

What movie has had the most influence on your life?

The following responses are available on AALLNET only. For the responses published in the November 2009 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, please see the issue in its entirety.

“It’s tried and true, but I say *Desk Set*. The computer served the needs of the library and info people. It’s also a great example of the need to understand the way the service being used operates and looks at a query.”

Barbara Gabor, senior researcher at Wilmerhale in Washington, D.C.

“*Joe Versus the Volcano*. Loved by few, hated by many, and misunderstood by even more. The sweet parable flopped when it came out but for a select coterie it is the quintessential ‘what am I doing here’ movie. I confess I do not live its central theme but I do think about what it suggests everyday: taking a leap of faith.”

Sid Kaskey, research and information services manage of Florida & Latin American Offices for Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P. in Miami

“*Gallipoli* has influenced me in many ways. It portrayed war as being terrible, gruesome, and selfish, but at the same time there were high levels of camaraderie, grace, and selflessness. It portrayed the journey of a young runner from Australia to his sad demise in Turkey. I was influenced by his running skills (to which I ran a marathon), his entry into the military forces (I entered the military as well), and his happy go lucky attitude towards life as well as his dedication to duty.

“I eventually visited Gallipoli while being stationed in Turkey. The respect that the Turks had and still have for the allied forces during the Great War still exists, and the respect is reciprocated by the allied forces during the annual ANZAC day and Poppy Day. It was a campaign that tarnished the then-growing reputation of one Winston Churchill, a world leader whom I have grown to admire over the years.

“Another movie connected to Gallipoli is *All the King’s Men*, which is about a regiment from Sandringham Palace that was decimated during

the campaign. There is a room at Sandringham dedicated to the regiment. I had the honor of visiting that room and reading about the heroics of those who directly served King George V before going off to battle.”

Edward D. O’Rourke, manager of library services at Baker Botts, LLP in Washington, D.C.

“*Cleopatra* (1963) starring Rex Harrison, Richard Burton, and Elizabeth Taylor has had the most influence on my life as a librarian, specifically the scene of the burning of the great Library of Alexandria. Cleopatra exclaims to Caesar, ‘How dare you and the rest of your barbarians set fire to my library. . .neither you nor any other barbarian has the right to destroy one human thought.’ Now there’s a friend of the library.”

Tracy Woodard, reference librarian at Howard University Law Library in Washington, D.C.

“Well, it might not have had the *most* influence in my life, but *Party Girl* definitely inspired me to go to library school and become a librarian. I had always been interested in working in libraries (the finding, the organizing, and the analyzing always sounded fun), but wasn’t sure the environment would embrace a young, funky girl. I love Parker Posey and her portrayal of the super-funky, hip library clerk Mary made me confident that there can be organization *and* style in the library.”

Dee Dee Dockendorf, assistant law librarian at Virginia State Law Library in Richmond

“No doubt about it: *The Passion of the Christ*. Having been a Christian for so many years, seeing this movie really drove home just how much my God loves me.”

Dianna Carter, librarian

member to member

“The movie that has had the most influence on my life is *All About Eve* from 1950 starring Bette Davis as the Broadway star Margo Channing. The movie revolves around an aspiring starlet, Eve, played by Ann Baxter. Eve will do anything to get what she wants: she lies, pits friends against one another, and uses her feminine wiles to position herself as a younger, more attractive version of Bette Davis by finagling a role as her understudy in a play. The movie also stars Celeste Holm as another one taken in by Eve’s stories and pleas for assistance. She is repaid for her kind acts by Eve having an affair with her husband Lloyd, the playwright.

“The movie is a cautionary tale about human nature. Most people have known Eve in one form or another—someone who will do whatever it takes to ‘make it.’ On one level, I find the movie is a warning about trusting others who seem ‘too good to be true.’ The bigger lesson in *All About Eve*, however, is what Margo takes away from the experience. She had devoted her life and energy to her work as an actress. Through her experience with Eve, Margo discovers that there is more to life than one’s career and that sometimes naked ambition is not very attractive. Margo, in the end, finds a balance for her life—work and a personal life with her boyfriend/fiancé, Bill, the director, who was played by Bette Davis’s real-life husband Gary Merrill.”

Patricia Morgan, reference librarian at the University of Florida Levin College of Law in Gainesville.

“The original *Frankenstein*. We adopted my oldest son Steven, one of the Vietnamese War baby orphans, in April 1975. I met my wife at JFK airport around 3:00 a.m. after she picked Steven up in Denver and by the time we got home to Brooklyn, it was around 5:30 in the morning. I turned the television on and sat holding my new son and watching *Frankenstein*. My son has always been a movie addict, I believe, because of that movie (and later *Star Wars*). He has a phenomenal interest in movies, is now a manager in two movie theatres, and won \$100,000 on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* specializing, of course, on movies. He is

a great kid, and we all still watch a large number of movies in a year.”

Joel Fishman, assistant director for lawyer services and co-director of the Pennsylvania Constitution website at Duquesne University Center for Legal Information/Allegheny County Law Library in Pittsburgh.

