



School of Government Knapp Library

Author : Mike Smith

Categories : [SOG News](#)

Date : August 1, 2010



Last week I received the Knapp Library annual report for 2009-2010. The library, which is to say Alex Hess, Marsha Lobacz, and Yadira Conyers, has long been an excellent resource for the School and for anyone interested in North Carolina government. This most recent report demonstrates how the library continues to become even more responsive to our needs.



Our library averages over 120 outside calls per week, and we respond in different ways. Some calls are directed to the appropriate faculty member; others are directed to an outside organization for assistance. The library handles many requests with a small amount of research, but our staff also spends a considerable amount of time researching and answering other requests. It is not unusual for our folks to compile the entire legislative history for members of the legal community. The library is one of the many ways that we directly serve the people of North Carolina.

The School's pamphlet collection has long been a valuable source of information on many issues affecting North Carolina state and local government. It consists of around 25,000 items, and they are as varied as the topics facing government. They offer a valuable historical perspective on topics that continue to challenge us, and sometimes they are the only way to understand how current structures and processes came into existence. Those pamphlets are more easily



accessible than ever due to the hard work of our library staff.



Like all of us, the library staff—with the assistance of faculty members—has figured out how to do more with less. The old practice used to be that each lawyer faculty member had a full set of North Carolina's general statutes in his or her office. They looked impressive on our bookshelves, but most of us used only a fraction of the volumes. Through a collective effort led by the library, faculty members now are keeping only the most-used individual volumes in their offices and sharing full sets in nearby common spaces. The result will be a savings of \$25,000 over three years as the number of complete sets purchased drops from 46 to 25. Thanks to everyone for your willingness to experiment with this new model.

Now a story. Last week I was in Michigan meeting with Jeff Koeze, a former School faculty member who returned to Grand Rapids to run the family gourmet nut and fine chocolate business, [Koeze Company](#).

Jeff told me about a report by C. Wright Mills that studied small businesses and civic welfare shortly after World War II—one of the towns studied was Grand Rapids. Jeff sent me a copy of the



report, but it was a scanned version and difficult to read. His email said: "*I bet the cracker jack SOG library can track down a nice clean one for you.* And if they do, make a copy and send me one." I emailed Alex at 10pm last Wednesday night and asked if he could locate a clean copy of the report. He emailed me a clean electronic copy of the report that was waiting when I arrived at work the following morning.

Cracker jack is right! Alex and his colleagues provide excellent service to the School and to anyone interested in learning more about North Carolina government. I encourage you to look at the report, which was sent to everyone.