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Law Library Blog (September 2021): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

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September 2021 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

September 2, 2021

Supporting the RWU Law Clinical Programs

September 2, 2021



Experiential education is a touchstone of the work done at RWU Law. As librarians, we talk about “just in time” research instruction—learning about research tools and conducting research using these tools shortly thereafter—as important to the learning process.

Representing actual clients in one the RWU Clinical programs gives students the opportunity to learn new research skills “just in time” to help their clients. The library provides the [Law Clinic Series](#) consisting of guides that provide information on resources specific to each clinic. These guides are reviewed and updated at least annually:

- [Law Clinic Series: Business Start-Up LawGuide](#)
- [Law Clinic Series: Criminal Defense LawGuide](#)
- [Law Clinic Series: Immigration LawGuide](#)
- [Law Clinic Series: Veterans Disability LawGuide](#)

When possible, books and journals are linked to digital resources which provide anyone participating in the clinics access wherever they are physically located – Bristol, Providence, or home. In addition to the books, journals, and other digital resources related to each clinic’s focus, the guides include specialty databases, organization websites, legal and other blogs, Twitter

feeds, and other items available to enhance your research or knowledge of the specific area of law. Some examples include:

- The [Small Business Reference Center](#) in the Law Clinic Series: Business Start-Up LawGuide - provides access to full-text periodicals and books.
- [RI District Court and Traffic Tribunal Case Law in the Law](#) Clinic Series: Criminal Defense LawGuide provides a database of Rhode Island Traffic Tribunal Appeals Panel decisions and pertinent Rhode Island District Court decisions.
- [ailalink](#) in the Law Clinic Series: Immigration LawGuide - provides searchable access to the forms, statutes, regulations, cases, the leading publication in the field – Kurzban’s Immigration Law Sourcebook, and more.
- The [Court/Agency Resources](#) section in the Law Clinic Series: Veterans Disability Appeals LawGuide - provides links to information on court forms, fees, rules and procedures, and more.

To aid in this learning process, the series are complemented by reference service via chat, email, phone, at the reference desk in the library, on Tuesdays in Providence, or by appointment--in person or via Zoom from the comfort of your home or the clinic offices. We are ready to assist you in developing the research skills needed for success as you are ready to experience this new phase of your education!

Check out these guides and if you have any questions, don't forget to [Ask a Librarian!](#)

September 10, 2021

Collection Development: What people think I do vs. what I actually do.

September 10, 2021



I think it is fair to say that most of you have never thought about what collection development is. Now that you are confronted with the issue you might picture a scenario where I am in front of a computer looking for law books on Amazon. At the most basic level this is true.

Part of collection development is knowing what to add to the collection. The library maintains a list of subject areas of interest to our curriculum and faculty research, with associated collection levels:

- Basic—We collect only the seminal works and survey materials at this level.
- Instructional—We collect basic materials and any other items required to support the needs of students in current courses in these areas (such as study aids).
- Research—We actively collect to support faculty scholarship in these areas.
- Comprehensive—We attempt to collect all publications in this area (currently only Rhode Island law is collected at this level).

In addition to collection level, we also consider the publisher, author, depth of legal treatment (whether the book's focus is primarily legal instead of another subject with law minimally covered), if the item focuses on American law as opposed to law from foreign jurisdictions, price, etc.

We find new publications through several means. Most items we consider come from product lists distributed by publishers or resellers. I distribute these lists to the other librarians so they can have input into this process, as they may know more about a professor's current research or new areas of law school interest. I also sometimes receive suggestions for items to add to the collection directly from law school community members and look at these suggestions using the same criteria. After the other librarians have commented, I review these lists and make choices in accordance with our collection priorities and our other criteria.

Once the decision is made to add the item to the collection, I will purchase the resource through one of several suppliers. I decide which supplier to use based on how fast I need the item and which offers the best deal on the item. Then I try to find a MARC record* for the item and upload this into our computer system as well as prepare any special handling instructions for the resource. When they arrive, the physical items are processed and given to the cataloger who reviews the catalog record for accuracy and discoverability. When we acquire electronic resources, they are set up for remote access before they are cataloged.

Once the resources are processed and cataloged, physical items are placed in the appropriate place in the library where members of the law school community can use them. Electronic resources are made available through links in the catalog and, when appropriate, in our Digital Resources A-Z list.

* MARC is the acronym for Machine-Readable Cataloging

September 17, 2021

What People Think We Do – Faculty Services

September 17, 2021



If you have been with us since the COVID-19 pandemic began, chances are that you might think that classroom tech support is a good chunk of our faculty services. Or perhaps you know that we also provide document delivery services for faculty, in the form of books and articles from the RWU libraries, and Interlibrary Loan from our partner libraries in the U.S. and beyond.

