

“Energizing AALL, A Highly Selective and Brief Account of the Contributions of Private Law Librarians to the Association”*

by Frank G. Houdek**

Law Librarian Conversations
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INTRODUCTION

In July 1979, I attended the 72nd Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries in San Francisco. It was my second annual meeting, but my first as a private law librarian. In fact, attending the meeting was the very first thing I did as the new librarian of Lawler, Felix & Hall, a mid-size law firm in Los Angeles which I had just joined after four years as a reference librarian at what was then called the Los Angeles County Law Library, now simply the L.A. Law Library.

To save money, my wife and I stayed with a friend across the bay in Sausalito, so I took the ferry each morning to go into the City and attend the conference. The Fairmount Hotel where the meeting was held was the most elegant place in which I had ever been. And because the sophisticated Tom Reynolds of U.C. Berkeley was chair of local arrangements, there were bottles of red and white wine on each table at the Closing Banquet.

But the most memorable aspect of the meeting for me, the neophyte private law librarian, was the palpable energy I experienced as I immersed myself in all things PLL. This included educational programs, the PLL business meeting, and, especially, the

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inspirational presence of the two private law librarians then serving on the AALL Executive Board, Lorraine Kulpa of General Motors and Stan Pearce of O'Melveny & Myers in Los Angeles.

I begin with this story not to toot my horn as a private law librarian—after all, I left Lawler after three years and became an academic law librarian for the rest of my career—but to provide a personal illustration of an institutional truth. For even as I was energized by the rising tide of PLL 1979, the private law library sector has continually energized the entire Association for years. It is no exaggeration to say that it has been a major driver in the evolution of the AALL.

I hope to demonstrate the truth of this assertion in the following essay that I have titled “Energizing AALL, A Highly Selective and Brief Account of the Contributions of Private Law Librarians to the Association.” Because of time constraints, I can only describe a few “firsts” in the private law librarian/AALL relationship, but even with that limitation many events and way too many names will be omitted. For this, I apologize in advance. But enough with the introduction, let's begin.

1931

To do that, I start on June 26, 1931, in the heart of the Great Depression, when Lotus Mitchell Mills, librarian of the Sullivan & Cromwell law firm in New York City, became the first private law librarian to hold national office when she was elected to the combined position of AALL secretary and treasurer, which she held from 1931 to 1934. In 1933, Mills made history in another way when she wrote the first article in *Law Library Journal* to explore the characteristics of a law firm library and describe the work

of a private law librarian. Titled “Law Librarianship in Private Offices,” Mills’s article noted that “the most distinctive feature of a private law office library is its collection of memoranda of law, prepared in the office.”¹ Given these important “firsts,” it was no surprise that in 2010, a Special Selection Committee made Lotus Mitchell Mills an inaugural inductee into the AALL Hall of Fame as a “pioneer.”²

1948

We move next to 1948, when Elizabeth Finley, librarian at Covington & Burling in Washington, DC, began what became the longest tenure of any individual to serve as AALL Treasurer, eight years, from 1948 to 1956. Like Mills, in 1947 Finley had also written a seminal article, titled “Law Office Libraries,” in which she prophetically stated that “[a] law firm library is the information center and coordinating center of the office. . . . [I]t is in [these] aspects that a law firm library differs from other libraries. . . .”³ As we will see, Finley continued to contribute to AALL in many ways, even after retirement, leading Jack Ellenberger, her successor at Covington & Burling, to recall that Finley “started to work [for AALL] the minute she learned of its existence. . . . [S]he willingly assumed many jobs . . . that were short on glamour but long on detail and hard work. . . .”⁴ The

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1. Lotus Mitchell Mills, *Law Librarianship in Private Offices*, 26 LAW LIBR. J. 125, 126 (1933).
 2. 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.
 3. Elizabeth Finley, *Law Office Libraries*, 40 LAW LIBR. J. 179, 181 (1947).
 4. Jack Ellenberger, *Memorial: Elizabeth Finley*, 73 LAW LIBR. J. 737, 738 (1980).

