In 1977, Dr. John B. Coleman, a Houston, Texas physician, became the first African-American appointed to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. An advocate of higher education, Dr. Coleman was a staunch supporter of Prairie View A&M University and was instrumental in Prairie View receiving a share of the Permanent University Fund, which had previously only been distributed to Texas A&M at College Station and the University of Texas at Austin. In recognition of his long service to the Texas A&M University System Board and support for higher education at traditionally Black Universities in Texas, the Board of Regents voted on July 22, 1988 to name Prairie View’s “new” five-story Library in honor of Dr. John B. Coleman.

Dr. Coleman cut the ribbon to the new Library bearing his name before hundreds of guests at Prairie View A&M University, on November 13, 1988. On that occasion, Coleman was honored during a homecoming convocation for his contributions to Prairie View, Texas A&M, and to higher education. A portrait of Coleman was commissioned to be hung inside the main foyer of the Library. Texas State Senator Craig Washington, a 1966 Prairie View graduate, praised the work of Coleman as he gave the convocation address, and stated: “We know without your leadership, Prairie View would not be what it is today.” Other dignitaries applauding Coleman, included Dr. Percy Pierre, then President of Prairie View, former regent Joe Richardson, and A&M chancellor Perry Adkisson. In his remarks of appreciation, Coleman stated: “I am here to pledge to you I intend to contribute the rest of my life to higher education and this institution in particular.”

A graduate of Jack Yates High School in Houston, Fisk University in Nashville, TN, and Howard University School of Medicine. After medical school, Dr. Coleman returned to Houston and entered private practice in 1962. He eventually became Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Riverside General Hospital. During his long career, Dr. Coleman was a force in Houston politics, and served as Chair of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Houston Division. He was Owner and President of the Cullen Women’s Center, President of Almeda Square Medical Group, and President and Board Chair of KCOH in Houston. He also served as an advisory board member for the Texas A&M School of Medicine, the University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center, Texas Southern University, Huston-Tillotson College, and the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of Entex Gas, Inc., the Greater Houston Partnership, the Houston Citizen’s Chamber of Commerce, the South Central YMCA, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

Dr. Coleman’s contributions to the City of Houston were so widespread that the City of Houston, the State of Texas and Fisk University saluted him with a special celebration at the Shannock Hotel in 1981. The steering committee included community, political and business leaders from throughout the city and state. His life was dedicated to serving the Houston community through his many leadership roles as physician, public servant, and humanitarian.

Design, Construction, and Costs

Opened: 1988

Architect: Jones & Keel, Inc. San Antonio, Texas

Square Feet: 150,000

Collection Capacity: 600,000 Volumes

Seating Capacity: 1,400

Costs: $17 Million

Directors of Library Service

2005 - Present - Dr. Rosie L. Albritton

2000 - 2004 - Dr. Frank Bruno

1992 - 1997 - Dr. Dudley Yates

1988 - 1991 - Dr. Adele S. Dendy

Special Features and Collections

* African Art Collection
* Jazzman Café-Coffee Shop
* University College Tutorial Center– Center for Academic Support
* Information Technology Student Computer Lab
* University Archives
* Rare Book Collections
* Library Special Collections
* The Wilhelmina Delco Story Exhibit
* Hazel Bigger’s Collection of Paintings
* The Hyman Collection
* Distance Learning Services
* Learning Resources Video Department
* Student Academic Success Center

25th Anniversary of the John B. Coleman Library
Prairie View A&M University

Presiding: Priscilla Barbour, 2013-2014 University Student Government Association President

THE OCCASION AND WELCOME:
Dr. Rosie L. Albritton, Director of Library Services - John B. Coleman Library

GENERAL GREETINGS:
Dr. E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith, Provost and Senior Vp-President Academic Affairs

INTRODUCTION OF THE GUEST PANELISTS:
Ms. Kimberly M. Gay, Reference and Instruction Librarian (Panel Moderator)

THE GUEST PANELISTS: Reflections of John B. Coleman Library Services

Mr. Frank D. Jackson, Honorable Mayor of Prairie View, Texas and University Government Relations Officer

Dr. Clarissa Gamble Booker, Tenured Professor– College of Education

Mr. Fred Washington, Vice President for Administration and Auxiliary Services

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND REMARKS:
Dr. George C. Wright, President - Prairie View A&M University: Presentation of Proclamation

