

## AALL Representatives Expand AALL's Voice, Resources

by Merle Slyhoff

When John Donne penned the words, "No man is an island, entire of itself," I doubt he had any idea of the impact of that statement or in how many ways it could be applied. For example, we can invoke his sentiments to encapsulate the importance of AALL's representatives to related organizations. Many AALL members aren't even aware of these representatives to outside entities or, if they know the representations exist, they don't know what representatives do or how they function.

In 1990, a Special Committee on the *Representatives Handbook*, chaired by Barbara Bintliff with David Thomas and Earl Borgeson as members, created a manual for the Association's representatives. The introduction to the manual contains a brief but important history about the representatives. It informs us that, since AALL's inception in 1906, the Association has recognized that meeting members' needs, as well carrying out the mission of AALL, required maintaining contact with other library- and law-related entities. These relationships were established early and several official representatives were appointed. AALL has continued to value the work of the representatives and has expanded the program over the years.

Currently AALL sponsors official representatives to 22 organizations. As stated in the *AALL Representatives Handbook*:

"Representatives represent AALL; they pursue the interests of the AALL and the profession of law librarianship. Representatives speak for the AALL, and while they can't commit AALL to policies or expenditures, they act as a voice of the Association.

"When a member is selected as AALL representative, that person has the opportunity, in a friendly but unfamiliar forum, to enhance AALL's stature, and to speak, observe, evaluate and interpret on behalf of thousands of law librarians. It is an opportunity for personal and professional growth, but also an assignment of significant accountability to the membership of AALL."

AALL's Strategic Plan includes initiatives that can only be accomplished by maintaining the strong relationships that have been generated by the work of the representatives. These initiatives include:

- "Create opportunities for law librarians to provide leadership at conferences and influential meetings of other law and information-related groups and organizations."
- "Partner with ... other associations to offer continuing legal research education to national, state and local bar associations, and to other law and library associations."
- "Establish a coalition of major library and law-related associations and other nonprofit groups to promote permanent public access to government information from the legislative, executive and judicial branches of federal and state government."

Representatives are an integral part of AALL operations.

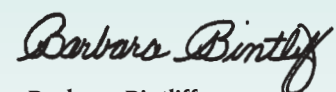
**A**LL's founders must have been prescient. In addition to understanding the need for a law-focused library association, they also realized that they couldn't "go it alone" in the world of librarianship. From the very beginning, AALL worked with other library organizations on projects of mutual interest and concern. AALL's first president, A.J. Small, appointed a committee to confer with the librarian of Congress for the purpose of cooperating in "the publishing of reference lists, cataloging cards, etc.," related to law. "I believe [the librarian of Congress] will be glad to confer with our representatives," Small said (*1 Law Libr. J.* 5, 1908). This was the beginning of AALL's representatives program.

The representatives program is well developed today. AALL has long-standing relationships with a range of related organizations and various library association committees and task forces.

AALL's representatives work on projects ranging from shaping federal information policy to law-practice management issues to serials control. Their venues range from the governing boards of related organizations to small, focused task forces. They influence decisions, serve as communications channels and create a strong network among groups with similar interests. In every instance, they further the mission of AALL and enhance the image of law librarians.

On occasion, representatives are appointed to another group to carry out a specific project. For example, AALL had a representative working with the American Library Association to reconceptualize the library-school accreditation process. There are many other organizations and worthwhile projects to which AALL could send representatives, either on an indefinite or a temporary basis, and the number of the Association's representatives has fluctuated over the years. The AALL Executive Board continually balances the number of representations from which AALL could conceivably profit and the number it can afford.

A.J. Small would undoubtedly be pleased with the direction AALL has taken with its representatives program. His foresight in dispatching AALL's first delegates to the Library of Congress charted a course that has served the Association well ever since.