Association recognized the contributions of this “pioneer of law firm librarianship”⁵ on several occasions: in 1966, with a Special Citation for Distinguished Service to AALL⁶; again, in 1994, with the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award; and finally, in 2010, when she was included in the inaugural class of inductees into the AALL Hall of Fame.⁷

1959

We'll now jump a decade, to 1959, when Jack Ellenberger, then at Carter, Ledyard & Milburn in New York City, first took the national stage. AALL President Frances Farmer appointed Ellenberger as the founding chair of the Association's first-ever standing committee on private law libraries. Explaining the significance of this action, Ellenberger wrote in the committee's annual report that “[a]s a result of the attendance of nearly fifty representatives of firm and company libraries at the 1959 AALL convention in New York City, the Executive Board . . . acknowledged the growing importance of such membership by authorizing the formation of this, the newest of AALL committees.”⁸

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5. Paul D. Healey and Mary Rumsey, *Visionaries in Law Librarianship*, AALL SPECTRUM, July 2003, at 16, 17.
 6. The Special Citation was presented at the Awards Luncheon of the 59th Annual Meeting, July 5, 1966, with President Arthur A. Charpentier presiding. Jack Ellenberger contributed remarks about Finley, and Finley responded. Remarks about the recipients were made by individual presenters, Dan Henke for Marian G. Gallagher, Jack Ellenberger for Elizabeth Finley, and Arthur A. Charpentier for Sidney Hill. These remarks and reply is summarized at *Law Librarianship Panel and Awards Luncheon*, 60 LAW LIB. J. 41 (1967).
 7. Houdek, *supra* note 2, at 14.
 8. *[Report of the] Committee on Firm Libraries*, 53 LAW LIBR. J. 285, 285 (1960).

1961

On June 29, 1961, two years after the formation of the committee on firm libraries, another milestone was reached when AALL President Helen Roalfe presented the gavel to Elizabeth Finley at the Closing Luncheon of the 54th Annual Meeting, held in Boston. With this simple gesture, Finley of Covington & Burling⁹ became the first private law librarian to serve as president. A singular moment in AALL history, especially when you realize that when Finley joined the Association in 1939, there were only two other private law librarians listed on the membership rolls.¹⁰

1962

In the next year, 1962, members of the Private Law Libraries Committee, now chaired by Berneice McDermott of Dewey, Ballantine in New York City, contributed to the development of a groundbreaking book called *Manual of Procedures for Private Law Libraries*, which was issued as number 5 in the AALL Publications Series.¹¹ Finley, who had retired in 1963 at age 65 after 42 years as a law firm librarian, prepared a second edition in 1966 that was nearly twice the length of the original.¹² Decades later,

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9. For a description of the development of the Covington & Burling law library during Finley's twenty-year tenure as its librarian (1943–63), see Elizabeth Finley with David S. Mao, *Recollections of a Mid-Twentieth Century Law Firm Librarian*, 97 LAW LIBR. J. 565 (2005).
 10. The two were Emily Dashiell, librarian, Fidelity & Deposit Co., Baltimore, MD, and Heley May Smith, librarian, Equitable Life Assurance Society, New York, NY. *Members of the American Association of Law Libraries, February 1, 1939*, 32 LAW LIBR. J. 29 (1939).
 11. MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR PRIVATE LAW LIBRARIES (Libby F. Jessup ed., AALL Publications Series, No. 5, 1962).
 12. ELIZABETH FINLEY, MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR PRIVATE LAW LIBRARIES (rev. & enl. ed., AALL Publications Series, No. 8, 1966).

Marie Wallace, by then a national figure in the private law library world, attested to the importance of Finley's work by writing, "I never met Elizabeth Finley but through her book . . . , she was always available, practical, and wise in all the counsel she had to offer."¹³

1964

Two years later, private law librarians played a pivotal role in another critically important "first" for the Association when, on June 29, 1964, the Executive Board opened a fund drive to finance the creation of a permanent Headquarters in Chicago. With a goal of raising \$220,000 by 1967, the campaign was cochaired by two private librarians, Eileen Murphy of the General Motors Corporation Legal Staff and William D. Murphy of Kirkland and Ellis in Chicago. Eileen, who was not related to Bill, explained why she cajoled him into joining her as co-chair: "I thought it would be a good idea to have the financial artist on the committee. [Bill was AALL Treasurer from 1959 to 1964.] My other reason was that, if you had a noisy, wild, imaginative, idealistic Murphy, she ought to be paired with a rather noble, levelheaded Murphy, and the combination ought to be able to do something."¹⁴ Indeed they did do something, for within a year, AALL hired its first full-time paid employee and established a permanent headquarters in the historic Monadnock Building in the Chicago loop, where it remained for 45 years, until relocating just a few blocks away in spring 2009.

