

1990

Memorials, Marian Gould Gallagher and Melissa Sue Landers

Penny Hazelton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/faculty-articles>



Part of the [Law Librarianship Commons](#), and the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Memorials

Marian Gould Gallagher

Trying to write anything about Marian Gallagher's life, especially for those who will not have the privilege of knowing her, is like trying to carry milk across the room in a sieve—a lot is lost in the process.

Marian's seventy-five years of living stopped short in October when she suffered a heart attack, but those of us who knew her realize that her spirit and ambitions live on.

Marian Gould grew up in Burlington, Washington, until she went to college at the University of Washington, where she received her undergraduate, law, and librarianship degrees. After two years as Arthur Beardsley's assistant law librarian, Marian left to become the head law librarian at the University of Utah. Though she planned to spend only one year in Utah, she stayed five because she "had so much fun down there." Finally, one night, she recalled walking completely around a Utah reservoir, "trying to make the moon make a path on it, the way it does on Puget Sound. And it wouldn't do it." So in 1944 she came back home with her new husband, Wayne Gallagher. Her career as director of the University of Washington Law Library spanned another thirty-seven years, until her retirement in 1981.

A comprehensive review of Marian's accomplishments would take many pages, but I will try to condense them here.

On the local front, she built a wonderful library collection and gathered a staff to whom service was paramount. Her *Current Index to Legal Periodicals*, started as a current awareness service in 1958 for her faculty, is now sold worldwide and is available on WESTLAW, in floppy disk or paper format, and can be transmitted electronically. Marian was also an active committee member in the local and state bar associations, the local AALL chapter (WESTPAC), and contributed her talents to the University and to library communities statewide. Mrs. Gallagher's close relationship with the local bar endeared her to many and has given the law library a fine reputation locally.

Marian's role as director of the law librarianship program through the University of Washington's library school has had a remarkable impact nationally and internationally. Educating eighty law librarians during her thirty-seven years was no easy task. But she brought charm, wit, professionalism, and practicality to her classroom. Many owe their interest

and success in law librarianship to her guidance and direction. Even those who were not her formal students have been influenced by her knowledge and competence as a law librarian.

On the national front, she was an active member of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, and worked hard to promote professionalism and fun in the American Association of Law Libraries. Marian served as President of the Association in 1954-55 and is the only person to be honored twice as the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. She was also Chair of the AALL Committee on Relations with Publishers and Dealers when *AALL Clearinghouse Bulletin*, the *CRIV Sheet* predecessor, began publication.

Marian served on the President's National Advisory Committee on Libraries in 1967-68 and on other presidential committees and commissions under three Presidents. She held similar appointments under several governors of the State of Washington. Her appointments to many of these library-oriented working groups were significant for at least two reasons: she was often the only law librarian appointed, and she was a woman. Because of her expertise and generosity, she enhanced the legitimacy and stature of law librarians everywhere.

In great demand as a consultant, Marian worked with thirteen law schools in one period of only five years. She served on innumerable ABA/AALS Site Inspection teams, sharing her experience and expertise with others.

If I stopped here, this sketch of her distinguished career would be a very incomplete picture of the real Marian Gallagher. You would miss what I think she regarded as the most important part: her natural inclination to find the humor in most everything. Marian was fun at work or play. She enjoyed life and made the best out of it. Marian was a rabid Husky football fan, loved to play golf, drink, and play poker.

Marian, affectionately known as Mrs. G., was well known for her wit and charm as a speaker or mistress of ceremonies. What many do not know is that she developed stage fright at an early stage in her career and knew she had to do something about it. So she joined the Toastmistress Club and was "cured." What a cure! Her natural wit and timing coupled with experience made her one of the best at her craft. In 1970-71 she gave twenty-nine speeches or addresses!

Perhaps the best tribute is to quote Marian herself. She claimed to want the following characteristics in law librarianship students:

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, . . . amusing, cheerful, imperturbable, diplomatic, and Summa Cum Laude.