Barbara Bintliff  
AALL President, 2001-2002

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## AALL Representatives

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### The Representatives

Representatives fall into two basic categories: "ambassadorial" representations and "working" relationships. An ambassadorial relationship is one where it is important to build a long-term affiliation with another organization. These ambassadorial relationships include liaisons with other library associations — such as the **American Library Association**, the **Special Libraries Association** and the **Canadian Association of Law Libraries** — and with law-related entities, including the **Friends of the Law Library of Congress** and **American Bar Association** sections and divisions. Ambassadorial representations are generally carried out by the AALL president or the AALL executive director.

AALL President Barbara Bintliff is our ambassadorial representative to a number of organizations, including the **British and Irish Association of Law Librarians**, the **Canadian Association of Law Libraries**, the **Association of American Law Schools** and the **ABA Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar**. Although ambassadorial in name, "the truth is that they are very substantial," Bintliff explains. "We always give reports of our programs, keeping our sister organizations apprised of our activities. Then, through both formal and informal networking, we create opportunities for joint endeavors as we identify areas of common interest. In many instances, specific projects and opportunities grow out of ambassadorial relationships." This can be seen in Carol Billings' accomplishments as representative to the Canadian Association of Law Libraries and the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians during her term as AALL president. The biennial Joint Study Institutes were established as a direct outcome of AALL working with these two law library groups. The institutes give members from all countries the opportunity to learn about the legal system of the host country while serving as a forum to explore and discuss transnational concerns for law librarians.

Roger Parent, AALL executive director, is the ambassadorial representative to a number of organizations, including the **International Federation of Library Associations**, **Friends of the Law Library of Congress** and the **Special Libraries**

Association. He equates the importance of his relationships with the executive directors of other related organizations to the need of law librarians to network with other librarians. "You build the relationships over time. At times it's informal, then an issue arises and you can call out to your colleagues [in these other organizations] and work together," Parent explains. "It's easy to do if you've built the relationships over the years." As a result, AALL is actively involved and interested in global issues and international relations. One such relationship has spawned the new law librarians' discussion group within the International Federation of Library Associations that will be starting its work later this year. When IFLA held its annual meeting in Boston in 2001, Parent served as secretary for the organizing committee, a direct result of his involvement with IFLA as the AALL representative.

The other group of representatives are those characterized as working relationships. These representatives are appointed by the AALL president and usually serve a three-year term, reporting to the AALL Executive Board and other appropriate constituencies for input and to report on activities. The representatives traditionally have expertise related to the organization to which they serve as a representative. Many of these entities deal with or create policies that affect the work of law librarians, including the **Serials Industry System Advisory Committee**, **ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access**, and the **ALA Interlibrary Loan Committee**. Others serve as a venue to promote the value of law librarians to the outside organization, such as the representative to the **National Center for State Courts**. Over the years, AALL representatives have played a vital role in policies drafted and adopted by many groups, as well as serving as a channel of information both to the outside group and back to AALL.

### Benefits of Representation

The benefits of the AALL representative program are reciprocal: Both the outside organization and AALL reap the benefits of the relationship. For example, **Gail Warren** serves as AALL's representative to the National Center for State Courts. Her relationship with the NCSC has proved to have visible benefits to that group.

As AALL's representative, Warren has been invited to participate in the Assembly of Court Organizations meeting organized by the NCSC. The assembly comprises representatives from associations that gather to discuss current issues confronting the court systems, such as access to justice. Actively participating in these discussion groups gives AALL visibility. Through her attendance, Warren has been able to instill the notion of the importance of the judges' own law librarians. One judge told Warren that, "When I go back [to my court] I'm going to call my law librarian and ask her." Another example of the impact of this relationship with the NCSC is the inclusion of law librarians in the planning and teaching of the Institute for Court Management and the court technology conferences. Through her participation as an AALL representative, the judges have recognized that the "whole profession [of law librarians] can make a vital contribution to education" and the court team, according to Warren.