13. Marie Wallace, *Mentors as a Picket Fence*, 91 LAW LIBR. J. 251, 253 (1999).

14. *Proceedings of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries Held at Saint Louis, Missouri, June 28–July 2, 1964*, 57 LAW LIBR. J. 309, 326 (1964) (reporting on the Headquarters Fund).

1972

The next contribution to highlight occurred on July 6, 1972. Although several private law librarians had already served as AALL officers, Jack Ellenberger, then at Covington and Burling, became the first to serve on the Executive Board when he took office at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting in Chicago.¹⁵ In doing so, he paved the way for the many private law librarians who would follow in his footsteps, including among others not only Kulpa and Pearce, but also Sue Dyer of Morrison and Foerster; Donna Tuke of Winston & Strawn; Sandy Peterson and Kate Martin, both of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius; Al Podboy of Baker & Hostetler; Karl Gruben of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey; Lucy Curci-Gonzalez of Kenyon & Kenyon; Amy Eaton of Perkins & Coie; and, currently, Emily Florio of Finnegan, Henderson et al.

1976

As further proof of the expanding importance of private law librarians, at its midyear meeting on December 28, 1976, the AALL Executive Board approved petitions for the creation of the Association's first seven special interest sections, including the Private Law Libraries SIS which had evolved from the Committee on Law Firm Libraries begun in 1959.¹⁶ Marie Wallace of Kindel & Anderson in Los Angeles was a prime mover behind the development of the new PLL-SIS, just as she was a year later when she organized the first program for private law librarians offered by a national continuing

15. To read more about the life and career of Jack Ellenberger, see Frank G. Houdek, *AALL History through the Eyes of Its Presidents*, 98 *LAW LIBR. J.* 299, 307–09 (2006) [hereinafter Houdek, *AALL History*] (remembrance of Ellenberger).

16. Am. Ass'n of Law Libraries, Minutes of the AALL Executive Board, Dec. 28–29, 1976, at 492 (on file at AALL Headquarters, Chicago).

education organization, PLI's "The Private Law Firm Library: An Integral Tool of the Law Firm."¹⁷ For this and many other important contributions, AALL presented Wallace with the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award in 1997.

1988

A unique "first" involving a private law librarian occurred on September 1, 1988, when Bill Murphy, now librarian emeritus of Kirkland and Ellis in Chicago, assumed the position of interim executive director of the Association, following the July resignation of William Jepson.¹⁸ This made him the first, and, to date, only law librarian of *any type* to serve as AALL executive director. Murphy had recorded another private law library "first" a year earlier when he became the first to receive AALL's highest honor, the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award.

1992

Carolyn Ahearn, librarian at Shaw Pittman Potts & Trowbridge of Washington, DC, and the fourth private librarian to serve as AALL president, achieved yet another AALL first at the 1992 Annual Meeting when she initiated the Member Open Forum following the general business meeting. The forum allows members to present an item of interest without the usual constraints of parliamentary procedure. Mark Estes of Holme Roberts & Owen in Denver, who became the fifth private law librarian to serve as president at

17. Gitelle Seer and Jill Sidford, *The Evolution of Law Firm Libraries: A Preliminary History*, in *LAW LIBRARIANSHIP: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES*, 77, 84 (Laura N. Gasaway & Michael G. Chiorazzi ed., 1996).

18. *William D. Murphy to Serve as Interim Director*, 20 *AM. ASS'N L. LIBR. NEWSL.* 41 (1988).

the conclusion of this Annual Meeting, moderated the initial forum, a transcript of which was later published in *Law Library Journal*.¹⁹

1994

Since 1994, AALL has periodically sponsored colloquiums bringing librarians and publishers together to discuss matters of mutual interest. As AALL president, Kay Todd of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker of Atlanta convened the very first such colloquium on April 7–8, 1994, to consider the future of electronic information and spark policy level discussions on a variety of issues.²⁰ Todd, who also served as a member of the Executive Board (1988–91) and chaired numerous standing and special committees, has been a tireless worker for the Association. She was elected to the AALL Hall of Fame in 2013.²¹

1996

Another AALL first occurred in 1996 when the Task Force on the Value of Law Libraries, chaired by former Executive Board member Patricia Patterson of Schiff, Hardin & Waite in Chicago, sponsored the Association's first-ever electronic roundtable discussion over a four-week period in May 1996. The topic of the roundtable was "The Future of the Law Firm Library." Utilizing AALLNET, a variety of participants, including librarians, attorneys, information providers, and legal administrators, addressed

19. *Proceedings of the 85th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries Held in San Francisco, California, July 20–22, 1992*, 84 *LAW LIBR. J.* 830, 866–73 (1992).