“When I first saw Errol Morris’ 1988 law documentary *The Thin Blue Line*, the film had not yet had the effect of freeing an innocent man after 12 years of incarceration. This was before I decided to go to law school, but I remember being shocked at discovering just how far astray the legal system could go. Being a movie projectionist, I later found it immensely satisfying when the film ended up playing a key role in altering the course of justice.

“It wasn’t until the law school where I work now began screening the film for 1Ls during orientation that I got a full sense of how film could be used to teach law. With its hauntingly oppressive Philip Glass score, *The Thin Blue Line* is something of a meditation on how hard it is to escape the wheels of justice once you’re caught under them. It’s always fascinating to see new students grappling with the reality of the ambiguities they will face in their new profession. Of course, as a die-hard film buff, I especially love the fact that I’m at a law school that shows one of my favorite movies every year.”

Alan Pannell, head of reference at the University of Colorado Law Library in Boulder.

“The movie that has most influenced me is *It’s a Wonderful Life* starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. It tells me that life is very much worth living, even when things get really tough.”

Steve Averett, head of reference at Brigham Young University Howard W. Hunter Law Library in Provo, Utah.

“*The Bells of St. Mary’s* (RKO 1945) taught me two important lessons: it is kinder to tell the truth, even if it’s unpleasant, than to withhold it (as when Fr. O’Malley did not tell Sr. Mary Benedict she was being transferred to Arizona because she had tuberculosis) and the power of prayer cannot be overestimated (the nuns prayed that stingy old Mr. Bogardus would give them his building for a new school and he did).”

Mary Kay Jung, director of library services at Thompson Coburn LLP in St. Louis

“Wim Wenders’ *Wings of Desire* influenced my impression of libraries with the scene of ‘divine inspiration’ taking place there. I was a huge fan of Nick Cave and (earlier) Peter Falk—plus, who wouldn’t love bunnies at the foot of the Berlin Wall?”

Victoria Levy, reference/computer automation librarian at Hunton & Williams in Richmond, Virginia

“Roman Polanski’s neo-film noir masterpiece *Chinatown*, starring Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston, and based on real events in 1930s Los Angeles. It was released at the height of the Watergate scandal in 1974 and examines the corrupt connections between wealth and government by using the recurring metaphors of ‘water and power.’ Two lines summarize how hard it is to see through this almost foreign world that exists both inside and outside the law:

“‘Mr. Gittes, you may think you know what you’re dealing with, but believe me, you don’t.’

“‘That’s what the district attorney used to tell me in Chinatown.’”

Michael Reddy, director of research services at Lewis and Roca LLP in Phoenix

“*Shane*, starring Alan Ladd. I watch it about once a year. ‘A gun is just a tool, Marion. Always remember that. . .’

“I read the book as an adolescent, and like it very much. I saw the early 50s film as an adult

and thought they captured the book perfectly. Alan Ladd was at the top of his game at that time, and the supporting cast was excellent. Shane came along and offered help and support for no other reason than it was the right thing to do; even when his help was initially misinterpreted by those to whom he offered it.

“He arrived. He assessed the situation. He took the side of those who, although powerless, were in the right. He didn’t invite trouble, but it came to him anyway so he kicked butt and then moved on. That is the recipe for heroism.”

David C. Clark, law librarian at Lightfoot, Franklin, & White, LLC in Birmingham.

“Wow, I’d have to say none. I enjoy the entertainment value of them but have never used one as a guiding influence. I realize this doesn’t make good copy, but I couldn’t just leave that question sitting there.”

Rebekah K. Maxwell, associate director for library operations at the University of South Carolina Coleman Karesh Law Library in Columbia.

“I think *It’s a Wonderful Life* would be my choice. Even though some may say the storyline was not realistic, it was beautiful to see how the man sacrificed for those he loved—and then with tenderness and in the most creative ways. It was an inspiring tale about remembering what’s most important moment by moment.”

Marianne Sterna, LSA II at the Office of County Counsel for the County of San Diego

member to member

“As a teenager and young adult, the movies *Apocalypse Now*, *Platoon*, and *Full Metal Jacket* all did their part to change my childish views on patriotism and war. I lost the non-questioning fervor of the Audie Murphy and John Wayne kind of films and saw war for what it really was—insane violence, death, and torture that are rarely ever the answer to anything.”

Michael J. Saporito, patron services librarian at the Social Law Library in Boston

“*The Keys of the Kingdom* starred handsome Gregory Peck as Father Chisholm, a missionary priest in China who lived through the Chinese Civil War and later returned to Scotland to minister to troubled boys. He believed that he failed because he never gained the superficial success of his oily false friend Father Anselm, played by Vincent Price. Father Chisholm respected the beliefs of the Chinese people, made converts to his faith and, despite disease, ignorance, and hardship, left behind a church with a school taught by nuns to wait for the revolution. Just think what you can do with patience, humility, determination, and a deep voice.

Anna Smallen, reference librarian for the New York County Lawyers Association in New York