

Reminiscences of Viola A. Bird

Compiled by Patrick E. Kehoe*

Marianne Alcorn**

¶1 Imitation is the highest form of flattery, and I've been trying my best to imitate Vi Bird for thirty-three years. As a twenty-year-old undergraduate, I was hired to work at the University of Washington Law Library. Marian Gallagher was the director and Viola Bird the assistant director; Betty Wilkins was head of technical services, Reba Turnquist was the acquisitions librarian, Mary Hubert and Ann Van Hassel were circulation librarians, and Eleanore Barrows and Flora Meyerson were reference librarians. It was the most wonderful place in the world for a young person to gain invaluable experience. I continued to imitate by attending library school and returning to UW to learn from them before taking a position at Arizona State University.

¶2 Marian Gallagher was very involved in national and international law librarianship activities, while Viola kept the library running like a fine timepiece. She kept peace among the interesting personalities employed there and would wake up one staff member who frequently fell asleep at her desk. (As the current president of AALL, Tory Trotta, my director at Arizona State, also has considerable out-of-town business. I've volunteered to keep an eye on the library. Whenever I do, however, Tory immediately diverts my attention by saying there are cookies in the lounge.)

¶3 One day Mrs. Bird was on a step stool dusting the bookshelves, and when I asked her why the associate director was dusting, she replied that everyone should do whatever needed to be done. Nowadays I frequently move through other departments, noticing items out of place and work needing to be done, but my colleagues suggest I keep right on moving.

¶4 As with her dusting Mrs. Bird felt it was important that she stay in touch with patron needs. She scheduled herself for duty at the circulation/reference counter at noon each day. I remember a law student approaching me and asking who the woman at the counter was. I eased her hesitancy and assured her that Mrs. Bird was the very best, that she could ask her about anything. I've found patrons

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and staff have a certain hesitancy in approaching me also. In my most delusional moments, I pretend it is because I am so similar to Mrs. Bird and they are in awe of me. In my lucid moments I know it is because they doubt they will get anything close to the correct answer.

¶5 Each summer when the berries were in season Mrs. Bird would invite a few staff over for her delicious shortcake. After moving to Phoenix, I tried to copy this but eventually realized I'd never reach her ability and turned to chocolate chip cookie baking instead.

¶6 In the years after I worked for Mrs. Bird we became friends. I know her devotion to her daughters, and I remember her avid UW Husky football fan husband, Win. She's heard my stories of my sons. We compete to see who gets their Christmas letter out first—I've won once in the past ten years. I'd like to find a flaw in this wonderful woman and think I finally might have. She hired me . . . but then nobody's perfect.

Connie E. Bolden*

¶1 Shortly after I arrived in Olympia as the newly appointed Washington state law librarian in the early 1960s, Marian Gallagher of the University of Washington invited me to visit with her law librarianship class and meet the staff of the law library. One of the first people I met was a tall, smartly dressed lady who had an enviable air of dignity and composure. Marian introduced me to the assistant law librarian for reference—Viola Bird. From that day to the present, Viola and I have had what was first an acquaintance but which quickly grew into a friendship. I have been the beneficiary of that friendship for more than thirty-eight years.

¶2 If asked for a position on a subject, she will give her honest, unvarnished opinion. Even if she may disagree with you, she does it in such a ladylike manner that it all seems very pleasant.

¶3 During my career in law librarianship, Viola and I had the opportunity to serve together on numerous committees of AALL and WESTPAC. Never did Viola take the charges given to her lightly or accord them less than her full, undiminished efforts. We also served together on the AALL Executive Board. In 1979, Viola, Marjorie Rombauer of the University of Washington Law School, Sally Grant of Bogle and Gates, Sally Wise of the University of Puget Sound School of Law, Frank Alan of the Westlaw Division of the West Publishing Company, and I shared a continuing legal education panel for the Washington State Bar Association. Viola was active at all levels of legal education, not simply at the law school level.

¶4 Over the years we have shared law librarianship issues with each other and, again, I have been the beneficiary of her sound judgment. As president of AALL in

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1979–80, I began an active campaign to establish the office of executive director of AALL. In the very early stages of formulating these plans, I solicited the opinion of many leaders of the Association. Viola Bird and Marian Gallagher were two of the very first librarians I asked. They were supportive and signed a petition to the Executive Board, along with all other living past presidents save one, requesting approval of a rather substantial dues increase to fund the creation of this office at AALL Headquarters in Chicago.¹ Once again, Viola lent her name and reputation to an effort that has yielded great benefit to AALL.

¶5 Viola has made such a contribution to law librarianship, not only at the national level, but also regionally with WESTPAC and locally with the Law Librarians of Puget Sound. Her professional efforts were not limited to UW either. Upon retiring she had a tour with a major Seattle law firm—Preston Thorgrimson Ellis & Holman (now Preston Gates & Ellis LLP). In that role, she was a valued part of the law firm librarian community in the Seattle area.

¶6 Marian Gallagher used to delight in telling the story of being at some cocktail party and being introduced as a “law librarian.” Later in the group conversation some lady could stand it no longer and simply had to ask “just what does a lolly-brain do?” Marian laughed as only she could!

¶7 The “lolly-brain” thing was just too good to let die, so the UW law librarians convened themselves into a monthly lunch group known as “The Lolly-Brains.” Although neither Jim McArdle of the King County Law Library nor I were ever members of the UW Law Library staff, and thus not entitled to full membership, Viola took it upon herself to invite both of us to the luncheons as “honorary members”—a distinction I will always cherish, thanks to Viola.

¶8 Over the years, Viola has been an influential and much-revered contributor to the profession of law librarianship. The number of Viola’s friends across the United States are legion, and my wife, Elizabeth Anne, and I are immensely proud to be counted among them.

Al Coco*

¶1 When Pat Kehoe contacted me about contributing to a celebration in *Law Library Journal* for Viola Bird who is celebrating her first hundred years, my immediate reaction was, “Wow! One hundred years.” What an accomplishment in itself.

¶2 I met Vi in 1961 when I was a student in Professor Marian Gallagher’s Master of Law Librarianship program at the University of Washington.

