

Leading the Way to Empowerment

by Gail Warren, State Law Librarian,
Virginia State Law Library

For many of us, the word "leader" conjures up images of great orators inspiring crowds with eloquent speeches that are remembered for years to come—John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi. Leaders are those with courage to drive profound change, those who break new trails and inspire others to follow.

But what about the likes of Thomas Edison, or Philo T. Farnsworth? Edison—hailed by some as the most important figure of the millennium—had few close friends and spent little time with his family due to his relentless focus on his work. Farnsworth, the quiet, unassuming man who invented electronic video, held more than 300 patents during his lifetime yet has been described as "the forgotten genius."

The fact is, every leader is not created equal.

The Reality of Leadership

It's not just the people with the quotable quotes and the microphones who can change the world. People who can make a difference in their professions—and even in the world we live in—are those who see an opportunity and apply their own unique skills and talents to making it happen.

The vast array of literature on leadership validates an important point—leaders are not just born, they are made. Leadership embodies a range of behaviors, knowledge, and skills—most of which can be learned—that are internalized with practice. Combining habitual leadership behavior with your own personal attributes creates your individual leadership style. Whatever a leader's personality or style, he or she is likely to demonstrate some of the following traits of leadership:

- Ability to listen and empathize
- Good communication skills
- Flexibility and openness to varying points of view

- Ability to work well with, delegate to, and motivate others
- Ability to identify common ground and build consensus
- Good organizational skills
- Creative thinking
- Sense of humor
- Self-confidence
- Willingness to try new ideas and take risks.

Leaders don't necessarily stand out because they are glib and presentable to a crowd. Leaders show others the way by demonstrating passion, competence, integrity, and results. They can be any of us, and they can be all of us.

Leadership Is a Personal Decision

"Leadership can be acquired, although some people are more disposed to developing leadership qualities than others," says Eugenie Prime, manager of Hewlett-Packard's corporate libraries, who cites vision, power, and persuasion as three tenets of good leadership. Prime, the first winner of the annual Dow Jones Leadership Award: 21st Century Competencies in Action, is an outspoken advocate who has led her company to create new business opportunities by using libraries as a competitive advantage.

"Librarianship in particular, and our world in general, would be in a sad state if we had to look for leaders who were born with these qualities," Prime says. "One of the fundamental prerequisites any leader must have is respect for people and an appreciation for others' viewpoints and ideas. If you lack a sense of self-worth, you can't be a leader. No amount of training will make that type of person a true leader."

Prime believes that the fault for librarians not reaching their potential in leadership "lies not in the inadequacy of our budgets, not in the myopia of upper management...not in sexism or gender symbolism, not in corporate restructuring...but in ourselves."

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What is leadership? There are dictionary definitions, of course, but the intangible qualities or characteristics of leaders are what I hoped to capture in this Members' Briefing.

Under the theme of Gateways to Leadership, one of my goals for this year is to recognize and nurture leadership within AALL and the law library community. Leaders are not only those people who have the title of Chair or President. Leaders are found in Chapters, Special Interest Sections, committees, and libraries. Leaders plan programs, initiate or volunteer for projects, write articles, and provide assistance to library users and library colleagues. Leaders are those who step forward to show the way or to fill a need.

Armed with only these general ideas, I turned to Gail Warren for help in developing these concepts into useful tools we could share with AALL members. Gail not only said yes, she took the intangible and made it concrete. True leadership.

Margaret Maes Axtmann
AALL President 1999-2000

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Workshop Advances Special Interest Section Leadership

In November 1998 Margie Axtmann, then AALL Vice President, approached the AALL Strategic Planning Committee with a vision, commitment, and plan to attain three objectives:

- revitalize the Special Interest Sections (SISs) of AALL;
- reemphasize their importance to AALL and its members; and
- strengthen the role of each SIS within the larger organization.

Almost a year later in October 1999, 13 SIS chairs and a handful of others took the first step in this effort with a weekend committed to learning about leadership, discussing the purpose and future of SISs, and working together as a team to identify a collective vision of SIS Leadership.

