The Site

The Chapman University School of Law is the only law school in Orange County located on a university campus. The campus setting presents many opportunities to develop interdisciplinary courses and degree programs with other schools of the university. The site, located near the Orange Metrolink station, was once part of the large Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana, a huge tract granted by the Mexican government in 1810. A prominent Los Angeles lawyer, Alfred Beck Chapman, and his law partner, Andrew Glassell, acquired a large portion of the ranch in 1868, and laid out the town that today is called Orange. In 1872, Mr. Chapman donated to the town the land on which the new law building is located.

The law building is situated two blocks from “the plaza” — the heart of Historic Old Towne Orange. The plaza, campus and surrounding neighborhood have been featured in a number of movie productions because of the quaint array of restaurants, antique shops and historically preserved structures.

Donald P. Kennedy Hall

Kennedy Hall, home to the law school, was completed in summer 1999. Rising four stories, the structure offers an efficient and pleasant learning environment for students. Classrooms and seminar rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art technology for enhanced teaching and learning, and are capable of accommodating future changes in electronic, visual and on-site learning. The law library occupies one wing of the building and individualizes the research process by offering student carrels equipped with outlets for laptop computers and related electronic devices. Two courtrooms, one designed for trials and the other for appellate hearings, provide fully equipped facilities for trial advocacy exercises, mock trial and moot court competitions, and formal hearings by visiting courts. Adjacent to the courtrooms are jury deliberation rooms and judges’ chambers. Student lounges and facilities for student organizations and publications insure that the law school experience at Chapman will be both productive and pleasant. The marble lobby, rising two stories, houses a time capsule within its walls. Placed by students and faculty while the building was under construction, the capsule will be opened in fifty years. A parking structure at the rear of the law building provides ample parking for students, faculty and visitors.

The distinctive historical façade of an earlier building located on the site is preserved within the walls of the new structure. The preserved façade is modeled after the eleventh century church of del Santi Vitale e Agricola in Bologna, Italy. Thus, the building links the important heritage of the past with the exciting educational environment of the future.

The Rinker Law Library

The law library, named in 2000 following a generous gift from university Trustee Harry S. Rinker and his wife, Diane, is designed to meet the needs of legal education in the twenty-first century. The facility features seating for 300 with computer access at each seat, shelf space for 175,000 volumes, and capacity for many more volume equivalencies in microforms. The collection is contained on the first and second floors of the facility with the circulation and reference areas located directly adjacent to the entrance of the library. Seating at both carrels and tables is arranged around the perimeter of the library. The third floor of the library houses two electronic classrooms, used to teach Computer Assisted Legal Research, and a computer lab offering students convenient access to research and word processing programs. Students have use of both Lexis and Westlaw beginning in their first year of school and each student is provided with an internet account that enables access to a worldwide network of information. The second floor has a number of small group study rooms and a periodical reading room that overlooks the marbled foyer. Natural lighting is a feature throughout all three floors of the library.

The library utilizes INNOPAC, a state-of-the-art automated library system used by most major law libraries. The INNOPAC system consists of an on-line public access catalog, including other modules used for various library functions. Several public access on-line terminals are located on the first and second floors.

The library currently contains over 230,000 volumes and volume equivalencies. The collection has grown rapidly to support the needs of an ABA approved institution and its curriculum, and boasts all basic research materials for American law, including primary materials for all United States and territories. There are also numerous law reviews, and a large treatise collection that will be developed to support the research needs of faculty and students.

In addition to the Rinker endowment, the law library received in 2000 a $1.5 million gift from the Hugh and Hazel Darling Foundation to augment the library’s fast-growing collection.