¶3 Vi was the “behind the scenes” law librarian who seemed to be omnipresent. I can still see her pushing a cart of new titles to Mrs. G’s office for her to review. It seemed that Vi’s multifaceted roles always fit my particular needs as a student.

1. *Editor’s Note: See Letter from Some Past Presidents of the Association to Executive Board, American Association of Law Libraries* (Jan. 2, 1980), in 11 AM. ASS’N OF LAW LIBR. NEWSL. 79 (1980).

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When I couldn't locate a certain title in the law library, I'd turn to Vi; when I was having problems in Ms. Peterson's cataloging class, Vi was there to counsel me. (As I recall, she told me that although cataloging was very important, I was taking the subject much too seriously.)

¶4 Vi was a true friend of the employees and students. She was interested in our daily lives. For example, she would ask me about my evening job at King County Law Library, about my wife's work as a dental assistant, and would often do a fun-tease about my Cajun accent. She even invited my wife and me for dinner at her and Dr. Bird's cottage on the water. This made me feel so very privileged. Vi knew how to make a lowly student feel that he or she was important. And she had such a positive attitude about Mrs. Gallagher's students, especially about us having an opportunity to make contributions to our new world of law librarianship.

¶5 On one occasion when I arrived for class, she and Ms. Gertrude [True] Wulfekoetter, head of cataloging, were having fits about a recently acquired shipment of books from some South American country because the books were infested with silverfish which were crawling all over. Having dealt with similar problems when I was a library assistant for Mrs. Henke at St. Mary's University Law School in San Antonio, I suggested to Vi and Gertrude that they either freeze the books for a while or have them fumigated. I believe they went the fumigation route. This encounter with silverfish led me to do extensive research about various bugs and varmints in libraries, resulting in a major paper for one of Mrs. G's classes for which I received an A.

¶6 In 1963, on a trip to attend my first AALL Annual Meeting, I sat with Vi on the ferry to Mackinaw Island. We talked about the importance of the AALL meetings, and she advised me on ways to participate in the Association. She suggested that I become a member of some of the committees. Later at the meeting Vi introduced me to some of the key members in the Association. I left that 1963 meeting full of wisdom and inner strength about AALL and the importance of being a law librarian, all thanks to Viola Bird.

¶7 In 1977, when I became president of AALL, I remember visiting with Vi at the annual get-together of Mrs. Gallagher's students which was always held during the convention. We talked about many subjects, and I'm sure I injected at least one Cajun story into our conversation. However, I don't remember ever thanking Vi for her friendship and her advice about the importance of joining those committees. Vi, I apologize that I waited until your hundredth to thank you. But what better occasion to say, "*Thank You, Vi, and Happy Birthday.*"

Morris L. Cohen*

¶1 The most fortunate newcomers to law librarianship are those who have been guided by older and wiser colleagues. Our profession is a welcoming group which has a long

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tradition of mentoring. One of the first people I met at my first Annual Meeting—long before the development of CONELL—was Viola Bird, then herself only a five-year veteran of such meetings. She was at the time associate librarian to the incomparable Marian Gallagher at the University of Washington Law Library, and I was a young lawyer then hesitantly embarking a new career. We hit it off immediately and she began introducing me around, pointing out luminaries while providing short thumbnail descriptions, offering advice, and generally making me feel at ease. She was a great help to me then and our friendship has grown over the years.

¶2 My second position in law librarianship was as associate to Miles O. Price, the distinguished librarian of the Columbia Law School Library, in 1961–63. He and Marian Gallagher were then the two leaders of the law library profession and the two major teachers of law librarianship. As associate librarians to those two formidable figures, Viola and I enjoyed comparing notes on our respective experiences and impressions. Viola had just coauthored her manual on order procedures.¹ It had been used for a 1959 AALL Institute and was now issued as no. 2 in the new AALL Publication Series. Although Mr. Price had written his own guide on that subject,² he gave me Viola's manual with the direction to learn it since it was the new standard for acquisitions work. Like all of her contributions to law librarianship, it was clear, concise, and pragmatic.

¶3 Viola was an invaluable support during my year as AALL president, and I was delighted that her own presidential year followed mine. We collaborated on several projects during those two years. At that time, before the growth of the Association's professional staff, the president and president-elect were the hands-on directors of AALL's activities and programs. It was a delight to work with her and to see how her gentle persuasiveness stimulated the creativity and commitment of her wide network of friends and colleagues.

¶4 For many years, law librarians have been blessed with a rare colleague and friend in Viola Bird. May her grace and wisdom continue to enrich our lives and work!

Jack Ellenberger*

¶1 At this writing, looking back across thirty-two years to recognize and celebrate the longevity and contributions of a distinguished colleague and former president of AALL can challenge memory, even if we contemporaneously played vigorous roles in the work of the Association. Achieving focus across that span, however, becomes easier as I think of everything that Viola Bird has done for us during her long life—in itself a notable and still exceptional accomplishment for anyone these days. Indeed, this year—2005—Viola will be *one* year older than AALL!

1. VIOLA A. BIRD & STANLEY PEARCE, ORDER PROCEDURES: A MANUAL (AALL Publications Series No. 2, 1960).

2. MILES O. PRICE, ORDER WORK IN A LAW LIBRARY (1941).

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¶2 Though I knew Viola slightly from my early AALL experience, a memorable meeting occurred about 1968 when, for some reason now forgotten, I visited the University of Washington Law Library at the very time that Viola won a deserved place on the AALL Executive Board.¹ Viola, you have always had ardent fans. I sent flowers. It seemed to me the *only* thing to do while I was in Seattle and had the opportunity to watch your strong presence in all the law library's work. This sort of personal engagement is now, I think, a rare quality in busy academic settings, but I know that it inspired anyone who worked for you or with you. Memorable, these same characteristics enlightened your leadership of AALL. I shall long remember your 1972 Annual Meeting in Chicago. Will we ever meet there again?

¶3 Viola was an authority in U.S. and Canadian legal bibliography, notably and uniquely compiling her three-hundred-plus page *Law Library Resources in Canada*² in 1975 following her AALL presidency. I pause even now to consider how much time and travel must have gone into that work when others similarly placed and honored could have expected to "put their feet up." Yet, it seems unlikely that Viola could have ever done that. I am reliably advised that in advancing years, she has remained a vigorous and notably productive gardener.

