

County of Carleton law library transformation offers lawyers modern facility

By AdvocateDaily.com Staff
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Most people have the same reaction when they step into [County of Carleton Law Association](#)'s (CCLA) newly renovated law library in Ottawa.

“They look up and say, ‘Oh wow!’” says Jennifer Walker, CCLA's head librarian.

The first phase of the long-standing renovation of the CCLA's library was recently completed, giving it a new look, which includes a raised ceiling and spectacular light fixtures.

“It’s like night and day, it’s hard to believe it’s the same place,” Walker tells AdvocateDaily. “It’s a wonderful space that Ottawa should be proud of. So far people really like it – they say it looks a bit like an art gallery.”

Phase two covering the remainder of the CCLA space in the Ottawa courthouse will spruce up the barristers' lounge and training facilities and is scheduled for completion this fall.

The renovations mark the end of an almost decade-long process for the law library that was in desperate need of a revamp after remaining largely unchanged since the building opened in 1987, Walker says.

"Over the years we’ve been in here, our staff has grown, our services have expanded, and how we do legal research has changed entirely, but the space has remained largely the same,” Walker says. “Our computers were on converted old-fashioned study desks because there weren’t any computers around when we opened.

“We needed to do something to modernize it and make it more functional,” she adds.

Architects were asked to submit designs about eight years ago and a fundraising campaign began to find the significant funds that were required for such a project. Work was finally ready to start in early 2018, and things have moved quickly since then, Walker says.

“It’s been a hugely collaborative effort by many people, including board members, donors, and staff,” she says.

The bulk of the donations that made the project possible came from private sources, although the Ministry of the Attorney General also provided some financial help for the training and meeting rooms, which will be available for its use.

“The amount of private funding secured by the CCLA signifies the value and importance lawyers in Ontario place on having dedicated space within the courthouse,” says Jaye Hooper, chair of [The Federation of Ontario Law Associations](#) (FOLA), who added that the success of the project “highlights the commitment of lawyers to maintain library and barrister spaces within courthouses across the province.”