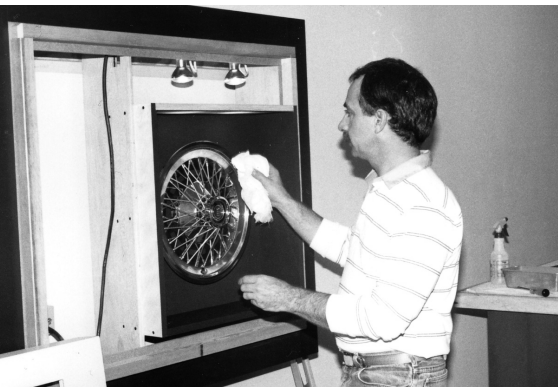


Copyright Lore

■ Frank Evina

December 2004 marks the twentieth anniversary of the installation of the Copyright Office exhibit, *By Securing to Authors: Copyright, Commerce, and Creativity in America*.

In 1984, the idea for a permanent exhibition celebrating American creativity was conceived by ninth Register of



FILE PHOTOS

The wire wheel cover of the *Norris v. ITT* case is installed in its case.

Copyrights David L. Ladd (1980–1985). Ladd was passionate in his quest to honor American authors in the new building, the stark corridor walls of which he often described as being “hospital-like.”

In a memo to the Copyright Office staff dated April 12, 1984, Ladd outlined his reasons for the installation of a permanent exhibit and invited the entire staff to submit ideas. Staff suggestions were forwarded to Anne-Catherine Fallen of Fallen/Kinnard Designs, the exhibit director contracted by the Office to coordinate the overall design and installation. Several longtime staffers who had both an in-depth knowledge of copyright and of the Library and Copyright



Office were recruited to help locate original artifacts.

Utilizing the unparalleled collections of the Library of Congress and the Copyright Office depository, the Office created a colorful and enduring display celebrating all forms of authorship. It was unveiled with a gala opening on Dec. 12, 1984.

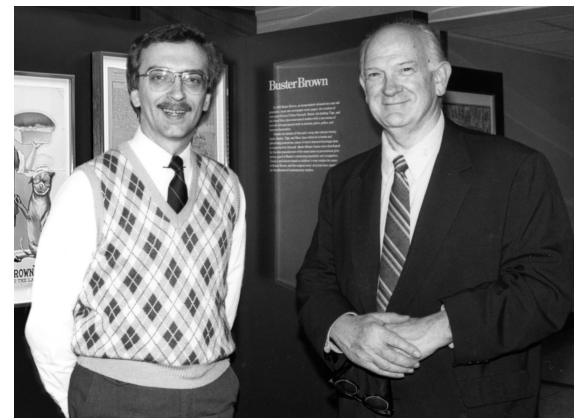
Two sections of the exhibit that have maintained their popularity over the years are the copyright timeline, which includes original two-dimensional copyright deposits spanning the period from 1870 through 1984, and the plexiglass cube-shaped display case containing three-dimensional deposits submitted for copyright registration prior to 1978. The practice of accepting three-dimensional copies of works of the visual arts was discontinued when the new law went into effect on Jan. 1, 1978.

The timeline includes original copyright deposit copies for several icons of American popular culture that have attracted a lot of attention over the years, including the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences “Oscar” award.

In the 20 years since the exhibit first opened, it has delighted scores of children who have seen the display of Bert and Ernie of Sesame Street fame, the Pink Panther, and, last but not least, Barbie and Ken, who arrived without clothes. To display them tastefully, a curator had to buy suitable outfits from a local toy store.

The exhibit touches upon the legal underpinnings of copyright as well as deposits. Under the guidance of Associate Register of Copyrights Waldo Moore, 14 landmark cases were selected for

display. A particular favorite with attorneys who visit the Office, this section also features original artifacts that help to illustrate and interpret each case. An original *Mazer v. Stein* plaster statue lamp-base discovered in remote copyright storage in Landover, Md., Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech, and one of two surviving Maltese Falcon statues, discovered in the property warehouse of Warner Bros. West Coast Division and donated to the Copyright Office by Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. bring this section of the exhibit to life.



Frank Evina and Associate Register Waldo Moore enjoy the opening of the exhibit in 1984.

Over the years, the exhibit has also received substantial media attention. It has been featured on the Today Show, CNN, and several local television broadcasts. In 1994, it was highlighted in *The Library of Congress: America’s Memory*, which was published by the Library. In the past 20 years the exhibit has not lost its public appeal and, as Register Ladd had envisioned, continues “to remind us of the importance of our daily work” here in the Copyright Office. ©

Anne-Catherine Fallen, of the firm Fallen/Kinnard who designed the exhibit, puts on the final touches.