¶4 Viola, it was a joy working with you over the years, and I am honored to salute you on your centenary. *Invictus et Vive Hodie*.

Jane L. Hammond*

A Great Lady

¶1 Viola Bird is a great lady. What a pleasure to write "is" rather than "was" as she celebrates her centennial year.

¶2 Viola is also indomitable, except that as her body has aged she has had to cut back on her physical activities. One of Viola's great passions is the Washington Huskies (the university's football team, as everyone who met Viola soon knew). Only two years ago did she give up the seats for which the family had held season tickets for forty-five years.

¶3 Viola spent most of her career in the shadow of the legendary Marian Gallagher, yet she was able to shine through that shadow. In 1971–72, she became only the second nondirector to serve as president of AALL. Bill Stern, foreign law librarian of the Los Angeles County Law Library, was the first, preceding her by

1. *Editor's Note*: In addition to serving as AALL president in 1971–72, Viola Bird also was a member of the Executive Board in 1968–70.

2. VIOLA A. BIRD, *LAW LIBRARY RESOURCES IN CANADA* (Resource Collections in Canadian Libraries II, Special Studies No. 3, 1975).

* Edward Cornell Law Librarian (retired) and Professor Emerita, Cornell Law School, Ithaca, New York. Secretary, 1968–70, and President, American Association of Law Libraries, 1975–76; Recipient, Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award, 1993.

two years (in 1969–70).¹ When she “retired” from the University of Washington Law Library, she took up another career in law librarianship, becoming a firm librarian for many years. No retirement of knitting and ladies’ lunches for Viola!

¶4 I first met Viola when she joined the AALL Executive Board in the late sixties, while I was secretary of the Board. I was impressed by her acumen, her direct approach to issues, and also her humanity. My most vivid memory of the last occurred on the morning following the close of the 1970 Annual Meeting. Bill Stern had finished his term as president by presiding at the banquet the night before. By morning he had collapsed. It was Viola, along with Babe Russo, AALL’s longtime administrative secretary, who tenderly but firmly took care of him, brought him to the post-convention Board meeting, and helped him until arrangements were made for him to fly back to Los Angeles. Two years later Viola herself was president. She always told me that she took my year to be president, for I was going off the Board after five years as secretary and she thought I should have then moved up to president. I could not do it then because we were in the middle of building construction at Villanova and I did not have time to be AALL president as well. As I told Viola then and ever since, “My time will come” and it did four years later.

¶5 Viola loved to travel and explore the world. With her children, she trekked in Nepal—twice when she was more than eighty years old. She also loves kites, taking me during one of my visits to Seattle to see her favorite open meadow for flying kites.

¶6 So it is my pleasure to honor a great lady, a great human being.

Penny A. Hazelton*

The Legend of Mrs. Bird

¶1 While I had the privilege to learn my craft from Mrs. Gallagher at the University of Washington in the 1976 law librarianship class, I completely missed working with Mrs. Bird! By 1975, Mrs. Bird had retired from the University of Washington Law School Library, had been hired back to manage the move into the “new” law school building, Condon Hall, on NE Campus Parkway, and had started her second or third career as a law firm librarian at a large Seattle law firm. When I came back to Seattle as the law librarian of the University of Washington ten years later in 1985, Mrs. Bird was still on the move in law firm libraries in Seattle! Her retirement from these jobs shortly thereafter meant I had missed her again.

1. *Editor’s Note:* As of this writing, in addition to Bird and Stern, two other nondirectors have served as AALL president: Margaret Maes Axtmann, Assistant Director for Collections and Technical Services, University of Minnesota Law Library, 1999–2000; and Carol Avery Nicholson, Assistant Director for Bibliographic and Collection Resources, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law Library, 2002–03.

* Professor and Associate Dean for Library and Computing Services, Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington. President, American Association of Law Libraries, 1990–91; Recipient, Joseph L. Andrews Bibliographical Award, 1997.



Viola Bird and Penny Hazelton, May 4, 2001.

¶2 Finally, in the late 1990s, I had the privilege of working with her on an important project. I remember her high standards, her willingness to listen to others, her ability to make hard decisions, her direct personality, her gracious manner that made you feel included, and her deep gratitude for her life and its rich experiences. Finally I knew why everyone used her name with reverence and awe. She was completely unwilling to accept anything less than the best possible effort.

Dan F. Henke*

¶1 When I entered the law library profession in 1955 at the University of Washington, I came to know Viola Bird as a kind and helpful student advisor in her role as assistant director. She was *Library* and Marian Gallagher, the director, was *Law*.

¶2 In corporate terminology, while Gallagher was the CEO, Bird was the chief operating officer who kept the library functioning. Unknowingly, for me Bird became the prototype for the three associates who guided and assisted me—Herta Prager at the New Jersey Bureau of Law & Legislative Reference, Jacqueline Bartells at Berkeley and Hastings, and Gail Winson at Hastings—from 1956 to 1991. As in the Armed Forces, they did most of the work and I received most of the credit. Because they were hard workers and possessed superior intelligence, only the “glass ceiling” delayed their rapid progress. At times they had cause for complaint as I assigned a variety of projects to their care, but such assignments served to broaden their qualifications.

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¶3 Bird and Gallagher were a great combination. Bird was inside and Gallagher was often outside as she cultivated law library support in the university president's box at Husky football games, spoke at judicial and legislative events, actively participated in legal and library associations, played golf and drank a martini or two with the faculty, and developed friendships among (and was highly respected by) members of the Washington State and federal judiciary, all while running the University of Washington law library educational program. Little wonder then that Bird was sometimes considered the librarian while Gallagher was "one of the boys"! As time went by, Viola Bird became president of the American Association of Law Libraries and served Seattle law firms with her quiet efficiency and knowledge.

