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# THE LAW LIBRARIANSHIP COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

MARIAN G. GALLAGHER \*

Under the quizzing of maiden aunts, very few five-year-olds express the hope of becoming law librarians when grown. Nor have their attitudes toward the opportunities and fascination of law librarianship altered to any discernible degree by the time they begin filling out applications for admission to law school, or reach that advanced stage in legal education marked by interviews with placement officials. This profession is not one which has distinguished itself as a goal; in short, and baldly, neophyte law librarians do not walk in and apply for positions—they have to be recruited.

We have never met a law library administrator who is not familiar with the harassed feeling accompanying the announced departure of a worthy assistant for greener fields (or, if that worthy assistant be a woman, perhaps for the dishpan and Bendix). The college or university placement bureau cannot produce a replacement as for a stenographer, and an advertisement may fetch only a motherly person who wants pleasant and interesting work to occupy her time. If the administrator will be satisfied with a librarian who has no legal training, he can use the placement facilities of the nearest school of librarianship, and rely on the recommendation of his general librarian, thus hardly qualifying for voting membership in the harassment society.

Voting membership for University of Washington law library administrators was established many years ago, with adoption of a policy requiring legal training in assistants as well as in the head librarian. The late Dr. Arthur S. Beardsley, during his term as head librarian (1922 to 1944), recruited young lawyers to assistantships by wheedling, cajolery, and word pictures of security and pleasant surroundings, ably assisted by the persuasive Deans Scheppe, Shepherd, and Falknor. If, after a year or more of work in the law library, an assistant showed sufficient aptitude, Dr. Beardsley encouraged his or her enrolling in the University's School of Librarianship, even though those who attained their degrees displayed an alarming tendency toward transferring degrees and selves to higher-paying positions elsewhere.

Perhaps this tendency, with its resulting turnover in assistants, was partially responsible for the establishment, in 1940, of the law librarianship course at the University of Washington. Certainly Dr. Beardsley had a better than average opportunity to observe the omissions and superfluous details (law librarianishly speaking) in the general librarianship courses being absorbed by his procession of assistants. They were required to study children's literature along with their cataloging, reference, and book mending. They learned how to select fiction for public libraries but they didn't hear a word about noting-up British cases, aids to selection of legal materials, or the AALS Library Standards. As long as the recruitment of lawyers and encouragement of library training has established a roll-your-own policy, the

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law school and the School of Librarianship combined forces to insure roundness, firmness, and full packing, by establishing a separate curriculum leading to a B.A. in law librarianship.

If measured by the number of students it has attracted, it has not been a popular curriculum. Since its inception, nine have graduated, one has taken a position as a school law librarian before completing two minor courses, two will graduate at the end of the 1953 summer session, and four have dropped out, either because of low scholarship or professional inaptitude.

We are not embarrassed by its unpopularity. We attribute this to certain factors not connected with the basic theory of the course, the subjects covered, or our personal peculiarities. We have not invited enrollment, beyond the mailing of a descriptive folder, in the spring of 1952, announcing a change in the type of degree which would thereafter be awarded. Our reluctance to advertise can be explained by the fact that until recently we did not feel we had passed the experimental stage and could abandon doubts about the usefulness of the training to others than our own library's assistants; we recruited only students for whom we should eventually have staff openings. Aside from our own recruits, our classes have consisted of a few lawyers, who without persuasion from potential employers or the promises of positions in the offing, decided that they wanted to become law librarians even if it meant another year in school, and the recruits of two law library administrators who heard of our course and sent us students for whom they had potential openings.

In spite of the fact that most deans and head librarians do not do their recruiting far enough in advance to allow their selectees the opportunity to study with us, we look for expanded enrollment in this latter category, once the advantages of our curriculum over that of the standard librarianship curriculum become known.

Graduation from an approved law school is a prerequisite to enrollment, and completion of the course normally consumes four academic quarters, with a longer time required if the student obtains part-time employment in the law library or elsewhere.

The requirements of a fourth quarter in residence<sup>1</sup> and completion of a research project as substitute for a thesis, were added in 1952, to conform to the School of Librarianship's change from the Bachelor's to the Master's program. We shall award a degree of Master of Law Librarianship, and those who earn it will have completed the following courses (classes marked with \* are taught in the School of Law rather than the School of Librarianship).

History of the Book (3; W and Summer)

Libraries, Librarians, and Society (2; A and Summer)

Libraries, Librarians, and Society (Part II) (2; S)

Directed Field Work (4; S) (1 month full time work in a law library)

Evaluation of Library Materials (4; A and Summer)

Library Materials in the Humanities and Social Sciences (3; W)

<sup>1</sup>The new schedule shifts to the summer quarter law library administration, and selection and ordering of law library materials, thus making them available to persons who cannot take the entire course. Under discussion, also, are plans for summer courses for those who do not qualify for the degree.

## Government Publications (2; S)

## Cataloging and Classification

Organization of Library Materials: Theory and Principles (4; A)

Organization of Library Materials: Comparative Methods (4; W)

Organization of Library Materials: Advanced Problems (2; S)

\*Advanced Legal Bibliography (2; A)

\*Selection and Processing of Law Library Materials (4; Summer)

\*Legal Reference and Research (5; W)

\*Law Library Administration (5; Summer)

The successful functioning of the course has not eliminated all of our difficulties, nor will it do so for those administrators who may send us their potential appointees. We shall still have to lasso our assistants, rather than sort them out of our waiting lists. We shall still have occasional difficulty in locating, at the proper time, willing victims who are industrious, alert, charming, attentive to detail, refined, imaginative, unafraid of briefing for a judge or getting filthy shifting books, dependable, receptive to taking and following orders, able to direct underlings to inspired heights, incorruptible, sincerely interested, attractive (and if women, not interested in persons who think a woman's place is in the home), amusing, cheerful, imperturbable, diplomatic, and Summa Cum Laude.

But here we have found that in time of need a careful scrutiny of our graduating class, and observation of the performance of law student library assistants, seldom fail to turn up one or two who have distinct law librarianship potentials. If then, we can induce them for monetary consideration to undertake apprenticeships in the library, a few months is sufficient time for the recruits to determine their interest or disinterest, and for us to determine whether or not they are candidates in whose fuller packing we might take pride.