

“The History of AALL Diversity: A Highly Selective and Abbreviated Account of Key Initiatives and Individuals”*

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INTRODUCTION

My good friend Rich Leiter, creator and host of Law Librarian Conversations, once again has asked me to do the impossible—tell the story of AALL diversity in minutes, not hours. No surprise, can't be done. So, although the title of this essay is “The History of AALL Diversity,” its subtitle is “A Highly Selective and Abbreviated Account of Key Initiatives and Individuals.” Emphasis on *selective* and *abbreviated*, as I will limit myself to short descriptions of just a few of the many people and events that played crucial roles in AALL's evolving approach to diversity over the past century or so. Consequently, much will be omitted and, for this, I apologize in advance. But enough with the introduction, let's begin.

1906

As is often the case when discussing the history of AALL, we begin on July 2, 1906, with the formation of the Association at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island. Twenty-four of the 25 individuals

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deemed “charter members”¹ were white males, so one can’t say that the new organization was a bastion of diversity. But there was one woman in the group and she was an important contributor to AALL for many years. Margaret C. Klingelsmith was librarian of the University of Pennsylvania’s Biddle Law Library, a position she held for 32 years, from 1899 to 1931. She had earned an LL.B. from Penn in 1898, and was “one of the first women in the city of Philadelphia to be admitted to the bar.”² Klingelsmith remained active in AALL after its formation—she was vice-president in 1912–13—and was remembered in a memorial in *Law Library Journal* as “one of the best known and best loved of [AALL’s] members,” with a “charming personality [that] added greatly to the enjoyment of the meetings she attended.”³

1907–1909

Although Klingelsmith was the sole woman among the charter members, she was not alone for long. Only a year later, when the list of AALL members was published in the first issue of *Law Library Journal*, 13 women were included among the 69 members (nearly 20% of the total). They represented a variety of library types—academic, bar association, court, and state libraries—but perhaps the most intriguing was Miss Eva Messe, librarian of the Young Men’s Hebrew Association Law Library, in New York City.⁴ Sadly, I haven’t been able to find out anything about her or

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1. The complete list of 1907 members, including honorary, regular, and associate categories, indicates charter members with an asterisk. *Members*, 1 LAW LIBR. J. 26 (1908).
 2. *Margaret Center Klingelsmith*, 24 LAW LIBR. J. 64, 64 (1931).
 3. *Id.*
 4. *Members*, *supra* note 1, at 27.

her library, so I'm not sure how if at all they fit into AALL diversity.

On June 30, 1909, Gertrude E. Woodard, law librarian of the University of Michigan, was elected vice president of AALL for 1909–10, becoming the first woman to serve as an officer.⁵ Then, in 1910, she became the first woman elected to the AALL Executive Board, and in 1915, the first woman to serve as editor of *Law Library Journal*.

1933

For the first 25 years of its existence, AALL diversity—at least what is visible in the historical record—was limited to women. That finally changed in 1933 when a true hero of our story emerged. In July of that year, Howard University Law Library was admitted to AALL as an institutional member. In October, Allen Mercer Daniel, Howard's acting law librarian, attended the Annual Meeting in Chicago, becoming, as he later wrote, “the first colored member to be admitted [into AALL].”⁶ A Howard graduate in both business (1906) and law (1909), Daniel worked as an attorney in the War Department for a number of years before returning to his alma mater, where he served in various capacities in Howard's law library from 1924 until his retirement in 1956. Daniel attended every single Annual Meeting from 1933 until 1975, which was nineteen years after he had retired from Howard and only one year before his death. Attending 41 consecutive Annual Meetings is a remarkable achievement in itself, but historical materials in AALL's archives documenting the difficulty he had in finding lodgings in the host cities, as well

5. *Minutes*, 2 LAW LIBR. J. 11, 19 (1909) (report of secretary-treasurer).