Peggy Roebuck Jarrett*

¶1 Mrs. Bird's reputation preceded her. Like many law librarians, I heard of Mrs. Bird before I had the pleasure of meeting her. In 1987, I took a job as head librarian at Preston, Thorgrimson, Ellis, and Holman—Mrs. Bird's former law firm. The attorneys welcomed me but made it clear that my predecessors, Maggie Chillingworth, who was moving to Hawaii, and Mrs. Bird, who had retired earlier, were both stellar librarians and I had quite a legacy to maintain. I remember seeing Mrs. Bird's handwritten notes in the card catalog and feeling the heavy weight of history and expectation.

¶2 What soon became clear, however, was that history can be a blessing. Mrs. Bird, through her talent, dedication, and the force of her personality, created a generation of lawyers who expected excellent library service and took pride in the collection and staff. More than one partner wandered into the library to tell me how much the firm valued the books on the shelves (and I'd darn well better be a good steward). After a few years in a smaller firm as its first full-time librarian, working at Preston was different. I could do my job without constantly having to explain it. For that, I thank Viola Bird.

¶3 In 1990, I joined the staff of the Gallagher Law Library and once again felt blessed by the opportunity to work in an institution Mrs. Bird helped shape. The first time I looked in the shelflist and saw Mrs. Bird's handwriting, I knew this was home.

¶4 During my years at Gallagher, I have enjoyed each visit Mrs. Bird has made to the library. She brightens my day with her enthusiasm and style. One special day was the new law school building dedication in September 2003. I had the honor of touring Mrs. Bird, her daughter, and two other retired Gallagher librarians, Mary Hubert and Pat Van Mason. They were impressed by the beautiful new facility, but I was awestruck by their collective questions. What a wonderful group of sharp, insightful women. Once again, the blessings of history were made known.

¶5 During a more recent visit, Mrs. Bird discovered that several of us were working on a quilt to hang in the lunchroom. She and her daughter looked at the

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various quilt blocks we had assembled, and a few days later I asked her if she would like one dedicated to her. She chose a pretty blue and green “baseball star” block, baseball being her husband’s favorite sport. She then wrote a lovely thank-you letter and enclosed a little something to help cover the cost of the quilt materials. Her generosity and thoughtfulness brought tears to my eyes. The quilt of Gallagher’s stars will truly honor all the wonderful people who help make this a special place.

¶6 At one point, many years ago, Mrs. Bird told me to please call her Viola. Although I sometimes do, in *Law Library Journal*, for the sake of history, she’s Mrs. Bird, a lady of talent and grace, a role model, and friend.

Jacquelyn J. Jurkins*

My Friend

¶1 Viola A. Bird is a remarkable lady, not because of her longevity, but because of her many wonderful qualities and her contributions to our lives. She makes this world a better place, law librarianship a more distinguished profession, and certainly AALL a better organization.

¶2 I met Vi when I was a student in the law librarianship program at the University of Washington and working at the law library’s circulation desk. Vi was Marian Gallagher’s right hand at the law library. One of Vi’s many hats at the time was to train and supervise the student staff. As a boss she was great! She instilled a work ethic in you by example, yet she was considerate of the needs and demands of your class and test schedule. She always took an interest in you as a person. She was more than a boss, she was your friend.

¶3 When my first AALL meeting announcement arrived, she offered to share a room with me, knowing I had limited funds. That started a habit—from that 1960 meeting until the last one held in Seattle (2003), we shared a hotel room. Each year a phone call would be made by the first one to receive the AALL meeting announcement, asking “Again this year? Do you want to make the reservation or should I?” When she was installed as president in Chicago, she let me stay in the second bedroom of her suite. Later, I was able to reciprocate in New York when I became president. Long after her final retirement, she continued to attend Annual Meetings and make new friends.

¶4 When Vi was active in AALL, she was among the farsighted who worked to create a permanent headquarters office in Chicago, to develop a better scholarship and education program, and to establish better relations with our counterpart in Canada, the Canadian Association of Law Libraries. She spent almost a year in Canada surveying Canadian law libraries and making many good friends for AALL and herself.

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Jacquie Jurkins, Penny Hazelton, and Viola Bird at 1994 AALL Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington.

¶5 Viola is fun loving and has a wonderful sense of humor. She is not above slipping out of a meeting to go out shopping for shoes, or to go to the Playboy Club, a concert, or to find a good place for a hot fudge sundae.

¶6 It is second nature for Vi to extend a hand of friendship. Whenever she saw someone who looked alone or bewildered at a meeting, she approached them, introduced herself, and soon became a friend. She has the ability to make people feel comfortable and part of the crowd. She was a mentor at meetings long before there was an AALL mentor program.

¶7 It is certainly true that Vi has “sand in her shoes.” She is adventurous and loves travel. She has traveled the world, from a safari in Africa to Europe, Russia, and South America, even to Tibet soon after the Chinese first allowed tours. Her friends are found around the world, and she keeps in touch via the Internet. Ask her how long she paid for a second phone line because she bought a Mickey Mouse telephone as a gift to take to a young friend in Hong Kong and for some reason the phone company added the second line charge to her home bill. It is probably her love of travel that explains why she has spent many hours teaching English as a second language to newly arrived immigrants, making innumerable new friends in the process.

¶8 Of all the many memories I have of this special lady, it is her lasting friendship that is the most important to me. I feel most fortunate to know her and to call her friend.

Brenna Louzin*

She Gave Me a Chance

¶1 In 1986 Seattle began to experience a wave of law firm mergers and dissolutions. I lost my first law firm librarian job after only two years. After a lot of networking, I found a temporary position at Preston Gates & Ellis. Maggie Chillingsworth, the library director at the time, was leaving for an extended trip to Asia. While she was gone, Viola Bird would step in and handle Maggie's job and I would fill in on reference. Little did I know that Mrs. Bird had been the library director at Preston Gates for many years and was just getting ready to "officially retire" from Preston Gates.

¶2 I was grateful to have found any professional law library position, but to have landed in so prestigious a firm and to have the opportunity to work with a law librarian of Mrs. Bird's stature was, well, awesome. Especially for someone who was a relatively new East Coast immigrant, and dare I say it, *not* a University of Washington Library (i) School grad!