Other relationships result in AALL's input and participation in policy decisions. The ALA Interlibrary Loan Committee, to which I serve as AALL representative, has, in recent years, been revising the national interlibrary loan guidelines. Law librarians rely on nonlaw collections to meet our patrons' information needs and, therefore, AALL members need to follow the national ILL guidelines when borrowing nonlaw materials. When these guidelines are revised, AALL needs to be an active participant to ensure its members' needs are met. Our work has included a revision of the National ILL Code and other national ILL guidelines. As an official representative from AALL, I am able to solicit input from our members on these important issues and bring them to the table.

**Bill Benemann**, representative to the ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access, says that "it is very important to have AALL represented on the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access" because it is "one of the most important national cataloging committees. We play a major role in deciding what cataloging records will look like nationwide." This committee comprises representatives from all of the large cataloging communities. Its recommendations help shape how

information is displayed in individual library catalogs, on OCLC and RLIN and many major periodical indexes, among others.

AALL's representative to the **ALA Machine Readable Bibliographic Committee** (MARBI) is **Susan Goldner**. The group is made up of people from the technical services, technology and reader services divisions of ALA. "Input from the law library community is crucial here," Goldner explains. MARBI has approved a new format for integrated resources which was originally envisioned as a way to handle Web pages and online databases, sources that are constantly changing and are therefore neither serials nor monographs by the standard definitions. "The law librarians helped them understand that the same is true of looseleaf services," Goldner says. Now MARBI is working on ways to better describe looseleaves. "We no longer will have to make believe looseleaves are monographs," she says.

The **American Library Association's Congress on Professional Education** has held two congresses on education. The first focused on library-school education; the second addressed continuing education for librarians. **Mary Hotchkiss** serves as the AALL representative to this ALA group. This is an instance when another organization sought input from AALL. ALA invited delegates to represent certain groups at the congresses. One advantage to this type of representation is that organizations come together to cooperate in addressing a common concern. With organizations competing for scarce dollars, this cooperation and sharing of ideas proves beneficial. The meetings are "great places to meet people from other types of libraries who were sharing parallel roles and contributing to leadership" in the greater profession, Hotchkiss says. She considers this "cross-fertilization" of library types as an excellent way to raise the visibility of law librarians. She has met people through COPE who comment that they had "never met a law librarian. They value another perspective, as do I," Hotchkiss says. She sees a "universal principle" related to all AALL representatives: "It is better to be a player at the table and in the loop," Hotchkiss explains.

AALL has representatives to a number of ABA sections and committees. **Michelle Schmidt**, representative to the **ABA Law**

**Practice Management Section**, considers the LPM section to be "a really dynamic group, very active and very tight knit ... almost like a family." Although "still finding [her] way in the section," Schmidt has identified projects in which AALL and its members can participate. For example, AALL members could review ABA LPM publications; contribute articles to the LPM magazine, *Law Practice Quarterly*; and volunteer at the ABA TECHSHOW® either as speakers or organizers.

### Time Commitments

Serving as an AALL representative requires a time commitment. Representatives traditionally attend the outside organization's meetings, usually no more than once a year or, in the case of ALA, twice a year. "Representatives usually are required to attend an intense series of meetings within a narrowly spaced period of time," Bintliff says.

This past winter, the MARBI members and representatives entertained nine proposals and six discussion papers. At times, there can be additional, joint CC:DA and MARBI meetings. The ILL Committee has numerous subcommittees, each of which may meet several times in addition to the larger ILL Committee meeting, the ILL Discussion Group and the service provider discussion groups. Overall this constitutes a minimum of 10½ hours of meetings spread out from Saturday through Monday. In addition to the time involved in attending meetings, representatives are involved in activities that include drafting policies and guidelines that require year-round work. The ILL guideline subcommittees, for example, hold lengthy conference calls and conduct business via e-mail throughout the year.