6. A. Mercer Daniel, *The Law Library of Howard University, 1867–1956*, 51 LAW LIBR. J. 202, 209 (1958).

insensitive remarks found in the published proceedings of the meetings themselves, make it clear what an incredible feat it really was and just how committed Mercer Daniel was to the law library profession and AALL.⁷ This commitment was shown in his steadfast service—he chaired three separate AALL committees and, in 1952, with the support of Miles Price of Columbia, was the first candidate of color to run for the Executive Board, losing by a mere 11 votes.⁸ Daniel contributed to AALL in a particularly unique way in 1966 when he donated “a book of photographs of the AALL annual meetings from 1935–1956” to the newly established Association permanent headquarters in Chicago.⁹ These photographs, now housed at AALL's archives, provide rare images of many of AALL's early members and leaders; most, if not all, are one of a kind treasures that provide a visual record of law librarianship that would be virtually unavailable without his priceless donation. A. Mercer Daniel justifiably has been accorded many honors: the library at Howard University School of Law was named for him, and he was a special honoree at the incorporation of Harpers Ferry into the National Park Service because of his expertise on John Brown and Harpers Ferry (where he grew up). As for AALL, he was elected to life membership upon his retirement and, in 2010, he, along with Margaret Klingelsmith and Gertrude Woodard, was inducted into

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7. Cynthia Berry, *Allen Mercer Daniel: A Leader in Law Librarianship*, AALL SPECTRUM (Feb. 2000), at 12, 12. The difficulties Daniel experienced in maintaining this remarkable attendance record are described in Ruth J. Hill, *A Legacy of Leadership*, in *CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: A LEGACY OF MINORITY LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES* 15, 21–24 (Carol Avery Nicholson et al. eds., 2006) (profile of Daniel).
 8. Hill, *supra* note 7, at 24.
 9. Kate Wallach, *Gift to AALL*, PRESIDENT'S NEWSL., Sept. 1966, at 2, 2.

the AALL Hall of Fame as a “pioneer.”¹⁰ But perhaps the best tribute paid to him was written by Marian Gallagher: “The dignity with which [Mercer Daniel] endured indignity and his proud, dedicated service to AALL and its members won him innumerable friends.”¹¹

1970s and 1980s

I will now jump forward almost 40 years, to the 1970s and 80s, a period of critical change not only in the country as a whole but also in AALL's attitude and actions related to diversity. What follows are highlights, though by no means the whole story.

On July 5, 1972, at the 65th Annual Meeting, held in Chicago, members approved an amendment to the AALL Bylaws which added a new article on anti-discrimination. It read: “Membership in the association or in any of its chapters, or participation in any activity of the association or its chapters, shall not be denied to any individual, or abridged, on account of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.”¹² The provision has since been amended by changing “sex” to gender and by including the additional categories of age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.¹³

In 1981, the Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section (now called

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10. Frank G. Houdek, *Introducing the AALL Hall of Fame: AALL Announces Its Inaugural Class of Inductees to the AALL Hall of Fame*, AALL SPECTRUM, July 2010, 12, 14.
 11. Marian Gallagher, Julius J. Marke, and Arthur A. Charpentier, *I Remember Them Well*, 75 LAW LIBR. J. 270, 272 (1982) (remarks of Gallagher).
 12. *Proceedings of the 65th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries Held at Chicago, Illinois, July 2–6, 1972*, 65 LAW LIBR. J. 333, 373 (1972).
 13. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, Bylaws, <http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Leadership-Governance/bylaws> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

the Social Responsibilities SIS) created the first AALL entities explicitly charged with diversity issues when it established two new standing committees: Status of Women, coordinated by Ann Puckett, and Status of Minorities, coordinated by Marvin Anderson.¹⁴ Anderson, a former Peace Corps volunteer and lawyer for the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights, served as Minnesota State Law Librarian for more than two decades before retiring in 2002.¹⁵ Over that time, he chaired both the Contemporary Social Problems and State, Court, and County Law Libraries special interest sections, and served as president of the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries. For his tireless efforts, AALL presented Anderson with the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award in 2003, making him the second person of color, following George Strait in 1989, to receive AALL's highest honor.¹⁶

On January 7, 1983, at its midwinter meeting in Cincinnati, the Executive Board created a new scholarship for graduate study leading to an M.L.S. degree, with eligibility limited to minority group members.¹⁷ In 1990, AALL renamed this minority scholarship in honor of George A. Strait who, as just noted, was the first person of color to receive the Gallagher Award. Over his long career, Strait served as associate director of the Harvard Law Library; founding director of the Southern, Northeastern,

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14. Jacqui Paul, *Committee and Special Interest Section News*, 13 AM. ASS'N L. LIBR. NEWSL. 8, 9 (1981) (reporting on Contemporary Social Problems SIS).
 15. Michelle Lore, *Marvin Anderson Retires After 22 Years as State Law Librarian*, MINN. LAW., Sept. 16, 2002.
 16. Mary Ann Parker, *Three to Receive Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award*, AALL SPECTRUM, June 2003, at 12.
 17. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, *Minutes of the AALL Executive Board, January 7, 1983*, at 826 (on file at AALL Headquarters, Chicago).