¶3 While on the Preston Gates library team, I tried to learn as much as possible from Mrs. Bird, especially the way she handled the staff and the attorneys. There was no doubt in anyone's mind just who was in command of the library and the treasure of legal resources at the firm. She knew everything there was to know about legal bibliography. She knew every attorney (and their initials for routing list purposes!), every secretary and receptionist. And everyone called her "Mrs. Bird."

¶4 Mrs. Bird, thank you for taking a chance on me and allowing me to work on the Preston Gates reference staff. Thank you for your tales about law librarianship in Seattle. Thank you for telling me about your love for hummingbirds.

Denyse (Denny) McFadden**

Fond Reminiscences

¶1 Following my graduation from library school in 1976, I had the fate of applying for the same position as Viola Bird at the prestigious firm of Preston, Thorgrimson, Ellis, Holman, and Fletcher. In the kindest rejection possible, I was informed that although I was a fine candidate, I did not stand a chance. During their University of Washington Law School years, many of the firm's influential attorneys had been "raised" by Mrs. Bird, and they simply could not imagine anyone else as their new firm librarian. I've always taken pride in the fact that I was beaten by the best. I'm not sure Viola ever knew that we competed for the same position, but I am sure that I grew to appreciate how wise those attorneys were. Early in my career Viola was a strong and encouraging influence.

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** Director of Library, Research and Central Records Services, Lane Powell Spears Lubersky LLP, Seattle, Washington.

¶2 Fast-forward to more than twenty-five years later. During that quarter-century we shared a wide range of encounters—conferences, lunchtime meetings, newsy Christmas letters, travel tales, birthday greetings, e-mail updates, and even funerals. One of my more meaningful recent contacts with Viola was a delightful “catch up” lunch that she, Maggie Chillingworth Ziker, and I shared in November 2001. Although she bemoaned the fact that she was no longer able to drive, Viola gamely took the bus downtown to meet us. Her wit, compassion, and recollection of people were, as always, finely honed. But what touched me the most was her discussion and insight into the events of September 11, 2001. With tears in her eyes, she expressed her grief for those families who lost someone, and she raged at the terrorists. Her reactions were clear and profound; they were the reactions of a woman who has seen much of this planet and who knows it has so much more to offer. The gifts Ms. Bird has given me are pride in my profession, compassion for the individual, and a sense of joy to be alive.

Nancy Mattox McMurrer*

Zest for Life

¶1 I think what has always impressed me the most about Viola Bird is her incredible zest for life. I had heard about her tenure here at Gallagher long before I met her; and I think, based on how long she had been retired, I expected an interesting, but rather sedate woman. Instead, she was talking about the places she had gone, traipsing around the globe, walking miles to see some remote wonder. Wow! The last time she stopped by the library, she pulled out her digital camera to show us her latest shots of mountain passes in the Cascade Mountains. She just glories in the beauty of the natural world and in the intricacies of what man has created. Sit around and take it easy? Not when there is a whole world to explore!

Lillian Vilborg MacPherson**

From Condon Hall to Canada

¶1 In the 1960s, when one alighted on the third floor of the University of Washington Law Library from the “back” elevator, an ancient cage-like box whose successful progression was always suspect, one looked straight across an open area to the glass-walled office of Assistant Law Librarian Viola Bird. Or perhaps I should say that Viola Bird’s desk was in a direct line with the elevator door. She saw every staff member’s arrivals and departures. This was a definite incentive for punctuality.

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** Law Librarian, John A. Weir Memorial Law Library, and Assistant Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta (Retired), Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. President, Canadian Association of Law Libraries, 1979–81.

¶2 Although she always deferred to Mrs. Gallagher, there was no doubt in my mind that it was Mrs. Bird who ran the place. Amongst other things, she made sure we all understood the underlying “raison” for our being there—the students and faculty.

¶3 She was an imposing figure, tall and straight and fierce. Regularly she put out a call for volunteers to collate the *Current Index to Legal Periodicals*. Leaving our desks, we gathered around the large table in the open area between her office and the elevator and walked around it picking up pages, then stapling them. She didn’t stand over us. She was one of us, walking around that table.

¶4 During my tenure at the University of Washington Law Library,¹ where we greeted each other on clear mornings with delighted “the mountains are out,” I was just a little bit afraid of Mrs. Bird. She was the epitome of the authority figure, clear thinking, firm, principled. And under that strong exterior, she was kind and loving, and protective of the brood of staff and students under her wing.

¶5 When I became the assistant law librarian at the John A. Weir Memorial Law Library at the University of Alberta in Edmonton in 1970, I knew I could not emulate Mrs. Bird in manner and bearing. But I certainly could take from her an unwavering service philosophy, her high standards, and her caring for and loyalty to people.

¶6 Several years later, I was delighted when Mrs. Bird was selected, and agreed, to do a study of law library resources for the National Library of Canada. In this role, she visited law libraries across the country, and met with librarians at meetings of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries and in other settings.

¶7 During this process, I was very impressed with her statesmanship. In a very political, complex situation, Mrs. Bird was able to see clearly the issues, and with the integrity that she displayed in all her work relationships, she produced a valuable document in a conscientious way. In ensuing years the *Bird Report*,² the document she authored, became a foundational reference in the development of Canadian law library collections, services, cooperative arrangements, and policy.

¶8 Viola Bird. Mrs. Bird she was to us as junior staff members those many years ago. Congratulations on achieving your one-hundredth birthday. You continue to be a role model.

Victoria Moor*

¶1 When I was asked to write a tribute to Mrs. Bird to help celebrate her one-hundredth birthday, I thought it was a wonderful idea and that it would be so easy.

1. Bibliographer, 1965–66; Government Documents, 1966–67; Reference Librarian, 1967–68.

2. VIOLA A. BIRD, LAW LIBRARY RESOURCES IN CANADA (Resource Collections in Canadian Libraries II, Special Studies No. 3, 1975).

* Administrative Services Manager (retired), Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington. Ms. Moor was originally hired to assist Viola Bird in the production of the *Current Index to Legal Periodicals*. She subsequently served as administrative assistant to four successive UW law library directors: Marian Gallagher, Betty Wilkins, Robert Berring, and Penny Hazelton.

