

Haggard Library reopens

Photography by Mike Newman

The W.O. Haggard Jr. Library celebrates a new chapter in 16 years of serving the community – an additional 20,000-square-foot upper floor. Haggard Library is now 60,000 square feet, the largest of Plano's five libraries.

"We have plenty of room to grow the collection here," said Joyce Baumbach, director of libraries for the Plano Public Library System. Baumbach also celebrates 16 years with the city, six of those years as director of libraries.

When the library was dedicated to the city on April 30, 1989, a 20,000-square-foot main floor accommodated the adult, children's, reference, and periodical collections along with a program room that seated 100. In 1996, a 20,000-square-

foot lower level was finished which housed administration offices and technical services.

After voters approved a \$3.53 million bond for expansion, construction began in July 2004.

The additional 20,000 square feet of space does not require additional staff. Speaking of staff, some things haven't changed. Haggard still features a friendly staff, among other attractions like sunken courtyards, self-check scanners, and a wide collection of resources.

Plano's five libraries offer 750,000 holdings total, with about 145,000 at Haggard. Around 30 - 40 percent of Haggard's collection is out at a time, meaning less crowded shelves and an overall pleasant library experience.

A pleasant experience is a safe one.

Outside, new tile was installed at the entryway because "the old tile was too slick when it rained," Baumbach said.

The Main Floor

The entryway leads to the main floor which houses the circulation desk, all hold books, and the children's collection. Children's books are in kid-friendly three-foot-tall shelves. Small tables and chairs with circus animals imprinted on the back of the chairs welcome children to sit and read an Eric Carle book. A large sign above a circus-themed storytelling room reads "Haggard Library – The Greatest Storytime on Earth."

Walk past the children's area to a trendy teen room. "We have a much larger teen and young adult area," said Baumbach. The teen room features two game tables,

and a sitting area with chairs on four- or five-inch wheels, and each chair has a slide-around oval table attached to it. A contemporary edge is dotted throughout the library either in the furniture or the lighting.

The Upper Floor

The upper floor holds adult fiction and nonfiction books, periodicals, an adult media collection, and a reference collection. Exit the elevator or take the stairs, and on the left is a public conference room with a dry-erase board that seats 12 (but could hold 20).





A special "sneak preview" November 13 was hosted by the Plano Public Library Foundation. The group's chairman, Robert Lindner (above right), welcomed visitors including descendants of library namesake W. O. Haggard Jr., including his son and wife, Rodney (above) and Merle pictured at right with retired head of the libraries Maribelle Davis (right).

Seven large windows look out and above the main floor's entryway. Plano's Public Art Committee has donated artwork that hangs from the ceiling for viewing on both floors. This conference room is in addition to Haggard's original and larger one that seats 75-100 people. Two other study rooms are also on the new upper floor, and ...

"A unique feature of Haggard is the quiet room," said Baumbach. "No cell phones, no laptops, no radios ... no snoring!" she laughs. "Last year over a million and a half visitors came through the doors of Haggard. ... We want our visitors to have a quiet place to study."

In the center of the quiet room are low-seating chairs (perhaps to remind visitors to keep their voices low) with four tall reading lamps.

Another quiet area of the upper floor is the computer lab, although it is separated by dividers. Baumbach said that the library doesn't have the money yet to furnish computers for the lab, but there are 39 other computer work stations available to the public. These computers are clustered in banks with a network printer connected to each bank.

The Lower Floor

The lower floor continues to house the PPLS administration offices, and a genealogy section is moving over from Harrington Library. Said Baumbach,

"Genealogy is becoming so popular that it's outgrown its area in Harrington."

Will Haggard outgrow 60,000 square feet of space? This chapter has yet to be written.

Visit Haggard Library at 2501 Coit Rd. For more information, call 972-769-4250.

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday

10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Friday - Saturday

10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Holiday hours vary