and Antioch law school libraries; and director of the University of Iowa Law Library until his retirement in 1985.¹⁸

AALL finally created a national committee to address diversity in 1985 when President-Elect Bob Berring appointed a Special Committee on Minority Recruitment in 1985 to focus on the Association's stated goals of improving minority recruitment and involvement. After a few years and a name change, the special committee became a standing committee on minorities, a name it retained until 1994–95, when it was changed to the Diversity Committee (and as of November 4, 2016, when the Executive Board approved the committee's request for another name change, it is now called the Diversity & Inclusion Committee¹⁹). As we will hear shortly, that committee has taken on many responsibilities and initiatives in its 30-plus years of existence. For example, on July 19, 1996, at the Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, the Diversity Committee sponsored the first-ever Diversity Symposium, under the co-direction of Yvonne Chandler and committee chair Joan Howland. That first symposium featured presentations, an open forum and panel discussion, and a workshop on diversity issues and training. In later years, it has focused on specific topics such as cross-cultural communication and

18. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, George A. Strait Minority Scholarship, <http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Member-Resources/scholarships/George-A-Strait-Minority-Scholarship> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

19. The committee explained its rationale for the name change in a written submission to the Executive Board. "The addition of the word inclusion represents an acknowledgment of the fact it is not enough to simply have diverse communities, but that actions need to be taken to make the diverse members of our communities feel included. . . . Adding inclusion will help make it clear that AALL celebrates the benefits and possibilities of a diverse, complex membership, and plans to take actions to sustain that richness." Memo from Diversity Committee to Executive Board, "Diversity Committee Name Change," September 29, 2016, available in Fall Meeting Board Book 2016, <http://www.aallnet.org/mm/Leadership-Governance/executiveboard/meetings/boardbooks/2016/110416.pdf>.

affirmative action. Another of the committee's responsibilities is overseeing the Minority Leadership Development Award, created in 2001 to nurture leaders for the future and to introduce minority law librarians to leadership opportunities within the Association.²⁰ The value of the award is shown by the numerous and substantial professional contributions of its recipients. Lauren Collins, Michelle Cosby, Dennis Kim-Prieto, and Ann Lee, current vice-chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, are just a few of the recipients who have already made significant contributions to AALL and the profession as a whole. And I would be remiss if I failed to mention that Ron Wheeler, AALL's current president and author of the *LLJ* column, "Diversity Dialogues," received the Minority Leadership Development Award in 2005.

Carol Alpert of NYU called the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues of the Contemporary Social Problems SIS during the 1985 AALL Annual Meeting in New York City. Over the next decade, the Standing Committee emerged as one of the most active and committed groups within AALL. It was instrumental in promoting non-discrimination policies and diversity in all aspects of the employment and professional life of law librarians. Through its efforts, sexual orientation was added to the Association's anti-discrimination bylaw and to its placement guidelines; a resolution on AIDS in the workplace was adopted by AALL; and the Executive Board canceled the proposed 1998 annual meeting in Denver, due to the passage of Colorado's anti-gay proposition.²¹

20. For a description of the award and complete list of recipients, see Minority Leadership Development Award, accessed http://www.aallnet.org/about/award_mlda.asp (last visited Feb. 2, 2017).

21. Soc. Responsibilities Special Interest Section, Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, Lesbian & Gay Issues, <http://www.aallnet.org/sections/sr/lgissues> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

On July 8, 1987, 35 years after Mercer Daniel was defeated in his bid for election to the Executive Board, Judy Dimes-Smith, law librarian at Howard University School of Law Library, became the first person of color to serve on the Executive Board when she took office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting in Chicago. Prior to the election, she had written that "there must be more minority involvement in every aspect of the profession if law librarians are to serve the larger community. Librarians cannot afford to believe liberal thoughts, while being passively engaged in nonpromotion of minority views. The minority perspective is sorely lacking in AALL and needs to be addressed. . . . More importantly, there are minority members in the organization presently, who desperately want to participate in policy decisions and committee work, who feel their voices go unheeded or unheard. I hope to be a voice for those constituents."²² She was not only that but she paved the way for the many persons of color who have followed her onto the Board, including current member Donna Nixon who is liaison to the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Also at the 1987 Annual Meeting, Mon Yin Lung of the University of Kansas led the effort to form the Asian American Law Librarians Caucus. It aimed to provide a forum for its members to exchange information and to represent their interests and concerns within AALL. The caucus continues to promote Asian law studies and the professional development and recruitment of Asian American law librarians.²³ Over the years,

22. *Executive Board Nominees*, 18 AM. ASS'N L. LIBR. NEWSL. 229, 231 (1981) (candidate statement of Judy Dime-Smith).

