5-16-1939

Letter to Charles Bagby regarding the Law Libraries and Publications Committee, May 16, 1939

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May 16, 1939

Mr. Chas. W. Bagby
Hickory, N. C.

Dear Mr. Bagby:

President Hutchins, of the State Bar, has informed me of our appointments to the Special Committee on Law Libraries and Publications. I was doubly pleased to learn of your appointment because your name was on the panel of possible appointees previously discussed by President Hutchins and myself.

Miss Mary S. Covington, Research Librarian, Duke Law School, in behalf of the Carolinas Law Librarians, will communicate with you shortly. She will send to you copies of tentative lists of small Law Libraries - ranging in cost as follows: $2,000, $3,000 and $5,000 - for your examination and criticism. The plan has been that the Law Librarians will perfect selected lists which will bring to the local bar libraries the best legal materials available for the amount expended. Further, they will cooperate closely with the local purchasing committees in assisting them in selecting the materials and in getting them at the best possible price, either second-hand or new whichever may be preferred. In this way the Law Librarians' Committee will function most effectively in the field in which they are best informed.

The task of our Bar Committee, it seems to me, is to perfect, in considerable detail, two or three alternate "model" plans of organization and administration for local bar libraries. It is here that the practical experience of the practicing attorneys is most important. Accordingly, I am requesting each member of the Committee to suggest a plan for setting up and operating a local bar library, giving special emphasis to the following: (1) Method of financing, (2) housing, and (3) plan of administration.

In drafting the plan which you are to submit to the Committee, the following suggestions and problems are stated for whatever value they may be to you: (1) Method of financing - From what source is the money to come - (a) allocation of funds from costs collected by Clerk of Superior Court, and if so what type of enabling act is needed; (b) bar dues assessed for the purpose, or (c) pro-rating of cost of Library among the members of local bar, and if so, should a higher percentage of the cost be paid by those using the Library more?
Would the participation of younger and older lawyers be upon an equal financial basis? (2) Housing - location - (a) space allotted in courthouse, or (b) office rented for the purpose? (3) Administration - who is to have personal responsibility for the operation of the Library - (a) librarian employed locally from among stenographers or commercial students, or (b) bar committee? Who is to have duty to secure return of books borrowed? Who is to have responsibility for buying books? Who is to act as collecting and disbursing officer? Who may give special permission as to removal of books, exchanging books, and selling obsolete works?

I am urging each member to submit, by July 1st, an outline of a plan for establishing and operating a local bar library. When all the plans are in, we will arrange a meeting to discuss the suggestions.

Looking forward with anticipation to the receipt of your suggestions, I am

Cordially,