

# The Clemmons Branch Library

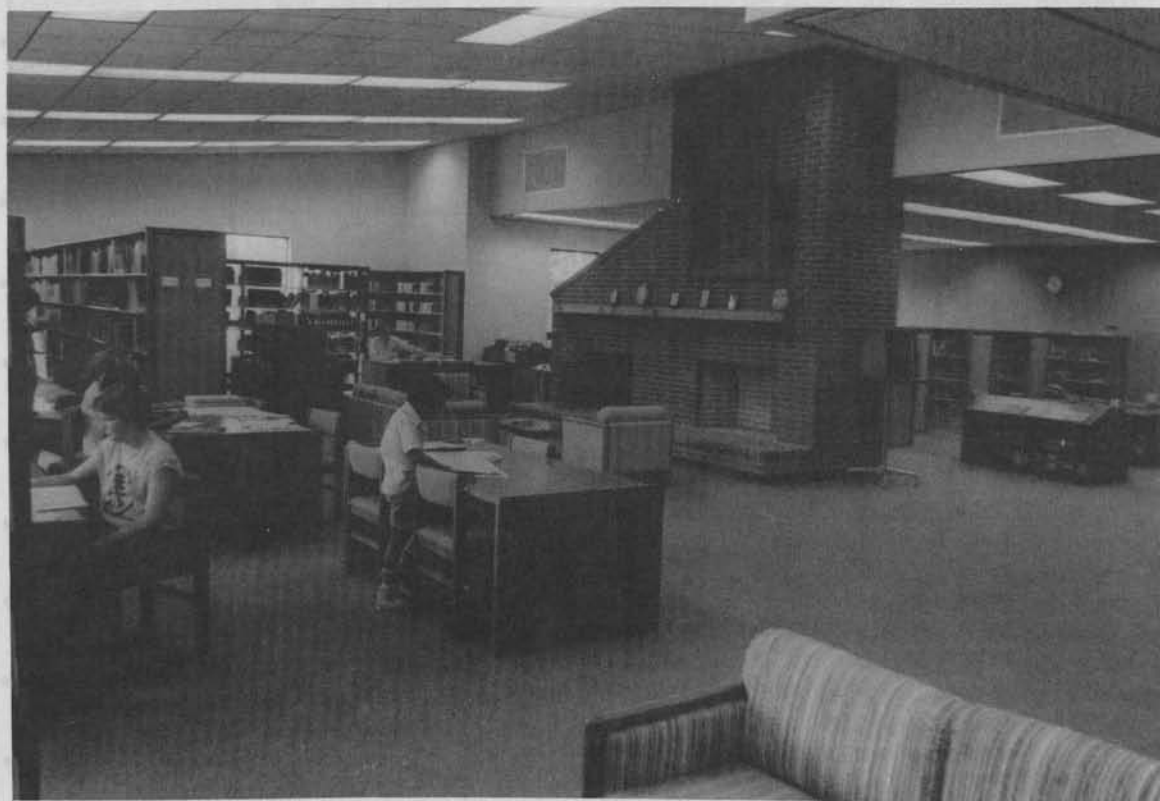
Jim Govern

Construction of the new Clemmons Branch Library began in March 1983, with completion and occupancy in August 1984. Clemmons, an unincorporated community ten miles west of Winston-Salem on I-40, has a population of just over eight thousand. The old branch building had only 1,500 square feet of space and had been severely overcrowded for some time. Several factors contributed to the decision to build the new branch—space limitations of the old building, the population growth of Clemmons (80 per cent increase between 1970 and 1980), and the likelihood of continued growth in the area.

Jim Govern is Head of the Clemmons Branch Library of the Forsyth County Public Library system.

Local businessman Edgar Broyhill donated roughly one acre of land adjacent to the Edgar B. Furniture Plantation on Route 158 in Clemmons, keeping the cost of the project down considerably. Plans called for constructing a building similar in design to, with some modifications, the Rural Hall/Stanleyville Branch Library that was completed in Forsyth County in 1982. Using this basic design for the Clemmons Branch helped the county manage costs by way of lowering the architectural and consulting fees to \$35,310.

The 8,900 square foot structure was built for \$619,370 (or \$54.95 per square foot) with \$88,310 coming from the Appalachian Regional Commission; \$60,300 from the state; and \$470,760 from Forsyth County. The building includes an auditorio-



"One of the design characteristics that makes the building so successful is the incorporation of a large fireplace in the center of the main building area."

