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PRESS RELEASE

The Law Library of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, has been honored by the New York Library Association for a collaborative initiative to digitize and make more accessible to the general public the state's codes, rules and regulations.

Presiding Justice Gerald J. Whalen said the project will make the sometimes obscure New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) readily available. Justice Whalen noted that the Fourth Department Law Library in Rochester, which hosts one of the largest court-based legal reference collections in the nation, is the only appellate court law library in New York State that is open to the public and provides research materials and reference assistance to other courts and patrons throughout the country.

In a joint initiative with the Charles B. Sears Law Library at the University of Buffalo Law School and the State Supreme Court Law Library in Buffalo, the Fourth Department Law Library committed staff and other resources to create a digital database that judges, lawyers and members of the public can access, free of charge, to find "superseded pages," or so-called "takeouts," of the NYCRR for the years 1945-2001 in an open database (<http://law.lib.buffalo.edu/nycrr/index.asp>). The NYCRR Digital Archive will enable researchers, librarians and practitioners to more easily investigate previous versions of New York's codes, rules and regulations, a cumbersome and time-consuming chore when performed with print editions, some of which are in poor condition, with loose or missing pages.

The project began in late 2012, and since then approximately one million pages have been scanned and converted to searchable PDFs. Portions of the scanned pages contain New York State's copyrighted material and are included with the permission of the Secretary of State.

Rosemary LaSala, chair of the Government Information Roundtable of the New York Library Association (NYLA), said the award honors “outstanding information products by state and local government units in New York [and] . . . recognizes the commitment of government agencies to making information available to the public.”

NYLA, founded in 1890, was the first statewide library organization in the United States; one of its founding members was Melville Dewey - namesake for the Dewey Decimal System. Dewey was New York State Librarian at the time.

Law Library Director Betsy Vipperman and Senior Law Librarian Andrew Kloc will be presenters at this year’s Annual NYLA Conference in Saratoga Springs in November.

The Appellate Division, Fourth Department, hears appeals and proceedings from 22 counties located in Central and Western New York.

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