and daughter of the Law School's first dean, **Judge Douglas Boardman**, purchased the library of **Nathaniel Moak**, an Albany attorney, and donated it to the library in memory of the dean. A significant portion of this collection, which became rare

simply due to the passage of time, is now housed in the Law Library's rare book collection.

In 1908, **Earl J. Bennett** (LL.B. 1901) established a fund devoted to the collection of all U.S. and territorial session laws in existence.

In 1945, **Edwin J. Marshall** (LL.B. 1937) donated a major gift of rare books to the library. The earliest item in this collection of books on equity was *The Speech of the Lord Chancellor of England in the Exchequer Chamber, Touching the Post-Nati* (London 1609).

In 1979, the library purchased the Thorne collection of English legal history materials, mostly published in the seventeenth century, to add to the collection. Professor **Samuel Thorne** was librarian at Yale Law School and professor of legal history at Harvard, and had built this collection during his career.

In 1998, Cornell University alumni **Henry H. Korn** and **Ellen Schaum Korn** donated the Donovan Nuremberg Trials Collection, consisting of General William Donovan's personal archive of the Nuremberg Trial transcripts.