Mrs. G. was all of this and more. I am proud to be a librarian because of the kind of person Marian was. She represented the best we could hope to achieve. Though she is gone, she leaves a lifetime of significant contributions and happy memories. Thank you, Marian, for sharing yourself with so many.

Penny A. Hazelton

Melissa Sue Landers

A Hoosier by birth, Melissa Sue (Colbert) Landers spent her childhood in Miami, Oklahoma, where she developed her distinctive drawl. At the time of her death in August 1989, she had been a law librarian for only ten years, but her contributions to the firms and institutions who were lucky enough to employ her were substantial.

After getting her degree in history from the University of Oklahoma, Melissa earned her MLS from the University of Washington in 1978. Her first position was as the associate librarian at Baker & Botts in Houston, and after a short stint with a smaller firm, she became the director of the law library at Baker & Botts. I can imagine the efficiency and dispatch with which that library was run under her management! I am certain Melissa found the complex research and information needs of the largest firm in Houston to be challenging and rewarding. While in Houston, Melissa handled the local arrangements for the 1983 CONELL meeting and was elected vice-president/president-elect of HALL.

Melissa's next job was as an account representative for LEXIS. In addition to marketing LEXIS to law firms in the state of Oklahoma, she provided training to new subscribers—attorneys, librarians, and paralegals. She learned something there that was one of her greatest assets in her position in our library—her skill and ability as a teacher.

In 1984, Melissa was very anxious to move back to Seattle, and she was hired as the AV-Media Librarian in the Gallagher Law Library. Her responsibilities included the overall coordination and provision of videotaping services to support the law school program. What that meant, of course, is that more often than not Melissa could be seen in the hallways pushing or dragging the AV taping cart to a classroom for use. Although she had some students working for her, she often moved the equipment and did the taping herself.

When she took the job, she knew nothing about AV equipment, but, just as she approached so many things in her life, Melissa learned all the details quickly. She became an expert, even at something she didn't

particularly like or want to know about. Melissa once laughed at me when I asked if she was mechanically inclined. "No," she said, "I just learned what I had to know."

During those early years in the Gallagher Law Library, she also worked as a reference librarian and was very involved in our training of law students in the use of WESTLAW and LEXIS.

In 1987 Melissa's superb organizational skills, her ability to coordinate many different programs, and her real service orientation earned her a promotion to a newly created position at the Gallagher Law Library: assistant librarian for public services. She exceeded all our expectations by using her unique talents and skills to strengthen all aspects of public services. Melissa's willingness to learn, her commitment to professionalism, her ability to solve problems in imaginative ways, her desire to be of service to others, and her no-nonsense teaching style all earned her the respect of library users and colleagues alike.

Her talents were beginning to be recognized by others. She had just completed a three-year term on the Board of Trustees of the Seattle-King County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. She published two articles in the last year and was, among other things, on the faculty of the 1989 AALL Summer Institute. Melissa organized and was on the faculty of several excellent CLE programs. Melissa had many good and productive years left—many years of contributing her professional expertise as a librarian.

But to extoll her virtues as a law librarian is not enough. As Melissa's friend and colleague, Linda Will, said in a recent issue of *The H.A.L.L.*, the newsletter of the Houston Area Law Librarians:

Melissa was complex and many-sided young woman who, besides being a law librarian, was a wife, daughter, Oklahoman, horsewoman, golfer, a devout lover of life. It would be almost impossible to list all that was Melissa in a mere mortal newsletter. She could be a real geek who would drag six hardbound gothic novels that she had checked out of the Seattle Public Library to the annual AALL convention. She could be real hep, writing to David Letterman and getting tickets to his show during the next AALL convention. She could be a "Skag Sister," in coke bottle glasses, Clearasil and oversized t-shirt, and she could be a lady, in starched preppy dress, smiling and making those who came in contact with her feel warm and fuzzy and good.

Melissa died while undergoing an experimental treatment for liver cancer. She lived the last nine months of her life as she lived the first thirty-three years—with spunk and vigor. Her sparkling personality and courage are an inspiration to us all. Melissa Landers died too soon by any standard. But we were privileged to know her, and our remembrances make us smile.

Penny A. Hazelton