Mr. Garnet F. Coleman, Texas House of Representatives-District 147: Acceptance of the Proclamation

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
Dr. Rosie L. Albritton - Director of Library Services

Reception immediately following program
Guest Speakers: Reflections of John B. Coleman Library Services

DR. GEORGE C. WRIGHT, noted African-American scholar, is the seventh President of Prairie View A&M University. Dr. Wright received his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in History from the University of Kentucky and his Doctorate in History from Duke University. In 2004 Dr. Wright was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Texas Southern University.

HONORABLE GARNET F. COLEMAN, TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – DISTRICT 147, son of the late Dr. John B. Coleman, M.D., graduated from the University of St. Thomas in 1990. In 1991, Representative Coleman was elected to the Texas House of Representatives. In 2010, Representative Coleman was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Texas Southern University.

DR. E. JOAHOANNE THOMAS-SMITH has served Prairie View A&M University and higher education for over thirty years as a teacher, mentor, administrator, and supporter. Among Thomas-Smith’s honors and awards are memberships in several national honor societies and selection as a distinguishable alumnae at New Mexico Highlands University.

MR. FRANK D. JACKSON, HONORABLE MAYOR OF PRAIRIE VIEW, TEXAS AND UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENT RELATIONS OFFICER, graduated from Prairie View A&M University in 1973 and was commissioned as an ensign in the United States Navy. He was elected mayor for the City of Prairie View on May 4, 2002. He also works at PVAMU as the Government Affairs Officer.

DR. CLARISSA GAMELE BOOKER is a Tenured Professor and Coordinator of the Reading Program in the College of Education. She is a 1968 graduate of Prairie View A&M University with a B.S. in Elementary Education. She also received her M.A. degree from the University of Northern Colorado, Ed.D Degree from the University of Houston and Extensive Post-Doctoral Study at several highly recognized Universities, including Columbia University and Boston University. She has served on numerous campus committees, including the University Academic Council, Faculty Senate, and the John B. Coleman Library Committee.

MR. FRED WASHINGTON, Vice President Administrative & Auxiliary Services, is responsible for all the support services at the school including housing, public safety, health care and other aspects that affect the quality of life at the university. He recently left a stint as the University’s Athletic Director. A graduate of Prairie View A&M University, Washington is married with four children. He retired from the military in 2010.

Prairie View A&M University Library Staff

Walker, Juanita, M.A., M.L.S.
Assistant Director Public Services

Henson, Karl, M.L.S.
Electronic Services Librarian

Williams, Marion, M.A.
Library Development

Aradhya, Geetha, B.A.
Library Assistant II

Brunfield, Elizabeth, M.L.I.S., A.B.D.
Distance Services Librarian

Daniels, Marvin, B.S.
Library Assistant II

Johnson, Kaia, B.A.
Library Assistant II

McClain, Tasha, M.L.S.
Reference and Instruction Librarian

Riley, Ola, M.L.I.S.
Medical Academy Librarian

Streety, Susan, B.S.
Library Assistant I

Russo, Jason, M.L.I.S.
Collection Development Librarian

Tschaepe, Bethany, M.L.I.S.
Reference and Instruction Librarian

Prairie View A&M University
A member of The Texas A&M University System
A Brief History of Library Service at Prairie View A&M University

Selected Chronology: 1876 to 2013

1876: The Texas State Legislature established the Agricultural and Mechanical College at College Station; and under the provisions of the Morrill Land Grant Act, authorized a similar school for Negro youth to operate under the management of the A&M College Board.

1876: The Fifteenth Texas State Legislature provided funds to initiate a library collection. The Administration Building (Academic Hall) was constructed, and the first library collection of around 1,100 books was housed in a small room on the first floor.

1885-90: An 1885-90 Report indicated that $150.00 was allocated for books.

1885: The Administration presented a request to the State for a $200.00 appropriation to support the library.

1912: Professor G. W. Buchanan, mathematician instructor, library, and bookstore manager, was in charge of the Library Collection of several hundred books.

1919: Mrs. Gertrude Williams, Commercial English Teacher, is appointed to serve as Librarian and teach English. She is cited as the "first trained librarian" at Prairie View, and served until 1931.

