

Semmes Library

15060 Judson Rd. | San Antonio | TX | 78247 | Phone: (210) 650-9540 | Fax: (210) 650-4079



Hours	
Sunday	10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
Monday	10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
Tuesday	12:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
Thursday	12:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.
Friday	10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
Manager	Jamie Flowers
Bus Route	640

The Collection and Services

The History

The Name

Julia Laura Yates Semmes was born October 20, 1904, in Stanton, Texas. She was raised on a ranch in West Texas and moved to San Antonio in 1941. She was a member of Christ Episcopal Church, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Colonial Dames, and the Huguenot Society. At the age of 80, Mrs. Semmes developed macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in Americans over 55. Mrs. Semmes worked with the Texas Commission for the Blind to learn how to continue to live independently in spite of her loss of vision. In 2000, the Semmes Foundation donated \$1 million to the San Antonio Public Library to create a special collection, including books and equipment, for the visually impaired. The Semmes Foundation has pledged an additional \$250,000 for materials and equipment for the Semmes Branch at Comanche Lookout Park. Mrs. Semmes died November 5, 2002, at the age of 98.

The Design

Using Comanche Tower as a focal point, the Library’s reading areas are oriented to take advantage of views into the park. The site orientation also takes into account the solar path to capture indirect natural light while minimizing the amount of direct sunlight. Rainwater will be collected in this environmentally friendly building and piped into water cisterns to be used to help meet irrigation demands on the site. The remaining surface water will be channeled into a new landscaped wetlands area that will naturally filter the water and contribute to the park’s ecosystem. The main reading area will allow seamless integration between indoor and outdoor spaces through the use of a 20-foot glass wall along the parkside view of the building.

The Location

Comanche Lookout Park is a 96-acre public park owned by the City of San Antonio. The site includes the fourth highest point in Bexar County with an elevation of 1,340 feet. The Cibolo floodplain lies at the base of this escarpment between the Gulf Coastal Plain and the Edwards Plateau. Vegetation on the hill includes native ash juniper, Texas and Mexican buckeye, chinaberry, graneno, Lindheimer hackberry, honey mesquite and huisache.

Native Americans used this hill as a vantage point for warfare and hunting. The Apache, and later, the Comanche Indians dominated the area as they hunted along waterways including nearby Cibolo Creek. The hill was also a prominent landmark for travelers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The old Spanish road (one of several routes of the Camino Real, or Royal Road) from San Antonio to Bastrop and Nacogdoches in East Texas ran past the base of the hill. The road followed earlier American Indian travel routes, and today its remnants are known as Nacogdoches Road.

15,975 square foot library integrating outdoor education concepts

Project Funds: 1999 Bond Election \$3,000,000 / SAPL Foundation Funds / 2002 GO Bond \$527,000

Architect: Rehler Vaughn & Koone, Inc.

Design Enhancement: George Schroeder

Construction Contract: FMG Contracting Co.

Grand Opening: November 5, 2005

The Community

Northeast part of San Antonio and Bexar County. Serves schools in the Northeast Independent School District.

Located in U.S. Congressional District 21, TX State Congressional District 121, TX State Senate District 25, and City Council District 10.

Directions

Via Loop 1604: Exit Nacogdoches Rd (FM Rd. 2252). Southwest on Nacogdoches to Judson Rd.