

**FROM THE STAFF
OF THE
THURGOOD
MARSHALL
SCHOOL OF LAW
LIBRARY**



Marshall News

Volume 5 Issue 2

November 2008

Marshall News is the newsletter of record for the Thurgood Marshall School of Law Library. It serves the campus of Texas Southern University and the surrounding community. TMSL Library boasts a staff of 9 professional librarians and 7 support staff.

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Wikipedia as a Basis for Judicial Method?

Justice Cardozo, a preeminent scholar on judicial method, would have never predicted it in a million years. It flies in the face of reason, tosses stare decisis to the wind, and causes traditional judiciary ethics to quake in their proverbial boots. What is it?

Wikipedia. It is now being cited in American judicial opinions. Lee F. Peoples, Associate Professor of Law Library Science and Director of International Programs at Oklahoma City University School of Law, is working on a paper exploring the use of Wikipedia by the judiciary.

Peoples finds that Wikipedia was cited almost 300 times in judicial opinions as of September 2008. A majority of the purposes for which courts cite Wikipedia are relatively non-threatening. There are references to widely-known facts, for example.

However, Peoples does find some instances that are more disturbing. Probing an Eighth Circuit case, Peoples finds the court remanded a case because the district court

upheld factual findings based on information from Wikipedia. Other disturbing instances involved courts using Wikipedia as a basis for reasoning or as support for a conclusion.

The significance of this occurrence cannot be overstated. Wikipedia is a type of collaborative Web site where volunteers (75,000 according to their website) contribute to a Web-based, free content encyclopedia project. In other words, any person with a working computer, Internet access and a basic understanding of HTML is considered a volunteer and may contribute to Wikipedia. To off-set inaccuracies, the project does encourage the use of citations to any relied upon authorities. Still, students may now have a leg to stand on

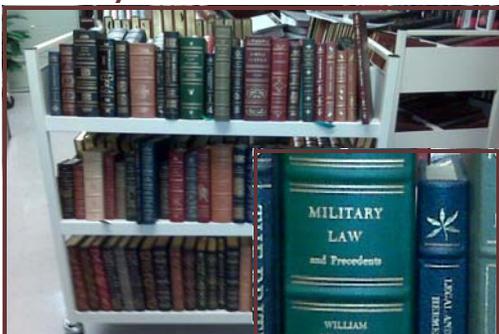
when their professor bans the use of Wikipedia in a brief or memorandum if they point to the very same usage in U.S. Courts.

Peoples explores the impact of references to Wikipedia in judicial opinions on the law of evidence, judicial ethics, the judicial role in

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Library Receives Personal Library of Late Prof. Hill



The family of the late Professor Donald K. Hill donated his personal library to TMSL. Prof. Hill taught at the law school for over 30 years before his passing in late 2007. The books cover a myriad of topics demonstrating that he was widely read and held vast interests. Evelyn Beard, Director of Technical Services, and Denise Cebrun, Cataloguing Assistant, are cataloguing the collection. The collection will be displayed in the library.

Librarians to Serve Food for Thought this Spring

The Brown Bag Sessions (BBS) provide students with informal yet engaging opportunities to discuss new and reliable print and electronic resources necessary for conducting legal research. These series are exclusive to TMSL students only.

BBS serve to clear up any confusion students may have after completing their course in legal research; to brush up in preparation for writing a research paper; or the use of an available electronic database.

Sessions start in the Spring. A schedule will be posted in the library on the information kiosk and will be made available at the Circulation Desk. Please note schedules may be altered to meet student demand or faculty request.

Each session will focus on a different area of legal research. If there is a

topic you would like to see covered, please contact the Learning Resources Librarian, Taciana Williams, by email at tawilliams@tmslaw.tsu.edu.

Topics to be covered include: Texas / State Encyclopedias, Finding Texas Cases, Citing Texas Cases—Texas Rules of Form, State Formbooks, and Texas Statutes. Please note that these topics are tentative and may be changed at any time.

Also available this Spring, the Clerkship Crash Course in Legal Research is scheduled for the beginning of April. The purpose of the Clerkship Crash Course in Legal Research is to allow students to brush up on their research skills in preparation for their summer clerkships and jobs. The Crash Course will review previously taught research skills and give more detailed attention to specific

How Fortunate for You!