20. For more information about the retreat, see Kay M. Todd, *From the President*, 25 *AM. ASS'N L. LIBR. NEWSL.* 359 (1994).

21. Frank G. Houdek, *Introducing the Hall of Fame Class of 2013: AALL Honors Brecht, Spinelli, Todd, and Wright*, *AALL SPECTRUM*, June 2013, at 28.

questions about the library's role within the firm, technology, outsourcing, and downsizing the library. Kay Todd edited a transcript of the roundtable which was published in *Law Library Journal*.²²

CONCLUSION

Although there is no end to the contributions private librarians have made to AALL, I've run out of time, so I'll close with a final "first" by Mark Estes, another private law librarian inducted into the AALL Hall of Fame.²³ With the September/October 2007 issue, Estes became the first and, to date, only private law librarian to serve as the editorial director of *AALL Spectrum*. In his first issue, Estes wrote that he "want[ed] each issue of *Spectrum* to energize each member in some way" and that under his direction, the magazine would "explore the ever changing world of law librarianship."²⁴

For me, this commitment to "energize" and to "explore change" perfectly symbolizes both the spirit and the contributions that private law librarians have made to AALL. Fueled by the leaders of the Private Law Librarians & Information Professionals Special Interest Section, I have no doubt that this will only continue. For that reason, it's a pleasure to contribute, even in a very small way through this essay, to today's Town Hall Meeting. Thank you very much.

22. *The Future of the Law Firm Library*, 89 LAW LIBR. J. 99 (1997).

23. Katrina M. Miller, *Introducing the 2016 Hall of Fame Inductees: Mark E. Estes, Hazel L. Johnson, Merle J. Slyhoff, and Frank Yining Liu*, AALL SPECTRUM, May/June 2016, at 39.

24. Mark E. Estes, *Passion and Professional Development*, AALL SPECTRUM, Sept./Oct. 2007, at 1, 1.

Appendix

AALL National Offices Held and Awards Received by Private Law Librarians

AALL President

1961–62, **Elizabeth Finley**, Covington and Burling, Washington, D.C.
1967–68, **William D. Murphy**, Kirkland, Ellis, Hodson, Chaffetz Masters, Chicago
1976–77, **Jack S. Ellenberger**, Covington & Burling, Washington, D.C.
1991–92, **Carolyn P. Ahearn**, Shaw Pittman Potts & Trowbridge, Washington D.C.
1992–93, **Mark E. Estes**, Holme Roberts & Owen, Denver, Colorado
1993–94, **Kay M. Todd**, Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walter, Atlanta, Georgia
2014–15, **Holly M. Riccio**, O'Melveny & Myers LLP, San Francisco, CA
2017–18, **Gregory R. Lambert**, Jackson Walker LLP, Houston, TX

AALL Secretary

1931–34, **Lotus Mitchell Mills**, Sullivan & Cromwell, NYC
1945–47, **Helen M.S. Helmle**, Equitable Life Assurance Society Library, New York
1983–86, **Mary L. Fisher**, General Electric Company Corporate Legal Operation
1986–89, **Gitelle Seer**, Dewey, Ballantine, Busby, Palmer & Wood, New York
1996–99, **Susan P. Siebers**, Katten, Muchin & Zavis, Chicago
1999–2002, **Karl T. Gruben**, Vinson & Elkins, LLP, Houston
2011–14, **Deborah L. Rusin**, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, Chicago
2014–17, **Katherine K. Coolidge**, Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinis, LLP, Springfield, Massachusetts; AccuFile, Inc., Boston

AALL Treasurer

1931–34, **Lotus Mitchell Mills**, Sullivan & Cromwell, NYC
1945–47, **Helen M.S. Helmle**, Equitable Life Assurance Society Library, New York
1948–56, **Elizabeth Finley**, Covington and Burling, Washington, D.C.
1959–64, **William D. Murphy**, Kirkland & Ellis, Chicago
1989–92, **Claire Engel**, Kilpatrick & Cody, Atlanta, GA