The mix of experienced and newer SIS leaders, of individual styles, strengths and weaknesses, and a facilitator extraordinaire created an energy both overwhelming and inspiring. The group not only focused on leadership in general, but internalized that knowledge with

personal leadership assessment. After identifying leadership behaviors that they themselves practiced individually, participants split into small groups, revealing their leadership styles to others in the group and identifying behaviors common to the group as a whole. These "group" behaviors were shared with the entire workshop, discussed, and prioritized, with the top five forming an SIS Leadership Profile.

SIS Leadership Profile

Pursue the vision
Build relationships
Lead by example
Administer the "programs"
Motivate others

All had time to examine their attitudes about leadership and their core values, and use both to draft a "personal" leadership statement. By the end of the

weekend, participants had developed a list of actions to ensure personal leadership growth. They also agreed upon actions to ensure the accountability, consistency, and continuity of the SIS vision, including:

- communicating regularly with members;
- incorporating the SIS vision into the SIS Handbook; and,
- restructuring annual SIS Leadership Training sessions to emphasize the importance of leadership and leadership skills.

The success of this meeting will be measured by the personal "investment" of each individual who attended. Their determination and commitment to completion of each step in their personal action plan will ensure benefits, not just for the SIS leader or their respective SIS, but for all AALL members. It does not matter that any one of these individuals arrived at this meeting not thinking of himself or herself as "a leader," they departed a leader with a vision.

Opportunities for AALL Leadership

- Actively participate in a Special Interest Section (SIS)
- Serve on—or chair—an SIS Committee
- Serve on a Chapter Committee
- Write for *AALL Spectrum*, *Law Library Journal*, SIS and Chapter newsletters
- Respond "yes" to the AALL, SIS, or Chapter Nominations Committee
- Volunteer for AALL Committees
- Attend AALL Committee meetings as an observer, even if you are not a member

Leadership Resources

The Art of the Leader, by William A. Cohen (Prentice Hall Career & Personal Development, 1990)

The Leadership Engine: How Winning Companies Build Leaders at Every Level, by Noel M. Tichy with Eli Cohen (HarperCollins, 1997)

Leadership Is an Art, by Max De Pree (Dell Trade Paperback, 1989)

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen R. Covey (Simon & Schuster, 1989)

Online

There are hundreds of thousands of Web sites addressing leadership

generally, leadership skills, leadership style, and leadership training. A sampling is below.

Leader-Values (<http://www.leader-values.com>) With a goal of creating a meeting place, the site includes articles, a book list, slide presentations, a discussion group, and much, much more.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (<http://p2001.health.org>) Click on "Course List" and look for "Leadership Styles" (CTW10), a full-scale course with a trainer module, participant materials, and handouts that can be downloaded.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (<http://www.ascd.org>)

Under the heading "Latest Resources for Teaching and Learning" click on "PD Online" to sample one of its distance-learning programs, and "Try out our sample lessons," for a lesson on "Effective Leadership" that includes a self-assessment on leadership traits.

Leadership IQ (<http://leadershipiq.com>) A book promotion site that includes a "Test Your Leadership IQ" form and suggested "correct" answers to the questions.

For Leaders (<http://www.forleaders.com>) A consultant's resources for leaders, including a "Leading Volunteers" section and "Techniques of Great Leaders," found by clicking on "Motivation & Commitment."

YOU Can Be a Leader!

Among the key elements of the AALL's recent SIS leadership workshop was a briefing on styles of leadership and the opportunity for participants to assess their own personal qualities to formulate a Personal Leadership Model.

The following material, part of a seminar by consultants from Thunderbolt Thinking, Inc., highlights the key points communicated at this personal leadership session. Follow the Self Assessment Steps noted, and use the worksheets provided complete the exercise for yourself.

The concept of leadership may seem daunting, but it's really about discovering your leadership qualities, making a commitment, and backing it up with action. Start by using the tools below to create your own Personal Leadership Model.

Three Components to Leadership

1. The Five "Thunderbolt Spirits" are leadership attitudes that drive you to make a difference each day.

Flexibility: The ability to see from different perspectives and act with agility. Developing a flexible focus allows you to shift constantly while staying on track—an essential factor in being a Thunderbolt Leader who makes a difference.

Awareness: Awakens your mind and prepares you for change. Being mindfully aware of your situation and your environment—inside and out—keeps you from operating as if there is only one set of rules. It helps you see the power you have right under your nose—your own personal power. Thunderbolt Leaders use all their power to make a difference.

