

For Immediate Release

PULITZER PRIZE WINNING AUTHORS LEAD COALITION OF SCHOLARS, AUTHORS AND PRESERVATIONISTS SEEKING INJUNCTION AGAINST MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR LIBRARY PLAN

This afternoon, a Coalition of Pulitzer Prize winners, scholars, authors, and preservationists together with library advocates [Citizens Defending Libraries](#) filed a lawsuit against the trustees of the New York Public Library to stop demolition and removal of seven stories of architecturally and historically significant book stacks that structurally support the Rose Reading Room of the Central Library. As part of their suit, which is the second such lawsuit to be filed against Library Trustees in the last week, the Coalition will ask for an immediate temporary restraining order against the Library to stop all construction with respect to the venerable stacks.

Although both cases feature claims against the Trustees, the similarities between the two lawsuits ends there. The first claim in the Coalition's lawsuit to be filed tomorrow is that a 1978 Agreement between the Library, City and State of New York bars any structural alteration of the Central Branch of the Library absent prior consent from the State. Under another provision of the 1978 Agreement, the NYPL and the City also each separately promised "to protect and preserve the historical integrity of features, materials, appearance, workmanship and environment" of the Central Library" -- a promise that "they would break if the stacks were to be removed," according to Michael Hiller of Weiss & Hiller, the firm representing the Coalition.

The Coalition's suit also includes claims seeking injunctive relief to direct that the books already removed from the Library as part of the Central Library Plan be immediately restored. A series of trusts, indentures, agreements and the NYPL Charter explicitly prohibit removal of the books from the Library.

The suit is accompanied by affidavits from, among others, Edmund Morris and Annalyn Swan, two Pulitzer Prize winning authors, all of whom complain that removal of the books severely handicaps research at the Library.

According to Hiller, "the gutting of the 42nd Street Library of its architecturally significant and irreplaceable book stacks, constructed as part of one of the world's most efficient book-delivery systems, has been condemned by scholars, authors, and architects of every stripe. The removal of the books from the Library makes this intolerable situation worse, converting the Library from a world-class research institution rivaling the Library of Congress, to a husk of a building that scholars and other members of the general public, who perform some of society's most important research, would be unable to use."

contact: Michael S. Hiller (212) 319-4000; (646) 408-5995 <mailto:mhiller@weisskiller.com>