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Dean’s Column

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The Weiner-Rogers Law Library: An Invaluable Legal Resource

Most lawyers have a research comfort zone. They’re familiar with online and print resources in their areas of practice and they’re quickly able to identify relevant authority to answer questions within their expertise. But, on occasion, lawyers venture into uncharted areas of research – they may be unfamiliar with the type of authority that would answer a specific question, or important resources may simply be inaccessible or prohibitively expensive. In these instances, and others, the Wiener-Rogers Law Library at the William S. Boyd School of Law can serve as a mediator to direct attorneys to useful authorities and provide access to a wide range of otherwise unavailable resources.

An important part of the mission of the Wiener-Rogers Law Library is to serve members of the state bar. We do so by encouraging lawyers to take advantage of the expertise of our staff, by collecting current and historical materials across jurisdictions and subject matters, and by creating resources that increase access to law-related information.

The library is open to the public 361 days a year, and is staffed by six professional librarians, five of whom have both JDs and graduate degrees in information science, and most of whom have practiced law in a variety of business and public interest settings. Their familiarity with a wide range of practitioner-oriented resources enables the Wiener-Rogers law librarians to refer attorneys to sources – both print and online – that address particular areas of practice and specific research questions. Attorneys are encouraged to contact reference librarians by

phone (702-895-2420), by e-mail (reference@law.unlv.edu), or in person at the library.

Research librarians also undertake training programs designed to educate attorneys in research strategies and efficient use of print and online resources. Programs can be designed to address particular research problems (e.g., legislative history research in Nevada), specific research sources (e.g., individual commercial databases or freely available online sources), or research strategies in particular subject areas.

The library’s collections are comprehensive with respect to federal authorities and materials from all 50 states. These collections are both current and historical – attorneys needing to find statutes or administrative regulations effective as of a certain historical date will find those authorities through the law library. United States Supreme Court briefs and records are also included in the library’s collections.

Attorneys involved in sophisticated transactional practice may find the library’s collection of treaties and international agreements useful. Moreover, as a European Union depository library, the Wiener-Rogers collections include European Union court reports, as well as important documents published by the European Union on a variety of topics (e.g., the economy, the environment, education, health and welfare, criminal justice).

The library’s secondary sources include practitioner-oriented treatises on a wide variety of transactional and litigation topics, and databases such as CCH Tax, Business and Finance Networks,



and the online BNA libraries covering labor and employment, bankruptcy, intellectual property, family law, criminal law, health law and e-commerce. Those databases, as well as Westlaw, are accessible to anyone who visits the library.

Attorneys who cannot visit the library may still take advantage of both our print and online collections. The library's fee-based document delivery service enables attorneys to request copies of materials included in the library's online, print and microform collections. Those copies can be sent by e-mail, fax or mail to requesting attorneys.

Looking forward, we expect to continue to expand our services to the practicing bar by creating online resources that provide access to law-related information important to Nevada attorneys and the state economy. The library's website (www.law.unlv.edu/library) will soon include resource guides to current practice areas (e.g., foreclosure mediation, consumer bankruptcy, guardianship) and common practice issues (e.g., starting a law practice). The library has applied for federal grant funds to support the digitization of important historical Nevada Supreme Court opinions and related documents. Other online resources may include a collection of documents and information relating to federal alternative energy initiatives. We welcome suggestions from the practicing bar for additional online collections.

An ability to efficiently find just the right piece of information amid a haystack of resources can be the difference between a frustrating exercise in hit-and-miss research and a satisfying and quick retrieval of a relevant authority. We hope that you will feel free to call upon the Wiener-Rogers Law Library to both facilitate the research process and access relevant authorities. ■

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