

## Editor's Postscript: Staying Power

¶1 On the evening of April 14, 2000, I had the pleasure of attending a lovely dinner at the Marriott Pavilion Hotel in downtown St. Louis (right across from the Stan Musial statue and Plaza of Champions at Busch Stadium) celebrating the career of Eileen Searls, retiring this summer after serving as director of the St. Louis University Library for forty-eight years. Former deans regaled us with stories of Eileen's legendary ability to build and maintain a great library collection on a shoestring (and sometimes less than that) budget. Others told of what a superb mentor she had been to students and faculty alike, not just when she was the first (and only) tenured female faculty member at the law school, but down to the present day. We were reminded of the many librarians she had hired, nurtured, and eventually delivered forth into the greater law library world.<sup>1</sup> And some of them revealed how one of AALL's great party-throwers—she is one of only three to have served as local arrangements chair for *two* AALL Annual Meetings<sup>2</sup>—taught them the ins and outs of attending a convention (“sit with people you don't know and make sure you come home with bags full of stuff, including gifts for the staff that stayed behind”).

¶2 I was not surprised to hear these things about Eileen, a charming, high-energy woman who I have come to know well since migrating to the Midwest from California in 1985. Listening to the tributes accorded the co-recipient of AALL's prestigious Marian G. Gallagher Award in 1999,<sup>3</sup> I kept remembering the fifteen years we have worked together in the Mid-America Association of Law Libraries, the Mid-America Law School Libraries Consortium, and the Council of Law Libraries Consortia.<sup>4</sup> Actually what I focused on most was the *fifteen years* part, because that period, which seems like such a long time to me, is less than a third of Eileen's tenure at St. Louis University. Forty-eight years. Now that's staying power, I kept saying to myself. And listening to the speakers, it was clear that

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1. Apologizing in advance to those I will surely omit, the list of Eileen's progeny includes Jim Hoover, Betsy McKenzie, Jim Milles, Charles Dyer, Cossette Sun, Patti Monk, Needra Jackson, and Kit Kreilick.
  2. Eileen Searls chaired local arrangements for the 1964 and 1980 annual meetings, both in St. Louis; Jack Ellenberger (1970 and 1985) and Bill Murphy (1955 and 1987) are the others who have pulled double-duty. And today's reader should remember that these were the years when the locals did most, if not all, of the planning for the annual meeting, without the assistance now provided by AALL's professional meeting planners.
  3. The other 1999 recipient was Bardie C. Wolfe Jr.
  4. Eileen did her usual nurturing on me; needing someone to take over after she finally decided to surrender the reins of the Council of Law Library Consortia, a group she single-handedly had created, she cajoled me into accepting the position by praising my “organizational skills, etc.” so much that I actually believed, for a moment anyway, that I could fill her very large (figuratively speaking) shoes.

her institution had benefitted beyond measure from every one of those years she had devoted to its growth and development.

¶ I was again reminded of staying power when, a few days after Eileen's dinner, I saw an announcement by Lamar Woodard, Director of Information Services at Stetson University College of Law, that he would retire on January 31, 2001, after thirty years of service at Stetson.<sup>5</sup> While changing positions to advance one's career development may not be as prevalent in law librarianship as we usually assume it to be,<sup>6</sup> service spanning forty-eight and thirty years at a single institution is still very impressive—and very thought-provoking. What are the upsides—and the downsides—to staying power? What was gained and what was lost—not just for Eileen and Lamar, but for St. Louis University and Stetson University, too—by their remarkable years of loyal service? I don't have the answers—I barely have the questions—and this postscript is not the time or place to explore either, but as you cross paths with Eileen and Lamar and others of our colleagues<sup>7</sup> who have exhibited such staying power, I encourage you talk with them about their experience. Knowing them as I do, I am sure it will be nothing less than an enlightening and informative conversation.

—Frank G. Houdek<sup>8</sup>

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5. J. Lamar Woodard <woodard@law.stetson.edu>, *Retirement Announcement*, Apr. 18, 2000, lawlibdir-l discussion list, available e-mail: lawlibdir-l@lawlib.wuacc.edu (“I have enjoyed the past 38 years since I graduated from law school at Florida and went off to Columbia for my MSLS. I think being a law librarian is one of the best jobs around and I feel very fortunate to have spent the last 29 years here at Stetson.”).
  6. See Michael J. Slinger, *The Career Paths and Education of Current Academic Law Library Directors*, 80 L. LIBR. J. 217, 226 (1988) (arguing that his study of directors in the late 1980s “contradicts the popular notion that academic law library directors are regularly changing institutions” and that “movement in the profession stops for the vast majority of directors at either the first or second directorship”).
  7. Again, despite recognizing the likelihood of embarrassing omissions, here is a list of current law school library directors who have twenty-five or more years of service at their institutions (the year they became director is listed in parentheses): Eileen Searls (St. Louis, 1952), Betty Taylor (Florida, 1962), Mary Emery (Santa Clara, 1963), Roy Mersky (Texas, 1965), Ed Schroeder (Florida State, 1969), Frank Bae (New England, 1970), Lamar Woodard (Stetson, 1971), David Combe (Tulane, 1972), Noelia Padua (Catholic–Puerto Rico, 1972), Patrick Kehoe (American University, 1973), James Bailey (Indiana–Indianapolis, 1974), Albert Brecht (Southern California, 1975), Laurel Clapp (Samford, 1975), and Jon Schultz (Houston, 1975).
  8. Fifteen years and counting as Law Library Director and Professor of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law Library.