Courage: Shores up your faith and makes it easier to break with the past. Embracing courage daily allows you to blast through your routines to free the catalyst within. Breaking the mold requires a fearless spirit of will, resilience, and resolution. Thunderbolt Leaders embrace the risks and open themselves to the vulnerability that's needed to challenge the toughest situations.

Humor: In most people, an underutilized gift. Weaving humor into your daily life gives you a strategic tool to smash through the barriers of rigid thinking. Purposefully funneling humor into your life helps you take your life seriously, but keeps from taking yourself too seriously! Thunderbolt Leaders have fun.

Action: Opportunities materialize when you act in the power of the moment. A can-do attitude allows you to turn all your visions, dreams, and wishes into real outcomes that will help you make a difference. Thunderbolt Leaders take action.

(Self-Assessment Step 1: Rank the top three attitudes, or spirits, that are the basis for your leadership style.)

2. Core Values: What are the principles and values that motivate you to put your time, effort, emotion, and thinking into the work that you do? Discovering your Core Values allows you to carve out your leadership identity and the philosophy of how you think and do each day—as an individual and as a model for others.

(Self Assessment Step 2: Consider and list some of the core values that you have, and that you might use to demonstrate leadership—see "What's Your Leadership Style?" on page 20)

3. Personal Leadership Statement: Articulating a statement is a crucial part of stepping into leadership. It forces you to be deliberate in how you will put into action your Attitude and Core Values. After all, it's the commitment you make and the action you take that makes you a leader!

(Self Assessment Step 3: Use the worksheet below to "Build Your Personal Leadership Model.")

Building Your Personal Leadership Model

Three Essential Steps to Building Your Personal Leadership Model

1. Recognize your own spirit, use your #1 ranked spirit/attitude (noted in item 1 above) to build and strengthen your leadership. _____ will help develop and enhance my leadership because: (complete the phrase or paragraph)

2. Identify your three Core Values:

3. Using your #1 ranked attitude and core values (listed above) draft your personal leadership statement:

Example: "As a leader, I leverage my strengths of humor and action to motivate myself and others. I complement these attitudes by seeking to collaborate with others from whom I can learn and whom I can emulate; in this way, I live by my core values of 1) recognizing and embracing the strengths of everyone around me, from my children to my boss; 2) learning; and 3) stretching beyond my comfort area to grow. In all things, I strive to be honest, to treat others with respect, and to promote a sense of community and mutual support."

Source: Thunderbolt Thinking, Inc., and the book, *Thunderbolt Thinking: Transform Your Insights & Options into Powerful Business Results*, by Grace McGartland. For tools, techniques, articles and case studies on how Thunderbolt Thinking can support you in your Personal Leadership, visit www.thunderboltthinking.com.

What Is Your Leadership Style?

- Motivate
- Use networks
- Often an Individual Contributor
- Concentrate on Tasks
- Encourage Risk Taking
- Require Consistency/Sameness
- Direct Others
- Promote Self-Management
- Seek Partners
- Administer Programs

- Instruct Others
- Apply Influence
- Collaborate with Others
- Leverage Diversity
- Build Relationships
- Communicate Often
- Inspire
- Coach Others
- Become Part of Team
- Pursue the Vision
- Take Courage

- Lead by Example
- Build on Strategic Insights
- Seek Long-Term Results
- Scrutinize Performance
- Create Formality
- Control Complexity
- Experiment
- Gain Commitment
- Involve People
- Think Globally
- Continuously Learn

Leading the Way

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A Matter of Attitude

Perhaps, some observers suggest, it's only their way of thinking that keeps librarians from being seen as leaders. It could be that other people don't view librarians as leaders, because they don't think of *themselves* that way.

An informal survey conducted for this "Members' Briefing" lends surprising credence to this idea. Of 27 past and present AALL leaders who responded to our e-mail survey, fewer than **one third** said they've always seen themselves as leaders. Several said they only recently began viewing themselves as leaders (despite serving in many such roles) and some responded that they still don't! Many of these individuals were elected to national office or appointed to committee leadership positions by their colleagues in AALL, and all had made significant contributions to their profession.