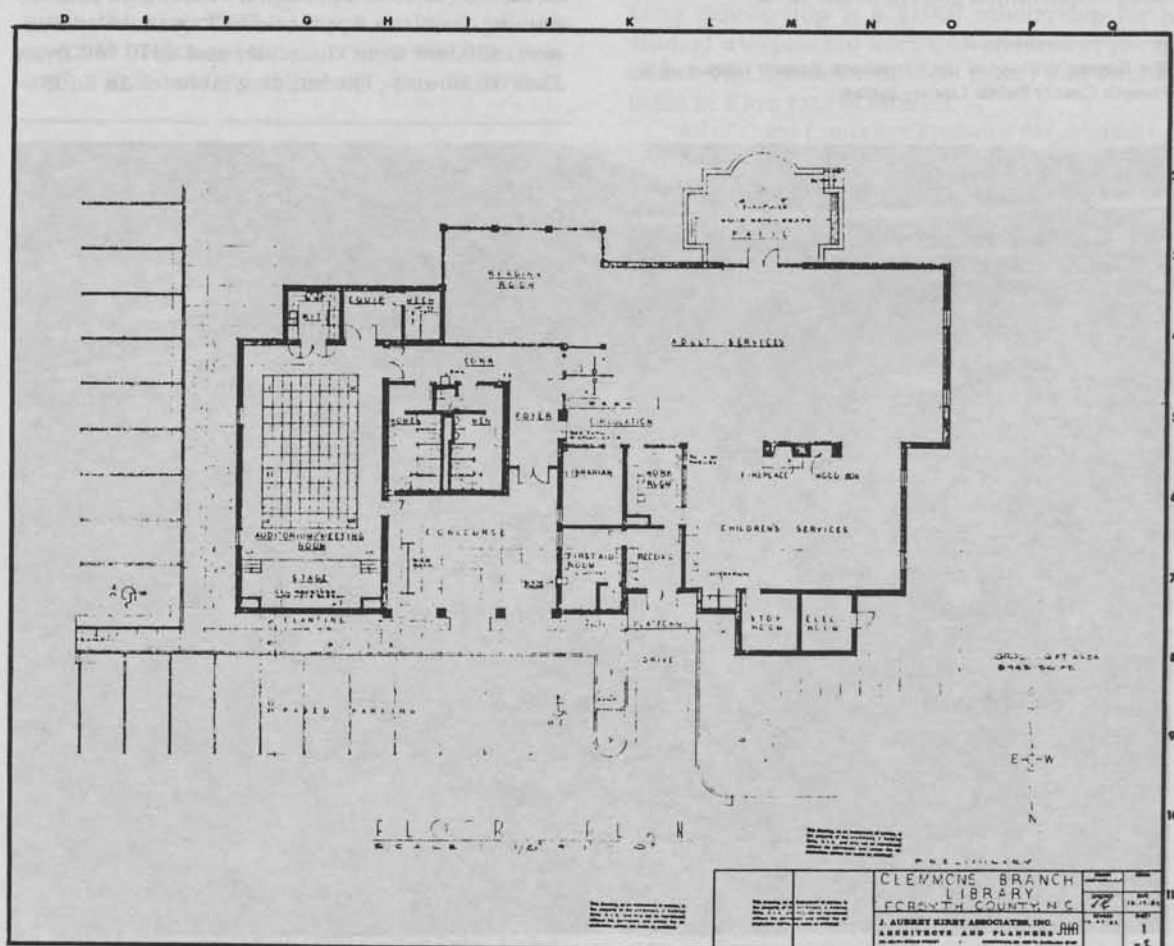
rium with a stage and a kitchen area; the auditorium will seat 150 people. Since no similar rooms are available in the community, the library's auditorium has been used extensively during its first two months of operation, averaging some function three nights a week. The auditorium is also used for children's and adult programming. One of the design characteristics that makes the building so successful is the incorporation of a large fireplace in the center of the main building area. The fireplace not only serves to soften the look of the building's interior but also has the practical effect of serving as a room divider between the adult and children's book areas. The fireplace also has a mantle that works well as a display area.

Equipment and furniture for the building amounted to \$95,000 and includes seven study tables in the adult areas along with an index table, atlas and dictionary stand, two full-sized couches, and four sitting chairs. The children's area is furnished with four regular tables and one picturebook table for display and reading. Display

shelving was also purchased to highlight our new books and paperback collection. This high-traffic area is conveniently located immediately to the left of patrons entering the library.

In designing the building, the services to be offered were carefully considered. The Clemmons Branch has two microcomputers, and therefore space needed to be made for them. The micros are housed in two carrels near the children's room. The idea of putting the micros in carrels was a sound one although the carrels are only six feet square, which is not enough space for a computer, printer, and work area. Twelve square feet for each machine is desirable.

The entire building (except the auditorium) can be observed from the circulation desk and work room areas. With the limited staff in the branch, this allows one person to be able to "control" the operation of the building with its seating capacity of sixty-eight from a single vantage point. Before moving into the new building, the branch had a staff of one full-time and one part-



Floor plan of the Clemmons Branch Library.



The circulation desk and work areas.

time employee. Staffing expanded to include two professional librarians and two pages. A children's librarian was among those hired, allowing the Clemmons Branch to offer services to children for the first time. Along with the new building and additional personnel, the branch was also given a one-time-only book budget of \$27,500 for fiscal year 1984-85. This sum will go a long way toward meeting the demand for reading material created by the new building. The Clemmons Branch had roughly eleven thousand volumes before the move into new quarters, which will house up to forty thousand books.

Circulation doubled immediately in the new building—3,500 books circulated monthly in the old building while over 7,000 books have been checked out monthly in the new location. Every other service offered here at the branch has also increased, voter registrations, reference inquiries, and library registrations among them. Along with the new branch and lots of new books, the increase in the library's hours of operation has also contributed to the increase in circulation.

The branch is now open fifty-nine hours weekly as opposed to the forty-three hours each week in the old building.

The difference that our new building has made is not only an increase in circulation but a real raising of the awareness of the library in the Clemmons area. A new building calls attention to the fact that there is indeed public library service in Clemmons. Coinciding with the move to new quarters was the formation of the Friends of the Clemmons Branch Library. With membership pushing one hundred, the group has already assisted us with an open house and dedication ceremonies by providing refreshments. Friends have also helped out with some of our programs for children. In the planning stages are a book drive and sale and helping with our Christmas program by providing a tree, ornaments, and a Santa. I think the formation of the Friends and the level of their activity are due in large part to the enthusiasm for the library generated by the arrival of the new building. If you wish to increase the profile of the library in your area—build a new one!