### Forming New Relationships

Over the years, AALL has both added and eliminated representations. The past AALL directories provide a sense of the ebb and flow of these relationships. The 1986 AALL *Directory of Law Libraries* lists 21 representatives, including several, since eliminated, to the American National Standards Institute and one for the U.S. Congress' Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Libraries Access to Automated Data Bases. Thirty-three representatives are listed in the 1992–1993 AALL *Directory and Handbook*; eight to various ALA committees. The number of representatives

changes as AALL responds to issues of concern to the Association's members or the larger profession of librarianship.

Proposals for new representations arise in a variety of ways. Sometimes the representation grows out of AALL's interest in working with another organization. For example, the relationship with the National Center for State Courts grew out of then-AALL President Jim Heller's proximity to the NCSC. As director of the College of William and Mary Law Library in Williamsburg, Va., Heller worked next door to the center. He had worked cooperatively with the NCSC and wanted to see greater AALL involvement with the group. He established a task force on the National Center for State Courts to determine how both sides could benefit from a formal relationship. One recommendation included in the task force's report was the creation of a representative position within AALL, a recommendation accepted by the AALL Executive Board.

In other instances, an organization requests a representative. This may be an all-but-permanent representation, or it could be a relationship for a specific project. The representation to the ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access is all-but-permanent. The **Library of Congress' Special Committee on Foreign Class K** representation, however, lasted for the term of the project. During Kathie Price's AALL presidency in 1983–84, the Advisory Committee on Library of Congress Law Classification was established. This committee, on which Price served as the AALL representative, completed its work in the spring of 2002 with the issuance of a reclassification of religious law materials. Now that the project is completed, AALL's representation will end.

Sometimes the representation is supported by both AALL and the other organization from the start. With the support of ALA leadership, I successfully petitioned the AALL Executive Board to re-establish a relationship with ALA's Interlibrary Loan Committee in 2001. The increasing importance of sharing resources, a proposed revision of national ILL codes and guidelines, and the request from ALA to reinstate the relationship were key factors in the proposal's success.

## AALL Representatives

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What if an AALL member identifies new islands to explore? Are there new groups with which AALL should partner and create official relationships? How are new representations established?

The AALL Executive Board adopted the following policy with respect to representatives:

“Links to other organizations should be created when the professional goals and interests of our members indicate that a liaison is beneficial. To carry out that relationship, a representative should be drawn from the ranks of the members with the expertise in the subject area. The ‘best’ person will be sought. Considerations of such practical matters, such as regular meetings occurring in a single location, might result in efficiency and economy dictating the selection of a member who is near the meeting site, in order to make the representation most effective by full participation.”

The *Representatives Handbook* includes information on proposing a new relationship. It states that “[a]ny AALL committee, SIS, or member may propose that a new representation be established.” A proposal must be drafted and submitted to the Executive Board. The proposal should include, among other pertinent information, a description of what AALL goals would be furthered by the representation, how the representation would help to achieve those goals, a proposed charge to the representative and a description of the organization to which the representation is proposed, including its purpose and objectives. The Executive Board considers the impact of the representative position on the AALL members and then approves or denies the position. If approved, the AALL vice president/president-elect appoints a representative to begin serving at the start of his or her presidency, serving for three years or for the term of a specific project.

Serving as an AALL representative is an opportunity to represent our profession and function as a voice of the Association to outside organizations. As a representative, a member can help shape national library policy, contribute to the development of law-related organizations,

serve as an “ideal” of what law librarians can do, and function as a visible public-relations tool for the profession and the Association. “Representing AALL and the interests of law libraries puts us in a position to influence the future of librarianship, information policy, legal education, and the practice of law. It’s an investment of time, energy and resources that yields a significant return,” wrote then-AALL President Margie Axtmann in her “From the President” column in the November 1999 issue of *AALL Spectrum*. The AALL representatives are one of the most essential outreach programs carried out by the Association. As it is unlikely that AALL will ever be, or desire to be, an island entire of itself, the representative relationships will no doubt continue to grow in number and importance as the profession advances and changes.

For more information on the AALL representatives, check out the “AALL Representatives To Related Organizations” Web page on AALLNET at <http://aallhq.org/public/representatives.asp>.

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