



# Bartholomew County Public Library



## Cleo Rogers Memorial Library

Cleo Rogers Memorial Library was designed by architect I. M. Pei who was chosen for his total concept of an open library. Mr. Pei believed that the library should occupy a space which would be quiet, dignified, and easily accessible to persons of all ages. Its location would create an area of urban space, and it would take into consideration the future growth of the community and its character.

Mr. Pei recommended the closing of Lafayette Avenue between Fifth and Sixth streets to create a viable public space. This plaza features the "Large Arch" sculpture by Henry Moore and has been the site for numerous outdoor events including concerts, festivals, art shows, as well as programming for all ages.

The I. M. Pei Library building is a sculptured brick pavilion with solid walls on the east and west. An integral concrete coffer slab and brick bearing wall construction are the main features of the design. The main entrance vestibule is located off center at the west end of the front of the building on Fifth Street. Tall windows are deeply recessed. The parapet wall around the exterior of the building hides the rooftop mechanical equipment.

Bricks throughout the exterior and interior intersect in the Flemish Bond pattern with alternating headers (short side of a brick facing out) and stretchers (long side of the brick facing out) on each course (row of bricks) with each header centered above and below a stretcher.

The coffered concrete ceiling aids in acoustical control and houses lighting and air vents. This poured concrete waffled ceiling is used on all three levels. The heat from the canister lights installed in the coffered ceiling is recycled through an elaborate intake/air handling system and used to heat the building during the winter months.

A poured concrete stairway inside leads upstairs to a mezzanine level with a skylight and planter at the center. This main stairway also leads downstairs to the lower level. The original building consisted of 87,000 square feet. It now houses the Family and Local History collections.

Adult and teen circulating collections are located the main floor and mezzanine levels. Children's Services on the lower level has its own entrance to the west and also is accessible from the main floor. A terrace adjacent to Children's Services can be used by the public during warm weather months. Five meeting rooms, the BCPL Create Lab, and the Columbus Indiana Architectural Archives are all located on the lower level.

The Cleo Rogers Memorial Library took almost three years to complete after an initial 3 year design and fundraising effort. Construction began in November of 1966. The project was financed with a bond issue and a community fund raising drive. The J. Irwin Miller family donated the land that is now occupied by the Library and the Visitors Center. Although the library was not part of the Cummins Foundation Architecture program, the foundation made a sizable donation to the building fund as costs grew beyond the planned budget.

The building was opened to the public in October of 1969 with Children's Services as the first area to be occupied. A community open house was held on December 7, 1969. After the new library building was

completed, the Carnegie building located at the southeast corner of the Library Plaza was demolished. The Library Plaza was completed with the installation of the Henry Moore sculpture “Large Arch” in 1971 which was a gift from J. Irwin and Xenia Miller.

Formal dedication of the library and plaza was held on May 16, 1971 with architects I.M. Pei and Kenneth Carruthers in attendance. The library building was named for Miss Cleo Rogers (1905-1964) to honor her 37 years of service to the library (28 years as Library Director).

The 1987 addition designed by James K. Paris, Principal Architect of Architect Group, Inc (Columbus, IN) enclosed a 11,700 square foot terrace at the north end of the main floor. Paris consulted with Pei on the design, and Pei asked that the addition be distinctly separate yet complementary to his original design. Paris separated the one story, 11,700 square foot addition from the original Pei design with a two story skylight atrium.

The addition was opened to the public on June 16, 1987. It houses the adult nonfiction, non-English book collection, Teen Area, and music and movie collection.

The Library Plaza was refurbished during 2013-2014 with Randy Royer of Blue Marble as the architect. A landscaped walkway connecting the Library and Visitors Center buildings was added to the project. This area includes seating, charging bollards, and free wireless Internet connectivity. The brick walkway’s focal point is the Modern Totem granite sculpture which was created by Martin Beach and placed on permanent loan to the Library by the Columbus Area Arts Council. The reopening of the Library Plaza was celebrated with the Modern Totem dedication followed by an outdoor concert on June 27, 2014.

