

Helen in the Court

EARL WARREN*

Someone once noted that the library is the heart of the university. The relationship of the law library to the courts is of equal importance, for the focal point of a judicial system is its laws and decisions and the historical works and texts which facilitate their interpretation and exposition. The value of these materials depends upon their being both comprehensive and accessible. These factors give the good law library its unique importance. It follows that the person vested with the responsibility of operating and maintaining such a law library plays a significant role in our legal system. Helen Catherine Newman had that responsibility as Librarian for the Supreme Court, and she discharged it with great credit.

Some years ago in the pages of this *Journal*, Sir Frederick Pollock had occasion to remark that "[T]he ideal law library and its ideal librarian cannot exist in this world." That is so. But the Supreme Court Library has become, if not an ideal facility for the Court, its personnel, and members of its bar, one that has served them increasingly well; and Miss Newman as the Court's Librarian played a substantial role in making the Library an ever more effective instrument in the furtherance of legal scholarship and research.

She took over her duties as Librarian on March 31, 1947, having served five years as Assistant Librarian. Prior

to that, she had been for about 15 years the Law Librarian of the George Washington University School of Law, of which she was a graduate. Miss Newman possessed a technical competence and expertise in the specialty of her profession which notably qualified her for the important post as Librarian of the Supreme Court, a position, incidentally, which she was the first woman to occupy.

During her 18 years of service as Librarian, the Library's collection of books increased from approximately 125,000 to 200,000 volumes. But this impressive expansion does not by any means tell the whole story of the progress made during Miss Newman's regime. The quality of service rendered by her and her staff kept pace with the increase in the number of books and with the continuing improvement in the Library's physical facilities.

I am gratified that the *Law Library Journal* is honoring Helen Newman with this issue, for no tribute, I am sure, would have pleased her more. Her service to the American Association of Law Libraries was long and distinguished. She held every important position which the Association had to offer. Indeed, when in 1959 she was awarded the Association's citation for distinguished contributions to law librarianship and for outstanding service to the Association, she was aptly described by its then president as "Miss AALL." I am sure that

* The Chief Justice of the United States.

other contributors to this issue will detail her services to the Association which amply justified that informal accolade and that still others will recount her professional accomplishments. In gratefully acknowledging the services which she rendered to the Court, I should like to repeat in part what I said on behalf of my colleagues and myself at the time I announced

her death and the appointment of her successor (382 *U.S.*, at XLIII):

She was in every sense of the word a professional librarian, and in her quiet, dignified manner rendered loyal and efficient service to the Court. She was devoted to the Court, and brought to it many fine qualities which won for her the respect of the Justices under whom she served as well as the admiration and friendship of those with whom she came in contact in the course of her varied duties.