AALL Executive Board

1972–75, **Jack S. Ellenberger**, Covington & Burling, Washington, DC
1977–80, **Lorraine A. Kulpa**, General Motors Corporation Legal Staff Library
1977–80, **Stanley K. Pearce**, O'Melveny & Myers, Los Angeles
1978–81, **Mary Fisher**, General Electric Company Corporate Legal Library
1979–82, **Sue Dyer**, Morrison & Foerster; Thelen, Marrin, Johnson & Bridges

1985–88, **Carolyn P. Ahearn**, Shaw, Pittman, Potts & Trowbridge, Washington, DC
1986–89, **Donna M. Tuke**, Winston and Strawn, Chicago; Alert Publications, Chicago
1988–91, **Kay M. Todd**, Paul, Hastings, Janofsky and Walker
1988–91, **Kathleen Larson**, Hazel, Thomas, Fiske, Beckhorn & Hanes
1989–92, **Sandra Peterson**, Morgan Lewis & Bockius
1990–91, **James Hambleton**, Haynes & Boone, Dallas, TX
1992–95, **Patricia A. Patterson**, Schiff Hardin & Waite, Chicago
1994–97, **Patricia G. Strougal**, Labat-Anderson, Inc., Atlanta, GA
1994–96, **Victoria K. Trotta**, Lewis and Roca Library, Phoenix, AZ
1996–99, **Kathleen S. Martin**, Morgan Lewis & Bockius
1997–2000, **Heather Braithwaite Simmons**, General Motors Corporation Law Library, Detroit
2000–02, **Elmo F. Dattalo**, Morrison & Foerster, LLP
2001–04, **Alvin M. Podboy**, Baker & Hostetler, Cleveland, OH
2002–03, **Karl T. Gruben**, Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP
2002–05, **Nina Platt**, Faegre & Benson LLP
2006–09, **Janice E. Henderson**, Lovels LLP, New York
2008–10, **Christine L. Graesser**, Brown, Rudnick, Berlack, Israels LLP, Hartford, Conn.
2009–11, **Janet McKinney**, Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP, Kansas City, Mo.
2010–13, **Lucy Curci-Gonzalez**, Kenyon & Kenyon, New York, N.Y.
2011–12, **Diane Rodriguez**, Hassard Bonnington LLP, San Francisco
2011–14, **Gregory R. Lambert**, King & Spalding LLP, Houston; Jackson Walker LLP, Houston
2012–15, **Amy J. Eaton**, Perkins Coie LLP, Seattle
2015–18, **Emily R. Florio**, Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP, Washington, DC

Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award

1987, **William Murphy**, Kirkland and Ellis, Chicago
1988, **Frank Lukes**, Baker and McKenzie (1953–88)
1993, **Blanka Kudej**, Striker and Striker (1968–73); Gulf & Western Industries (1974–76)
1994, **Jack Ellenberger**, Carter, Ledyard & Milburn (1957–60); Jones, Day, Cockley & Reaves (1960–61); Covington & Burling (1963–78); Shearman & Sterling (1978–94)
1994, **Elizabeth Finley**, Root, Clark, Buckner & Ballantine (1921–42); Covington & Burling (1943–63)
1997, **Marie Wallace**, Kindel & Anderson (1971–82); Latham & Watkins (1982–88); O'Melveny & Myers (1988–95)
2013, **Carolyn Ahearn**, Arent, Fox, Kintner, Plotkin & Kahn, Washington, DC (1975–76); Pierson, Ball & Dowd, Washington, DC (1976–79); Shaw, Pittman, Washington, DC (1979–96); Wiley Rein LLP, Washington, DC (1996–2010)

AALL Hall of Fame

2010, **Lotus Mitchell Mills**, Sullivan & Cromwell, New York

2013, **Kay Moller Todd**, Kilpatrick & Cody; Paul Hastings LLP, Atlanta

2015, **Victoria Trotta**, Lewis & Roca, Phoenix

2016, **Mark Estes**, Holme Roberts & Owen, Denver

2016, **Hazel L. Johnson**, Smith & Hulsey; Aldridge & Norman; McGuire Woods LLP