

What is the most memorable speaker or speech you have ever heard?

“My nomination goes to Larry Tribe. Program Chair Sally Wiant invited Tribe to be the keynote speaker for the Opening Luncheon at the 1987 AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago. And while it may be because this was my presidential year, I think it is way more than that.

“The theme of the Annual Meeting was the Constitution—it was the Constitution’s bicentennial after all. So noted

constitutional law scholar and Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Tribe was invited to talk about current constitutional issues. However, due to very interesting current events, Tribe chose a different topic: the nomination of Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court.

“Just five days before, President Ronald Reagan nominated Robert Bork to the U.S. Supreme Court. Despite Bork’s service on the D.C. Circuit, many were opposed to his nomination, as was Tribe. He talked about the constitutional issues surrounding this nominee and how we must oppose someone of this ilk being named to a lifetime appointment on the Court.

“Larry Tribe is not only brilliant but also an amazing orator. At the end of his speech, most of the audience was ready to follow him and march around the ballroom. It was an unforgettable speech.”

—*Lolly Gasaway, associate dean for academic affairs and professor of law at the University of North Carolina School of Law in Chapel Hill*

“The most memorable, captivating speaker I ever heard was Sarah Weddington at the 1992 Southwestern Association of Law Libraries Conference in Lubbock, Texas. It was standing room only in a small hotel conference room, and she painted a picture of her taking on the historic *Roe v. Wade* case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. I can still remember her winding up her

speech with the dry observation that no matter what else she would do in her life, she’d have a reference to *Roe v. Wade* on her tombstone.”

—*Jennifer S. Stephens, librarian at Haynes and Boone, LLP in Dallas*

“The most memorable speaker I have heard is Al (Alfred C.) Haynes, captain of the ill-fated United Airlines Flight 232 that he and his crew were forced to crash land in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1989. Although there was loss of life, a majority of the passengers survived the crash. Captain Haynes not only expertly wove the story together but also made a lasting impression on me about safety, personal integrity, community responsibility, and trust. I gained an entirely new perspective on the safety of various modes of transportation and a greater appreciation for those to whom

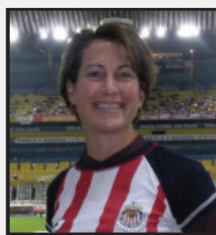
we entrust our safety when we travel. When I wish a friend ‘safe travels’ or ‘safe journey home,’ it is with more conviction because of Captain Haynes.”

—*Katherine K. Coolidge, law librarian at Bulkley, Richardson, and Gelinas, LLP in Springfield, Massachusetts*

“While I have heard and read many moving speeches, there is still only one that I can say had a great impact on me. It was when I was 16 years old, I was with my mother, and the speaker was Zig Ziglar. That one speech taught me how to carry myself with confidence, ignore negative talk from others, set achievable goals, and just enjoy life. During my most difficult personal and professional times, I often think back to Mr. Ziglar’s talk that day. It truly shaped my life, and I have thanked my mother many times for taking me with her.”

—*Angela Smircic, law book coordinator at the Dallas County Law Library in Dallas*

“Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright visited Yale Law School in the spring of 2006. Though controversial at times, her speech on this day was quite captivating and



Teresa M. Miguel

inspirational. Most memorable for me was when she was posed the question, ‘What do you think about the wall being built on the U.S.-Mexico border?’

Ms. Albright responded, ‘I come from a generation that tore walls down rather than build them up.’ I’ve retold and reflected upon this poignant line many times over the years, most recently during the 20-year anniversary celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall.”

—*Teresa M. Miguel, head of foreign and international law reference at the Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Library in New Haven, Connecticut*

For more responses to this month’s “Member to Member” question, please visit www.aallnet.org/products/pub_sp1002.asp.

backfire— continued from page 21

Conclusion

In a world of metrics, the effective librarian is well-advised to collect statistics. Consider carefully, however, the statistics to keep. Avoiding micro-statistics and too much library jargon can help you succeed. Likewise, a solid knowledge of why the library exists in the larger organization, including a well-developed philosophy or mission, is important. It can carry you through the questions of why you are doing what you are doing. Relying on the numbers alone will defeat you if you cannot offer valid reasons for the library’s activities. Also, be willing to discuss what is worth the time spent and what is not. Take the suggestions and re-examine your initiatives and procedures. It is not a complete loss if you have to eliminate a task or relinquish a responsibility. If that happens, try to use any changes in your statistics the following year to show how you have improved in another area.

Time, money, and knowledge gained without sacrificing integrity and accuracy are worth demonstrating through the use of statistics. The key is to know in advance what matters to the organization and to tailor your work—and your statistics—to match those goals. ■

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