

Memorial: Joyce Elaine Malden (1936–2006)*

¶1 Joyce Malden, who died on October 26, 2006, a week after her seventieth birthday, had long been an active and effective member of AALL. She was elected to the Executive Board in 1976 and served two terms as treasurer until 1983. During these years, AALL went through the usual growing pains experienced by a professional association as it matures and, as well, had to impel and persuade its members to understand the situation of a smaller organization, operating from a one-room office supported with volunteer help, as it coped with a suddenly expanding and more demanding membership. Joyce was, for about a decade, at the center of this effort.

¶2 Bill Murphy, AALL treasurer from 1959 to 1964, and then president in 1967–68, along with his colleague, Jack Ellenberger, who followed him on the Board and as president in 1976–77, had long been aware of the need for a real “headquarters” for AALL, with a professional and responsive staff to support Executive Secretary Antonette (Babe) Russo. Joyce, before assuming her Board position, had been assigned the task, along with Bill Murphy and Joe Benson, treasurer from 1967 to 1970, of convincing AALL members of the increasing need for a central administrative office and for its assured funding. These two requirements went hand in hand, but the financial support proved a tough one to get across. Joyce rose to the task and over years of persuasion and agitation steered through the necessary dues increases that guaranteed expanded staff and office space in Chicago. The city, home to many professional and academic associations and centrally located in the nation, was fixed on as the best situated for AALL’s head office. If any one person was responsible for today’s modern headquarters and staff and the expanded role of AALL as a center for assistance, programs, and information, it was Joyce Malden.

¶3 During these formative years, Joyce was also the chair of AALL’s first search committee for an executive director; she then oversaw, with a prudent and competent hand, the Association’s finances and investments as chair of the Special Committee on Financial Planning (1982–84) and the Financial Advisory Committee (1986–88). She, and those who worked with her, often during trying and even rancorous circumstances, are deserving of the appreciation of our membership.

¶4 Joyce came to Chicago in 1957 to attend the University of Chicago’s library school—and she never left Hyde Park. In 1959, before graduating, she joined the staff of Chicago’s Municipal Reference Library, a unique city reference organization created by Joe Benson. She succeeded Joe in 1967 as municipal reference librarian, becoming the first woman member of the mayor’s cabinet, and remained

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in this position until her retirement in 2000. Her unusual library, constantly expanding its collection of books, pamphlets, journals, and clippings was really a “special library” more than a law library; though now replaced by the Internet, it was long an important part of Chicago’s city administration. Joyce was greatly appreciated by the first Mayor Daley, and her position remained a part of the mayor’s cabinet through the administrations of Mayor Byrne, Mayor Washington, and the second Mayor Daley. The Municipal Reference Library, whose wing on the tenth floor of City Hall was coveted by the mayor’s minions, was eventually reorganized in 1993, with its staff merged into the Chicago Public Library, an institution for which Joyce had little regard. Perhaps because she had been on the board of the Chicago Public Library System, she opted to remain within the City Hall bureaucracy, and reported to the mayor until her retirement.

¶5 Joyce was an active and participating librarian beyond her work for AALL; she also served on the board of the Chicago Association of Law Libraries as secretary-treasurer and as president, as well as chairing several committees of the Special Libraries Association.

¶6 Joyce was more than “just” a librarian. She was a wonderful cook, truly a master chef. With a kitchen full of gadgets and special pots, she frequently gave really big parties, but she was, as well, a connoisseur of restaurants and a delightful dinner companion, eating everything and never complaining. A particularly appealing aspect of her company was her practice of carefully participating in the wine selection at dinner, taking a couple of sips, and then leaving the bottle for her companion.

¶7 Joyce was a participant in the Chicago art scene. She served on the board of the Harper Court Foundation from 1992 to 1999, and was its president from 1994 to 1997. The foundation was devoted to programs and activities, usually cultural or artistic, benefitting the Hyde Park-Kenwood neighborhood. She served on the advisory board of the Illinois Arts Foundation and was an art collector herself.

¶8 She was a long-time member of the Renaissance Society, a group of artists and collectors whose interests were as antithetical as one could get from those of the Italian Renaissance. Indeed, visitors generally had to be wary of being impaled by one or another piece of abstract sculpture in her living room, and they could be mesmerized by a minimalist (albeit costly) painting on the wall. Her dining table, on the other hand, made of sculpted granite, presented no such dangers.

¶9 Joyce Malden was a lot of fun, a great companion at gatherings, in travel, and at the theater. She retained her sense of humor and positive outlook through a series of illnesses. She leaves her cousin Paula Smith and her family, a host of friends, and two kitties to mourn her.—*Thomas H. Reynolds*¹

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