

PEARLESCENCE DOES JUSTICE TO LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY

Project: J. Michael Goodson Law Library, Law School of Duke University

Description: Approximately 85,000 square feet with four separate floors

Recognition: Ranked among top ten law schools in the U.S.

Location: Durham, NC

Website: www.law.duke.edu/lib



When the architects and designers of the international architecture firm Shepley Bulfinch took on the renovation of the J. Michael Goodson Library at the Law School of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, they faced several unique challenges. “It presented a different type of library service model,” says Joseph A. Rondinelli, a senior associate of Shepley Bulfinch.

Located in a very prominent part of the campus, the building was about 85,000 square feet with four separate floors. To give it a presence worthy of its use for professional study, the designers had to find a way to bring a sense of unity to the space. “Because a law library supports many different models of learning,” says Rondinelli, “it had to be able to accommodate a high level of interactivity between faculty, students, and librarians while still ensuring quiet areas for concentrated individual study.”

ILLUMINATING THE LAW

“Before the renovation,” says Rondinelli, “the building was very closed; with very little glass on the exterior wall. Aside from opening up the library interior to natural light, we wanted the design to increase the law school’s visibility to the campus at large.

Our intent was to give the entire building a sense of quality and richness that would both delight and reveal.

Now, it’s like a beacon, a wonderful glass box at night. And that’s only fitting; because whenever our clients at the law school talked about the project, it was always all about light.”





Lamin-Art's Pearlescence 2300 Platinum with Oyster Shield High-Wear Protection™



A PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE

To create a monolithic, professional presence, the team wanted the color of the laminate to be compatible to the millwork. Initially, the designers proposed warmer shades of bronze. But school officials asked for a more neutral gray. This could have posed a dilemma for the design team because gray tends to be flat, without the sense of richness and quality they felt the design demanded. Fortunately, one laminate came in a shade that met everyone's specifications—Pearlescence 2300 Platinum with Oyster Shield High-Wear Protection™ from Lamin-Art.

“Pearlescence adds richness to neutral colors – an iridescent quality – that is unique.

Pearlescence 2300 Platinum has a velvety texture to it,”

says Rondinelli. “Other products simply didn't have this creamy quality. Pearlescence hit the spot, solving the problem very well.”

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Perhaps Duke University President Richard Brodhead paid the new design the best compliment of all, proclaiming, “When you reach the point where a great law school has a great building, you realize it wasn't just an ornament, it really is an enabler of things.”

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SHEPLEY BULFINCH RICHARDSON & ABBOTT OVERVIEW

- Description: A national architecture, planning and interior design firm founded in 1874
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