After all, for the last fifty or more years, she has given so much of her time and her heart to law librarianship. She has made immeasurable contributions to the University of Washington Law Library, to AALL, to private law libraries—not to mention the influence she has had on so many young people entering into the field of law librarianship.

¶2 But as I sit down to write about Mrs. Bird, I find it a much more difficult assignment than I thought it would be. That is because, above all, she is my friend and it is difficult to distill the meaning of friendship into a few words.

¶3 Mrs. Bird (I cannot call her anything but Mrs. Bird, even though she has invited me to call her Viola many times) hired me to work in the UW Law Library in 1971, about two years before she retired from there. During those two years, it began to dawn on me what a special person she was. From the time she hired anyone to work in the library, Mrs. Bird took it upon herself to try to make each of us the best employee we could be. By her example we were taught a strong, service-oriented work ethic. She did whatever needed to be done to make the library run smoothly, without thought of title or status. She never asked people to do what she herself wouldn't do. She swept the floor if it needed it; she sorted mail when the regular mail person wasn't available; at the end of the day she delivered her own outgoing mail to the post office near campus. In addition, she took each of us into the reading room and taught us how to use the digests and reporters and other materials in the collection, under the assumption that our mission as library employees would make more sense if we knew how the materials we distributed from the circulation desk were used. Most of all, I remember being told on my first day of work that if I did not like the idea of serving others, including my fellow workers, the law library was not the place for me.

¶4 I am most happy to say that after retiring from UW, Mrs. Bird made me part of her extended family, a family that includes all kinds of people, from all around the world. Through the years it has become clear that the way Mrs. Bird treated her law library family was the way she treated everyone. She values all people, she nurtures relationships until they become friendships, and through kindness she strives to bring out the best in everyone. She also lives by the old saying, "You can learn something from everyone." And she knows that to learn what people have to offer, you have to keep your mind and your heart open to them. A rare quality.

¶5 Mrs. Bird is unapologetic in her love of God, her love of country, her service to others, and her sense of the importance of community. She has a sincere appreciation for the differences in everyone and respects their privacy, while gently inviting them to open up to her. She gives her undivided attention to whomever she is with and makes each of her friends feel as though he or she is the most important person in her life. She telephones just to chat and to pass along the latest of her often amusing adventures. Her handwritten notes arrive just when a kind word is needed most. She makes special daylong outings to friends who live a little farther away than just down the street. She is genuinely interested in people.

¶6 Perhaps the greatest tribute we can pay Mrs. Bird is to pass on to others what she has given us.

Stanley K. Pearce*

¶1 I first met Viola Bird more than fifty years ago. Our relationship began when I was a first-year law student at the University of Washington working as a student assistant in the law library, and she was the assistant to Marian Gallagher. We bonded early, partly because my wife and Viola's daughter were sorority sisters at Whitman College. With that as a beginning, we became good friends. Viola remained a good friend and a respected colleague as long as I was active in the law library profession. We even collaborated on one of the first of the AALL Publications Series manuals.¹

¶2 Viola was a valued mentor while I was in law school, library school, and later when we were both on the AALL Executive Board together. I was delighted to learn that she was agreeable to Pat Kehoe's efforts to put together this tribute to her in *Law Library Journal*, and particularly pleased to be able to contribute to it. I can think of no one more deserving.

¶3 Others will probably concentrate on her professional accomplishments, which are many, but for my part she remains in my memory as a warm, loving woman who was always there offering support, reassurance, and constructive advice.

Muriel Quick**

A Remarkable Woman

¶1 Like generations of University of Washington law librarianship students, law library staff, law school faculty and staff, and law school alums, I am in awe of Viola Bird. Upon commencing employment at the University of Washington Law Library in fall 1970, much of my "education" fell to her. What she gave my colleagues and me was an understanding of our mission to the institution and a desire to excel in our endeavors.

¶2 Viola Bird is a direct, bright, and determined woman who did not suffer fools gladly. As the assistant director to Marian Gould Gallagher, she corrected, when the occasion arose, situations in need of remedy and kept the library running smoothly. However, she is also a very humble and compassionate person who makes time for everyone in need. And no job was too menial for her! Though an

* Director, Information Services (Retired), O'Melvany & Myers, Los Angeles, California. Member, American Association of Law Libraries Executive Board, 1977-80.

1. VIOLA A. BIRD & STANLEY PEARCE, *ORDER PROCEDURES: A MANUAL* (AALL Publications Series No. 2, 1960).

** Information Specialist, *Current Index to Legal Periodicals*, Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington.

important law librarian, law library staff remember Mrs. Bird's toilet paper maintenance in the circulation desk staff bathroom, and mail sorting when needed. She even participated in the assemblage and mailing preparation of the *Current Index of Legal Periodicals* when staff was "short," and she doled out support and even comfort as needed. She taught us to work together as a team and to support one another. There is no question that she valued her staff.

¶3 We remember her dedication in directing the move to the then-new Condon Hall in 1974—after her retirement in 1973. But did she really *retire*? Of course not! The Canadian Association of Law Libraries invited her to conduct a survey of Canadian law libraries.¹ She then went on to serve as librarian at a law firm then called Preston, Thorgrimson, Ellis, Holman, and Fletcher.

¶4 Nor did age cause Viola Bird to curtail her activities as a world traveler. Into her nineties, she trekked near and far, whether to Russia or to Seattle alone by bus, and even held would be assailants at bay with her cane! No one would ever learn of these things by talking to Viola Bird, however, because she is not self-promoting. But we all thank you, Viola, for the gifts you gave us and will always remember your wisdom, service, example, dry humor, and kindness.

Mortimer Schwartz*

A No-No Librarian

¶1 Seems almost strange, but not too long ago when I was thinking of Marian Gallagher, an image of Viola Bird popped up. At first, I could not understand why, of all the staff members who worked with Marian, an image of Viola would appear. Then the answer became clear. I had been reviewing the list of Marian Gallagher Distinguished Service Award honorees in connection with a special project and Viola Bird was named as one of the early recipients.

¶2 This thought led to others about Vi as I have experienced her. Marian had differing evaluations about various members of her staff that she shared with me, and, as for Vi, the evaluation was one of profound respect for her as a person and equally profound and high regard for her as a law librarian.