Let's break down what we REALLY do for faculty.

The library staff assist faculty at all stages of the scholarly process. Document delivery requests may seem simple, but may require us to find materials in languages we don't speak (French, German, and Russian), very old (1739) newspaper articles, unpublished Congressional materials from 1941, and even visiting a library outside RI while we are traveling for work or fun to obtain an obscure item that is only available in that library and that we can't get on Interlibrary Loan. We also create "current awareness" searches for faculty, which locate new materials on licensed databases based on keywords that we select to describe the topic.

Sometimes instead of borrowing items from another library, a faculty member may want us to purchase a copy of a book, a specialized database that they need for their research, or a copy of a book that they can keep in their office for an extended period of time. In this case, the Collection Services team takes over. They will work with the faculty member to obtain the needed resource as quickly as possible, usually within a few days for a book or journal issue, a little while longer for databases due to the licensing process. In some instances, faculty may not want their own copy but want to see a publication that we purchase for the library or just a table of

contents. The Collection Services team will “route” the publication or table of contents to the faculty member for review.

The librarians field a variety of research requests that may be done in as little as five minutes or may take months to complete. It may be as simple as filling in a citation so that an item can be located, identifying and locating historic photographs based on a description of an event or series of events, assisting a faculty member track down the origin of a specific clause in a state statute, tracking down film footage of historic events, transcriptions of radio or news shows, images that appeared on social media, identifying quotes that faculty members know exist (or exhausting resources to show that they don't), and more.

We also help faculty with the scholarly communications process. That may involve helping a new faculty member learn more about specialized journals, uploading their recently completed papers to the [Legal Scholarship Network on SSRN](#), and adding those papers to the Roger Williams University Legal Studies Papers series also on SSRN. Once the article is published, we secure permission to upload a copy to the [Law Faculty Scholarship collection](#) in the RWU Digital Repository, which is accessed by readers around the world! As a final step, we add the publication to their [RWU Law directory](#) profile so that visitors to our site can easily see what they have written. We also update those profiles regularly with new biographies, CVs, and other information that faculty provide.

Now let's return to where we started – the classroom. Sometimes faculty members want to show a movie that we cannot purchase from mainstream stores or is not available from a streaming service. In that instance, we will assist in securing the movie from the publisher or license it for short term use. We assist faculty in identifying which recommended or required readings are available in licensed or free ebook collections so that you don't have to spend money on those sources. The librarians have also assisted faculty in creating “open electronic resources” rather than relying on expensive supplements.

You know that we teach in conjunction with the required Legal Practice program, but did you know that we also [teach in many other classes and credit bearing programs](#)? We teach the Sea Grant Fellows, research sessions for the clinics and experiential classes, paper research for seminars, and even how to use Adobe Acrobat for clinic students!

September 24, 2021

Women in Law

September 24, 2021



On October 27th, the Women's Law Society of Roger Williams University School of Law will hold its annual [Women in Robes event](#). To help celebrate, the Law Library has prepared a virtual display of titles from our collection that celebrate women jurists and attorneys. You can find the virtual display at [Women in Law](#). Also, in this post, we highlight two female trailblazing judges from Rhode Island: Justice Florence Kerins Murray and O. Rogeriee Thompson.

Florence Kerins Murray was the first female State Senator in Rhode Island, the first female judge in Rhode Island, the first Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Rhode Island, and the first female Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. She was a Rhode Island native, born in Newport in 1916. She attended Boston University Law School and graduated in 1942. She served in the Women's Army Corp in World War II. After the war, she ran and was elected the first female State Senator in Rhode Island and served in that capacity from 1949 to 1956. She was appointed to the Rhode Island Superior Court in 1956 and appointed Chief Justice of the Superior Court in 1978. She was elected by the Rhode Island General Assembly to be an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court in 1979.

O. Rogeriee Thompson is the first female African American judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Thompson was originally from South Carolina. She attended Boston University Law School and earned her Juris Doctor in 1976. She practiced law from 1976 to 1988 when she was appointed to the District Court of Rhode Island. She was elevated to the Rhode Island Superior Court in 1997. She was nominated to the First Circuit in 2009 by Barack Obama and confirmed by the United States Senate in 2010 in a 98-0 vote.

For more information on remarkable women in the Rhode Island legal system, see the article [Pushing the Bar in R.I.: 5 Women who Blazed Trails Through the Legal System](#).