1924: Library collection of around 7,000 volumes, was moved to the east side of the first floor of the newly constructed Science Building.

1931: Dr. O. J. Baker, B.A., B.L.S., M.L.S., was appointed Head Librarian, a position that he held for 37 years, over two separate terms, from 1931 to 1951, and again from 1959 to 1972.

1936: Prairie View is selected as one of four Regional Centers for the "Negro Teacher-Librarian Training Program" (NTLTP: 1936-39). Virginia (Lacy) Jones was appointed as the Instructor for the Prairie View Center, and later served as the Dean of the Atlanta University School of Library Science (1945-1954).

1943: The 4th Texas Legislature appropriated $100,000 for the construction of a library building, and added a supplement of $30,000 for equipment and books; an additional $30,000 was provided by the General Education Board, for a total building fund of $160,000.

1944: The Department of Library Science was established as a unit of the Division of Arts and Sciences, and began instruction under the direction of Dr. O. J. Baker, B.L.S.

1945: The "new" library building was completed for around $175,000 and named "Open House" was held on May 20, 1945. The building was designed with a capacity for 100,000 volumes and seating space for 500 students. The Department of Library Science, in the Division of Arts & Sciences, began offering the B.L.S. degree in Library Science.

1946: Dr. W. R. Banks retired in August, and the "new" library was named in his honor - W.R. Banks Library, dedicated on November 9, 1946.

1950: A $27,000.00 addition to the W.R. Banks Library was completed at a cost of $550,000 to expand the volume capacity from 350,000 to 600,000 volumes.

1951: The Learning Resources Center began in Banks Library basement, under direction of Dr. Henry Robinson, Jr., and the University Archives was established by Mrs. Baker. The Library began conversion from Dewey to Library Congress (D-C), and the collection was over 300,000 volumes.

1955: The Library Science B.L.S. degree program is closed after 30 years of "library education" instruction, and the awarding of over 200 library science B.L.S degrees.

1956: Ground-breaking services for the "new grand library" are held on July 18, 1956. Mr. Robert Wedgeworth, Dean - Columbus University Library School, and former Executive Director of the A.L.A. was the keynote speaker. Mrs. Marion Williams served as Chairperson for this event.

1958: Dr. Adele Davis, was appointed as Director of Library Services of the W.R. Banks Library.

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1959: The launching of the "new" Library Building is completed at an estimated cost of $7 million dollars, and dedicated on November 13, 1959, as the John B. Coleman Library. In honor of Dr. John B. Coleman, the "first" black regent on the Texas A&M Board of Regents. The building was designed to hold 200,000 volumes. Dr. Adele Davis, Director of Library Services, coordinated the move from the W.R. Banks building, and the opening of the "new" building.

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1963: Dr. Adele Davis was appointed as Director of Library Services of the W.R. Banks Library.

1967: The construction of the "new" Library Building is completed at an estimated cost of $7 million dollars, and dedicated on November 13, 1967, as the John B. Coleman Library. In honor of Dr. John B. Coleman, the "first" black regent on the Texas A&M Board of Regents. The building was designed to hold 200,000 volumes. Dr. Adele Davis, Director of Library Services, coordinated the move from the W.R. Banks building, and the opening of the "new" building.

1967: Dr. Adele Davis served as Director of Library Services until 1971. Dr. Percy France was President of PVAMU.

1970: Dr. Dudley Yelton was appointed Director of Library Services, and serves until 1974.

1970: Dr. Adele Davis was appointed as Director of Library Services of the W.R. Banks Library.

1971: The construction of the "new" Library Building is completed at an estimated cost of $7 million dollars, and dedicated on November 13, 1971, as the John B. Coleman Library. In honor of Dr. John B. Coleman, the "first" black regent on the Texas A&M Board of Regents. The building was designed to hold 200,000 volumes. Dr. Adele Davis, Director of Library Services, coordinated the move from the W.R. Banks building, and the opening of the "new" building.

1971: The 25th Anniversary of the Ground-Breaking Services for the "new" library building is recognized by the John B. Coleman Library. The building was dedicated on November 13, 1971, to commemorate the "Silver Anniversary" of the "Grand Library."