¶3 One recollection I have about Vi relates to visits I made to Seattle to consult with Marian or to crossing paths with Marian at AALL and chapter meetings. It seemed that Vi was always there but in a special way. Not appearing with horns blowing and drums rolling, she would just appear and be there, as the saying goes, as a quiet presence. But, as Marian confirmed, Vi would attend to her duties in her

1. See VIOLA A. BIRD, *LAW LIBRARY RESOURCES IN CANADA* (Resource Collections in Canadian Libraries II, Special Studies No. 3, 1975).

* Professor of Law, Associate Dean for Law Libraries, Emeritus, University of California, Davis, Davis, California. Member, American Association of Law Libraries Executive Board, 1966–69; Editor, *Law Library Journal*, 1955–56; Recipient, Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award, 1995.

quiet but very competent way, getting them taken care of most properly. And this was the view that Marian shared with me about Vi.

¶4 My visualizing continued on and I imagined that Vi was a next-door neighbor to me. She knocked on the front door and told me that my lawn needed mowing. Immediately, I went out and cut the grass and groomed the lawn, not out of intimidation, but out of respect and affection. To my way of thinking, Vi is what I regard as a *no-no* law librarian. No frills, no nonsense, just a true professional and a good person to know. I am happy and proud to be one of those law librarians who shared moments with Vi and learned from her.

Leina‘ala Robinson Seeger*

¶1 It’s remarkable—and humbling—to realize that I’ve known Viola Bird (and Reba Turnquist, who continues on the Gallagher staff) for more than half my life, and for the entirety of my years in academic law libraries. I was but a bird-brained fledgling when I was hired into the University of Washington Law Library nest in the mid-sixties, which offered me a flexible schedule while completing my undergraduate degree. Dare I admit that I still have difficulty referring to or addressing “Viola” as such, as the statuesque, imposing then-assistant law librarian was always addressed by her adoring, chattering flock as “Mrs. Bird”? Along with sister adoptees Sharon Minor, Bonnie Oliver, Vickie Moor, Vickie Northington, Muriel Quick, and countless others, I became one of “Bird’s Brood” in the comfortable, nurturing law library nest in old Condon Hall.

¶2 Although I reported directly to former Director of the Law Library, Elizabeth (Betty) Wilkins, who was then the assistant librarian for technical services, everyone interacted closely with Viola on a daily basis. She managed the day-to-day operations of the law library and its staff of diverse personalities. Librarians and staff alike turned to her for advice, troubleshooting, problem solving, coalition building, whining, and the like. Without question, Viola was the *go-to* person in the library.

¶3 Cross-training was an imperative at UW then, and all staffers in technical services were assigned regular shifts at the circulation counter and, eventually, as substitute help at the reference desk. Even with the support of the outstanding reference librarians on staff, we often sought out the guidance of our Legal Eagle when reference inquiries challenged us.

¶4 Viola coordinated the weekly publication and dissemination of the *Current Index to Legal Publications*, and we had ample opportunity to bond each Friday during the production-line collation and envelope-stuffing of the mimeographed publication. This was a time for all of us to catch up on happenings within the law school, as well as in our personal lives, and a time for us to be regaled with droll humor and tales from our head Bird.

* Law Librarian and Associate Professor of Law, University of Hawaii, William S. Richardson School of Law, Honolulu, Hawaii.

¶5 She was there when I was engaged, married, went off to teach English as a second language in Japan, returned to work in the comparative law department, and bore my daughter Maile. During my part-time working mom phase, I shared an office with Vickie Moor next door to Viola's, where I input entries (on paper tape!) for the monthly issues of the *Current Index to Legal and Law-Related Publications*, which was compiled and edited by Betty Wilkins, with loads of input from Reba Turnquist and Laura Mahoney. Viola engaged Vickie and me with her observations and commentary on people and events, and entertained us with her constant stream of amusing asides.

¶6 Memorable incidents included her escorting a startled, Halloween-costumed law student, outfitted in a prototype Darth Vader get-up, into the staff area to meet Marian Gallagher, on the pretext that Mrs. G loved to meet "visiting dignitaries." Another occurred when the creaky old staff elevator, directly across from Viola's office, lurched to a standstill between floors, trapping Viola within. Repair service was not forthcoming for a couple of hours, but Viola made light of the situation by saying it gave her a chance to sit down on the stool in the elevator and take a breather for the first time that day.

¶7 Writing this tribute stirs up feelings of awe and gratitude, not to mention smiles, about sharing good times in an exceptional learning community. I am blessed to have apprenticed and been nurtured by such an admirable group of strong, independent women who practiced law librarianship with professionalism, passion, and laughter, while still managing to maintain rich, balanced personal lives. From all of them, but especially Viola, Marian, and Betty, I learned that humor and laughter are essential, necessary ingredients in one's work, in the workplace, and in one's personal life. From them, I inherited the highest standards of providing customer service, driven purely from the desire to serve their clientele, rather than by peer-driven competition. From them, I witnessed and experienced the value and bond of strong working relationships that migrate into lasting friendships. For all of this, I join the chorus of admirers in saluting Viola Bird for her years of unparalleled leadership, mentoring, and friendship, and wish her a second century that tops her first.

Jane Stewart*

¶106 The invitation is ominous, a tribute to Viola Bird.

¶107 I first met Vi in the classroom. I took her legal reference class in 1972. It was the beginning of a career for me and I had the perfect mentor. We crossed and worked parallel paths in our professional activities for several years. We worked together and confided frequently. A friendship developed that included more than law librarianship. We were both involved in "Literacy Action" and shared a goal of lifelong learning.

* A professional and personal friend of Viola Bird, the author is a former Seattle law firm librarian who now, together with her husband, owns and operates the McComb Road Nursery in Sequim, Washington.

¶108 Vi teaches by example: she is patient, she is stable, and she listens. When we listen, we learn, we grow, and we change. Viola Bird still changes. When we meet, she has new ideas, experiences, and visions.

¶109 I often wished we had met as students, but now realize we did—we are!