23. Carol Avery Nicholson, *Introduction and Historical Overview*, in CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: A LEGACY OF MINORITY LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES, *supra* note 7, at 1, 4; Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, *Asian American Law Librarians Caucus*, <http://community.aallnet.org/aallic/home> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

additional caucuses with similar goals for their constituents have been formally organized, including the Native Peoples Law Caucus in 1991;²⁴ the Black Law Librarians Caucus in 2005, with Dwight King of Notre Dame as its first chair;²⁵ and the Latino Law Librarians Caucus, also in 2005, behind the leadership of Lizette Lopez Garcia of the University of Puerto Rico, and with Raquel Ortiz of Boston University as the first chair.²⁶

2002

Although the story of AALL diversity involves many more individuals, events, and initiatives than I have been able to cover in these few minutes, I have time for only one more highlight. On July 24, 2002, at the Closing Banquet of the 95th Annual Meeting in Orlando, outgoing president Barbara Bintliff presented the gavel to Carol Avery Nicholson of the University of North Carolina. With that simple gesture, nearly a century after its founding at Narragansett Pier, Nicholson became the first African American to serve as president of AALL. Her list of professional contributions is impressive, including serving as chair of AALL's Minority Committee and the Online-Bibliographic Services SIS; president of the Southeast chapter; and co-author of *Celebrating Diversity*, an invaluable book that provides an historical overview of AALL's diversity efforts as well as

24. Nicholson, *supra* note 23, at 4–5; Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, Native Peoples Law Caucus, <http://community.aallnet.org/nativepeopleslawcaucus/home> (last visited Feb. 2, 2017).

25. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, Black Caucus, <http://community.aallnet.org/bcaall/home> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

26. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, AALL Latino Caucus, <https://latinocaucusaall.wordpress.com/about/> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

detailed profiles of many leading minority law librarians.²⁷ Nonetheless, Nicholson later wrote that “my most satisfying and enjoyable position was having the opportunity to be the first person of color to serve as AALL president.”²⁸

CONCLUSION

In his first presidential message published in *AALL Spectrum*, Ron Wheeler wrote that “[w]e have a longstanding and demonstrated commitment to diversity in AALL,”²⁹ a statement whose truth I have tried to demonstrate in this essay. Of course, it is impossible to cover everything, particularly the nuances of the story, in mere minutes, so for those who want to explore further, I have prepared a bibliography that will be included with the essay when it is posted to the Law Librarian Conversations blog.

To conclude, I again turn to Judy Dimes-Smith, who expressed much better than I ever could the importance of diversity in our profession. “[T]he surest way to bring about a change of attitudes is the willingness to challenge old patterns of thinking and behavior. Change will come about when groups in control risk sharing it with others different from themselves. Fear of the unknown keeps our fears intact. We have much to gain by embracing newness. Law Librarianship can only grow from fresh, new,

27. CAROL AVERY NICHOLSON, RUTH JOHNSON HILL, & VICENTE E. GARCES, *CELEBRATING DIVERSITY: A LEGACY OF MINORITY LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES* (AALL Publications Series No. 71, 2006).

28. Frank G. Houdek, *AALL History through the Eyes of Its Presidents*, 98 *LAW LIBR. J.* 299, 344 (remembrance of Carol Avery Nicholson). To read more about the life and career of Nicholson, see Hill, *supra* note 7, at 46–50 (profile of Nicholson).

29. Ronald E. Wheeler, *Shaking Up the Status Quo*, *AALL SPECTRUM*, Sept./Oct. 2016, at 7, 7.

diverse ideas and individuals.”³⁰

Thank you for your attention and patience.

30. Judy Dimes-Smith, *Law Librarianship: An African American Perspective*, LAW LIBR. LIGHTS, Mar./Apr. 1992, at 4, 6.

Appendix

A Selective Bibliography on AALL and Diversity

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