

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Maury County Archives & Justice Center

From Filing Frustration to Future-Ready: A Case Study in Judicial Storage

For decades, the Chancery and Circuit Courts in Maury County, TN, operated out of a historic courthouse in downtown Columbia. Built in 1905 to serve just over 12,000 residents, this courthouse was no match for the demands of a modern judicial system now serving more than 100,000 residents.

By the early 2000s, the courthouse was bursting at the seams. Storage overwhelmed staff offices. Finding a single document could derail an afternoon. And as the county's caseload kept growing, so did the pressure to find a better solution.

THE PROBLEM

Filing cabinets had taken over. Two thousand square feet of office space were crowded with steel, paper, and frustration. "We had filing cabinets everywhere," said Larry Roe, Clerk and Master for Maury County. "Most of our office was just filing cabinets." And even then, it still wasn't enough to hold everything.

"We'd been out of space for twenty years," said Roe. "I had records all over downtown, as did the circuit court clerk, because we were out of room at the courthouse."

Staff filed records wherever they could find space. Volumes lived in satellite offices, hallways, and borrowed corners of nearby buildings. Roe recalls, "We were constantly shifting from one office to another, just hunting for space."

Traditional filing cabinets only made things worse. When probate cases ballooned from single folders to ten-volume behemoths, the static systems couldn't keep up. Misfiled documents became a regular headache. Meanwhile, the county's population and caseload kept climbing.

"Probate cases have doubled in the past 15 years," Roe said. "And with the growth we've had, we just couldn't keep up."

The county finally greenlit a new judicial facility, but Roe knew the county needed more than a new building. They needed a new approach to records storage.



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– Larry Roe, Clerk and Master, Maury County, TN

THE SOLUTION

The county commission's vote to build a new judicial facility came just as the Maury County Archives was expanding. Unwilling to carry old storage problems into new spaces, Roe reached out to Patterson Pope.

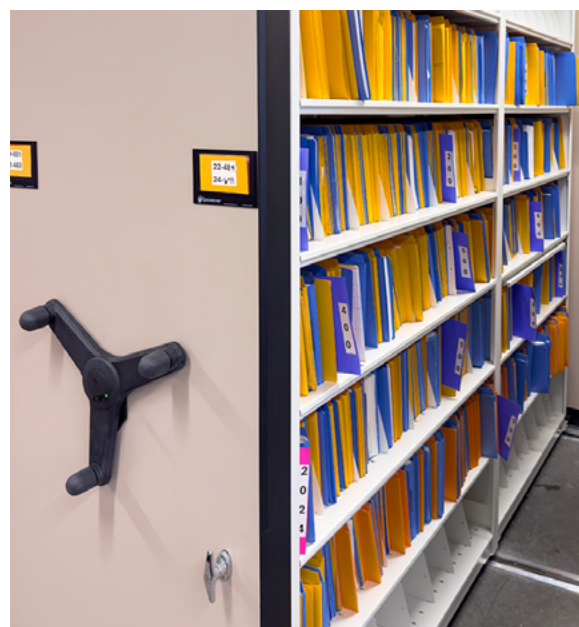
With guidance from sales representative Paul Myers, Roe reimagined what court storage could be. "Patterson Pope helped make things easier with so many choices," Roe said. "That was the benefit of having Paul. His experience with other court systems and in the private sector, businesses, hospitals, universities, etc."

Roe visited Bedford County (which referred Roe to Patterson Pope) multiple times to see the solutions in action. "I think I went to Bedford County at least three times just to see what all they had," he recalled. "It's one thing to look at a catalog but another thing to actually be in someone else's office and see it."

With Roe's input, Patterson Pope designed a high-density mobile shelving system that packed more storage into less space — and left room to grow. In the end, the size of the new office didn't increase, but the storage capacity did.

"I was really surprised, as was my entire staff, at how much it could hold," Roe said. "When you look at it, you're like, 'Oh okay, there's seven or eight mobile shelves. I bet you get a couple of years.' No, it could probably hold 15 or 16 years, at least for our purposes."

Myers stayed involved throughout the entire process, from design to installation. "Paul gave me his cell number and said, 'Call anytime,'" Roe said. "He met with the architects. He toured Bedford County with us. He's not just a sales guy — he's a partner. Paul's here long-term for us."



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THE OUTCOME

The new shelving system didn't just reclaim space; it changed how the office works, with immediate, measurable benefits in space, organization, and peace of mind. Staff no longer lose time digging through overstuffed cabinets or chasing down files across town. Records stay where they belong, neatly organized and easy to find. *"You don't see files scattered anymore,"* Roe said. *"Everything's tidy. It's easy to access."*

Adjustable dividers help the team manage expanding case files, while the flexible design adapts to shifting needs. *"It's easier to find stuff and make adjustments,"* Roe said. *"I would not want to go back to the filing cabinet system."*

Thanks to well-designed storage and expanded archives, the county was able to reduce the overall footprint of the new judicial building. *"This building would've needed to be a third larger if the archives hadn't expanded,"* Roe said. Better storage made it possible.

But the real success wasn't in the shelves — it was in the partnership. Patterson Pope helped bring clarity to a complex process and earned lasting trust along the way.

"My advice is to call Patterson Pope," said Roe. *"When your budget shifts or the building plans change, you need vendors who can help you. Stick with someone who's known and trusted in the industry. Stick with Patterson Pope."*