Viola Bird is my friend
 Viola Bird is my pal
 We share our lives with truth and bond
 We laugh we cry we sing a song
 Law librarians we have been
 But there's more; we're kind' a kin
 She is smart, and kind, with humor and wit
 We walk, we talk, we smile, we sit
 Lucky me, I have a friend
 That is all, the end

Erwin C. Surrency*

Saluting Viola Bird

¶1 It is difficult to remember when a friend first walked into your life. Just when I first met Viola is a hazy memory, but slowly, through contacts at AALL conventions, a close friendship ripens, and so it is with Viola Bird.

¶2 She was assistant to the legendary Marian Gallagher at the University of Washington and participated in its graduate program in library science for law librarians. Those who had the opportunity to attend this program remember her conducting some of the classes and how effective she was in legal bibliography.

¶3 When Viola joined AALL in the 1950s, she became active in its affairs, frequently participating as a member of its committees. In recognition of her many contributions, she was later elected president in 1971. Anyone who accepted these national offices had to become personally involved in administering the Association because it had no headquarters; one's parent institution had to support these officers by allowing each time off and extra support. Planning for the convention required voluminous correspondence with the local arrangements and program chairpersons. It was fortunate that the Association had members who would give their time and energy to making AALL a successful professional organization. Viola's administration as president was very successful for this was a time of transition as AALL became more involved in social issues such as providing law libraries for prisoners.

¶4 I remember Viola as being stately but friendly. It was a pleasure to talk with her at the conventions. She had a pleasant way of putting one at ease and was interested in what others had to say when discussing topic of current interest to law librarians.

* Professor of Law and Law Library Director Emeritus, University of Georgia School of Law, Athens, Georgia. President, American Association of Law Libraries, 1973–74.

¶5 On this occasion, Viola, we who benefited from this association salute you, wish you well, and say, thanks for your friendship!

Betty Taylor*

¶1 Viola Bird and I first became acquainted while attending the AALL Annual Meetings forty years ago. She always welcomed me and inquired about my activities as a new law library director. She listened patiently while I talked about the future of technology in libraries.

¶2 In the years between 1963 and 1970 I became involved in computer technology on our campus and attended AALL computer technology committee meetings at the conventions. I still remember the thrill it was to receive a letter in 1970 from Viola, incoming president of AALL, appointing me to the Automation and Scientific Development Committee. The following year, 1971–72, she appointed me to serve on the Task Force for the Study of Legal Research, a joint program of AALL, the Association of American Law Schools, and the American Bar Association. During the two-year period that the task force met, evaluating the potential for conducting legal research with the aid of computers, I kept her informed of the latest developments.

¶3 While Viola and I had little contact after her presidency, we always had cordial visits at conventions, and I would update her on the current progress of computer technology. I shall always be grateful to Viola Bird for the appointments to computer technology committees and the contacts that I made with librarians and lawyers. Through association with individuals who played a major role in establishing computer technology in the legal field, my lifetime career in law librarianship and, incidentally, the law library that I directed, were enriched beyond all expectations. Many thanks to Viola Bird for her role in launching me on this lifetime ambition.

¶4 Happy one-hundredth birthday, Viola!

Reba Turnquist**

¶1 Whenever I've been stuck in a slow-moving checkout line and have sneaked a peek at the Most Unforgettable Person section of *Reader's Digest*, only one person has come to mind: Viola Bird, the Mrs. Pollifax of the law library (although she has never worked for the CIA—as far as I know). There's Mrs. Bird, riding the Siberian Express, standing atop the Great Wall, at Luxor, Petra, Tibet, Tanzania, viewing the Great

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** Collection Development Librarian, Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington.

Barrier Reef, and crawling to the shore in Mexico after her excursion boat swamped while attempting to dock. Only Antarctica has eluded her—at least, so far.

¶2 I met Mrs. Bird when I came to work at the Gallagher Law Library. She was Mrs. Gallagher’s right-hand person, and the two of them made the newest library tech feel a real part of the team and take pride in helping maintain the library’s reputation for service.

¶3 While we were all expected to work hard, Mrs. Gallagher also wanted us to enjoy lighter moments and hearing of Mrs. Bird’s doings helped supply these:

- Mrs. Bird grew up in a home where her father was moved to say “By jolly” when having a frustrating round of golf. He came home and announced he was not going to play anymore because when something caused one to swear it was time to quit. So it is no surprise that Mrs. Bird’s decorum puts some of the rest of us to shame.
- To those who don’t know her, Mrs. Bird might appear quite stern. At a movie, she found herself behind a group of noisy teenagers. Finally, exasperated, she grabbed the semirecliner seat of the boy in front of her, pushed it down, and, putting her face about six inches above his, said “Some of us would like to listen to the movie, not you” and yanked the seat back up. They all sat like statues for the rest of the show.
- One time a driver made a right-hand turn without checking and found Mrs. Bird sprawled atop the hood staring at him through the windshield. He was so unnerved he slammed on the brakes, depositing her on the curb. After yelling a hurried “Are you all right?” out the window, he immediately stepped on the gas and made his escape. Mrs. Bird said she felt like a “deer being brought home during hunting season.”

¶4 But to those who know her, she is anything but stern. As someone new to Seattle, I was introduced to Vancouver, British Columbia, by Dr. and Mrs. Bird and joined them at university and Monday night football games. In later years an annual highlight was going to her house for strawberry shortcake the size of a dinner plate. Those were very good times.

¶5 Mrs. Bird was more involved with *all* the day-to-day workings of the library than Mrs. Gallagher as these verses from her retirement party song note:

No more desk, doors to lock
Mail to sort, heads to knock
Bye, bye, Ms. Bird

She won’t be here to answer
All those questions, moot
To scrub the sink, and t.p. distribute

Without her word of what to do
We’ll just have to muddle through

Ms. Bird, bye, bye
Vidy, bye, bye

¶6 While we've been muddling through, she's been traveling the world, studying calligraphy, flying Chinese kites, helping students learn English as a second language, and who knows how many other things. We all look forward to her fun-filled visits and are hoping to make her one-hundredth celebration as memorable as she has made our years at the Gallagher Law Library.