Date	Topics
Tues, 1-27	Texas / State Encyclopedias
Tues, 2-10	Finding Texas Cases
Tues, 2-24	Citing Texas Cases – Texas Rules of Form
Tues, 3-10	Texas Forms
Tues, 3-31	Texas Statutes

legal research strategies. The Course will present a Texas legal research problem; unlike the first-year legal research course which focuses on a federal problem. The Clerkship Crash Course will be open to 100 students, as space permits, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students

must sign up at the Circulation Desk. The Clerkship Crash Course will be a half-day presentation covering secondary sources, case law research, citators, and statutory research. Please mark your calendars now and plan to take advantage of this opportunity.

Studying for Finals: Time is of the Essence

The law library will be open for extended hours during the reading and final exam periods. Students are encouraged to take advantage of two additional hours of study time.

Extended hours will be in effect beginning on Saturday, November 29, 2008 to Thursday, December 11, 2008. The hours are as follows:

Mon—Thur	7 am—2 am
Fri & Sat	7 am—12 am
Sun	12 pm—2 am

Students, please note that extended hours are a courtesy. During these times, only law students will be allowed in the library. Doors are not to be propped and students must remain in the library and use the facilities in the basement. Adhering to

these rules will ensure a safe, incident-free reading period.

After acing your exams, you are welcomed to visit the library during the holiday season. We are open Monday through Friday from 8 am and 5 pm (Dec. 12—22, 2008 and Jan. 2—9, 2009). All hours are subject to change. Please visit or call the circulation desk for up-to-date hours of operation.



As you study for finals, you are not alone! Reference librarians can point you to study aids.

After Terry Library suffered damage from Hurricane Ike, TMSL Library volunteered to display the art collection.

In the photograph at right, from left to right, respectively: Dean McKen V. Carrington, Donor Michael Wasserman, Obidike Kamau, Director of Robert J. Terry Library, and DeCarlous Spearman, Director of Thurgood Marshall School of Law Library.

TMSL Library Displays Quarter-Million Dollar Art Collection

On October 14, 2008, Michael Wasserman donated a collection of African Art to the Texas Southern University. The collection is valued near a quarter of a

million dollars. Mr. Wasserman and university and law school officials intended the collection to be housed at Robert J. Terry Library. However, the library sustained damages during Hurricane Ike. It was

then that the law library's director, DeCarlous Spearman, offered to house the collection. University and law school officials worked tirelessly to ensure the collection was

received and displayed. Charlotte Washington, TMSL Director of Communications, and Carolyne Oliver, TSU Director of Development, facilitated the arrangements for delivery and receipt of the collection. Leal were instrumental in uniting all officials to implement the project, which took a little over a year to materialize. Be sure to visit the law library's elevator lobby, where the collection is on display until the end of December.



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Photo of the Honorable Myron H. Bright available at U.S. Court website: www.court.state.nd.us/court/news/profiles/bright.htm

UND Donates Death Penalty DVD

The University of North Dakota (UND) has donated a DVD chronicling the "long struggle and ultimate attainment of justice in the case of James Dean Walker" as told by the Honorable Myron H. Bright of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. UND donated the recording to every law school in the country. TMSL Library is

the recipient of a set of these videos and they are available for viewing. The DVD is a recording of a lecture given by Judge Bright at UND in Fall 2006. Special features of the DVD include interviews and media accounts. The DVDs are being made available for checkout. See the circulation desk for more information.

Wiki cont'd from p. 1

the common law adversarial system, the de-legalization of American law, and the future of stare decisis. Lastly, Peoples finds these citations are here to stay. Thus, he concludes by discussing the best practices for judicial reliance on Wikipedia and other wiki materials. The abstract for the paper is available on the Social Science Research Network.

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December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Schedule of Events

- November 27, 28: Library Closed
- November 29—December 11, 2008: Extended hours tentatively scheduled
- December 12—22: Library's hours of operation 8 am—5 pm.
- December 13, 14: Library Closed
- December 20, 21: Library Closed
- December 23, 2008—January 1, 2009: Library Closed
- January 2—9, 2009: Library's hours of operation 8 am—5 pm

