

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBRARY FACILITIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA**
September 15, 2005

The Early Years: 1965-1970

Classes began at Indiana State University at Evansville on September 15, 1965, in the Centennial School Building with freshman level courses and an enrollment of 412 students. The library supporting the fledgling institution consisted of two small classrooms on the second floor of the old school building with the reference materials stacked against the walls. A bell on the desk summoned the librarian or assistant. In January 1966 the library received a \$5,000 grant to improve conditions; the money was used to purchase basic reference materials.



By the fall of 1966 enrollment had doubled, and administrators began looking for land on which to build a permanent home for the university. Groundbreaking for the new campus was on June 22, 1968. The Administration Building/Science Center was finished by September 1969, in time to accommodate an enrollment of 1,950 students. This complex housed administrative offices, classrooms, and a temporary library operated by three librarians and four staff members.



First Library Building: 1971--2005

As the new university continued to experience rapid growth, it became increasingly clear that a permanent home was needed for its expanding library services. A library study published in June, 1969 reflected this need when it stated, "Libraries provide very active catalysts for the learning process. Therefore, the administration, faculty, and students at the Evansville Campus of Indiana State University have placed the highest priority on construction of a library building for this campus."

The new library became the second building on campus and opened in 1971 at a cost of \$2,500,000. The three-story facility was built to house 150,000 volumes and provide reading and study areas. In addition to the university's library, which was located on the two upper floors, the new building also accommodated general purpose classrooms and faculty offices on the lower level.



Additions and changes in services and expansion of staff necessitated many rearrangements and renovations of the physical space over the next thirty years. One of the major changes occurred in 1983, when the classrooms and faculty offices were moved out of the building and the library's Technical Services, Learning Resources Center, and University Archives and Special Collections were moved to the lower level. The faculty reading room (L100) on the lower level continued to be used for faculty meetings as well as by many other groups.

At that time Collection Development moved from the library's main floor to the upper level, taking over the offices that had been part of the Learning Resources Center, while the old Archives area became a student lounge named Caliban's Corner. In 1986 Academic Skills moved into the two offices that had been used by Collection Development and built an additional office there. Collection Development was located with Technical Services until 1999 when additional staff made it necessary to use the space that had served as L100 on the lower level for Collection Development and Serials.

Technological advances, some of which resulted from, or coincided with, the university's newly independent status as the University of Southern Indiana, demanded even more changes in the physical facilities. In 1987, the library went online with the new GEAC automated system. Students no longer had to fill out check-out cards for each book, but rather had an ID with a barcode to make the process faster and more efficient. During the next ten years, the Library migrated to the NOTIS automated system and then in 1998 to Endeavor's Voyager system. The card catalog was removed and replaced by the automated system, and print indexes were increasingly eclipsed by electronic databases. These changes required additional services and staff training and necessitated the purchase of new furniture as well as the installation of additional computers and network connections to provide access to databases, e-mail, and the Internet.



In 1992, the University honored founding president David L. Rice by naming the building the David L. Rice Library. A new Library Director was hired in 1996, and three new librarian positions (Reference Services Librarian, Serials Librarian, and Distance Learning Librarian) as well as two new staff positions (computer technician and library assistant for collection development) were added within the next five years. The increasing student population forced the university to once again initiate discussions about a library renovation or a new building. Library personnel held their first facility planning project meeting on May 15, 1998 and considerable time over the following years was devoted to planning for the new building.

A New Home: 2006 and Beyond

As the university approached the new millennium and its 40th anniversary as an institution, it was still growing. In 2004, enrollment reached 10,000 students. After years of planning, the University of Southern Indiana broke ground for a new \$28,000,000 library on June 1, 2004. Construction began almost immediately. On September 15, 2005, a special ceremony was held during the university's Founders Day celebration to set the cornerstone for the new library building. University personnel contributed artifacts to be placed in the commemorative stone to be opened in 100 years. The library staff is anticipating its biggest move yet to the new building in the spring of 2006. Growing from a two-room classroom on the second floor of an old school building to the largest building currently on USI's campus, this building is expected to be the hub of the University, creating a quadrangle with the Liberal Arts building, the University Center, and the next new campus building to house the College of Business.