AALL in the Lead

Yet, it is only through the leadership of these individuals, and many others like them, that AALL could have made such tremendous progress—for law librarians, the legal community, and the American public. In its 93-year history, AALL and its members have:

- **Educated thousands of law librarians** at annual meetings, programs, and activities;
- **Proposed national information advancements**, such as persuading Congress to use popular titles for statutes and asking the U.S. Postmaster General to establish a library rate;
- **Testified before Congress** on legal information issues for the past 60 years, and more recently influenced information policy through the AALL Washington Affairs Representatives;
- **Led the legal community into the Information Age** as early adopters of technology, creating and advancing medium-neutral citation as a national standard.

The Value of Commitment

Throughout the history of law librarianship, the commitment of individual AALL leaders and members

made all of these accomplishments possible. Each person found his or her own satisfaction and reward from participating, as do the leaders of today who are quoted below.

"Working with talented, creative people who inspire and energize is easily the best benefit of being a leader," says Sue Burch (Assistant Director and Coordinator of Public Services, University of Kentucky Law Library), who is Chair, AALL Public Relations Committee, and was president of SEALL in 1998-99. "Leadership is all about collaborating with others and discovering the talents in others—whether on a library staff or as part of an AALL Chapter, SIS, or Committee. Being part of this collaborative process—which can result in teaching a class in an innovative way, or planning a conference, or being part of a panel presentation at a national meeting—is one of the more energizing and intriguing aspects of being a librarian/leader," she says.

"The benefits of being a leader include fulfilling one's potential, testing one's character, achieving personal growth and maturity, and serving people. It's also satisfying to achieve common ideals with people of similar values, and experience life in a larger arena through professional involvement."—Frank Liu (Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law, Duquesne University Law Library, Pittsburgh), AALL Executive Board Member.

"Being in a leadership role has introduced me to a wide group of talented people in my profession, whose ideas and practices for their libraries have provided models for me to use to improve my own work environment."—Jean Holcomb (Law Librarian and Director of King County Law Library in Seattle), who is Immediate Past Chair of AALL's State, Court & County Law Libraries Special Interest Section.

"I've found that the benefits of being a leader are the satisfaction of making a contribution to my professional community, and discovering unsuspected abilities and resources within myself."—Christine Graesser (Librarian, Brown Rudnick Freed & Gresmer, Hartford, Connecticut), who is a member of the AALL Committee on Relations with Information Vendors (CRIV).

"Both the individual and the profession benefit when a librarian is involved in the profession. The individual benefits from the opportunity to work with people from different backgrounds, the chance to learn and to create, and the opportunity to keep

one's skills sharpened. The organization or profession benefits because without involvement from its members, there could not be an organized profession."—Paul George (Associate Librarian for Research Services, Harvard Law School Library), Co-Chair, AALL Citation Formats Committee.

What About YOU?

Of course, you might be asking yourself, "What does this have to do with me? I have no interest in running for office, chairing a Special Interest Section or serving as a committee chair. I'm really not a leader. Why bother?" The answer is, if you limit yourself to this line of thinking, it's time to rethink leadership. Instead, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you enjoy the friendship and collegiality you receive through participation in AALL?
- Do you feel good about yourself when someone acknowledges your hard work and perseverance?
- Do you want to make a difference?

If so, you need to recognize your own potential as a leader, whether you aspire to be AALL President, or simply to be a thoughtful, resourceful law librarian. Leadership is more than holding higher office or being "in control"; it has more to do with touching your heart, sharing ideas and respecting others, than building empires.

This "Members' Briefing" is designed to help each AALL member look at leadership in a new way. Many opportunities exist across the organization for individuals to pursue their interests further, to meet others with similar commitment, and to enjoy connecting and growing together. Once you've become more informed about your own talents, consider how you might be able to put them to work to make a difference for yourself and your colleagues.

Everyone has the potential to be a leader. All of those AALL leaders before us had to take the first step. What they found—whether they were coaches, mentors, or managers, whether they led quietly by example or were speaking out at the microphone—were new ways to grow, learn, be challenged, and personally make a difference through leadership. Consider the value you could bring to yourself, your library, and to all of your colleagues if you chose to take that step. Consider yourself a leader!