

"Perspectives" serves as a members' forum and features articles on issues of concern to the profession.



During the Closing Banquet at the 2002 Annual Meeting, AALL Executive Director Roger H. Parent accepts a glass sailboat from West in honor of his pending retirement from AALL in December.

## AALL in the Roger Parent Years

by Frank G. Houdek

To the casual observer, AALL has not changed much since Roger H. Parent became its third executive director on Sept. 7, 1993.

Then, as now, AALL was headquartered in suite 940 of the historic Monadnock Building at 53 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago.

Then, as now, AALL had an 11-member Executive Board, 13 Special Interest Sections, and about 30 chapters and 25 committees.

AALL members still flock in great numbers each summer to the Annual Meeting, seeking educational enlightenment, professional stimulation and social interaction.

*Law Library Journal* is still the Association's scholarly journal, albeit under a new editor. Tom Reynolds continues his editorship of the *Index to Legal Periodicals*, a post he has held since 1984. The *AALL Directory and Handbook* is still published for the Association by CCH Incorporated, as it has been since 1940, differing only in size (6 inches by 9 inches in 1993–1994, 8 ½ inches by 10 ½ inches in 2001–2002) but not basic content.

But scratch just a little below the surface, and it quickly becomes evident that the AALL that Roger Parent will leave behind when he retires on Dec. 31 is a vastly different — and in many ways better — organization than the one he found on his first day at work in the fall of 1993.

Roger would be the first to say — as he has publicly on many occasions — that AALL's progress during his nine years as executive director is an achievement of many people and that it would be unfair, if not inaccurate, to suggest that he is its sole architect. Yet thanks to Roger's contributions, AALL remains to a large extent a member-driven, member-run organization. Roger made it possible for members to focus on the issues that are important to law librarians because the details of carrying out the programs and events centered on those member issues were left to those with experience and expertise in managing associations. By professionalizing AALL and securing necessary resources, Roger facilitated the important contributions that AALL members and entities (committees, SISs, chapters, representatives) made in areas such

as professional development, information policy and legal information dissemination. So while the events, activities and developments described below help us to understand how the Association evolved and improved under Roger's stewardship as executive director, neither he nor I would ascribe them entirely to his doing. But trust me, he had a hand in them all.

### **AALL has become a reinvigorated and more professionally managed association.**

If this were *Entertainment Weekly* and not *AALL Spectrum*, we would say that there's been lots of "buzz" about AALL during the past nine years. Things have been happening that have been impossible to ignore. At least part of the explanation for this burst of energy is due to AALL's professional Headquarters staff. The director of finance and administration manages the financial resources of the Association. Professionals in continuing education supervise the educational program. AALL's experienced meeting planner coordinates the Annual Meeting. And so on. And at the helm is Roger Parent, an association professional with 14 years of experience at the American Library Association *before* he came to AALL. Following are some examples of a reinvigorated and professionalized AALL:

- New strategic plans developed in 1994 and 2000 established priorities for AALL to build a thriving profession and help law librarians have a positive impact on their institutions and the larger community.
- Written policies covering a wide range of Association practices were developed and publicly distributed via the *AALL Directory and Handbook* and AALLNET — e.g., "Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest," "Conduct of Election Policy," "Collaborative Activities and Joint Agreements," and "Use of AALL Name."
- New unified Bylaws in 1994 combined previously separate provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws.
- A Financial Long Range Plan (1995) and accompanying principles and policies were gradually developed to ensure that the Association is financially secure and able to fund initiatives identified in the strategic-planning process.
- Under the 1996–1997 "AALL–Chapter Alliance," the relationship

between AALL and chapters was strengthened, exemplified by the creation of the quarterly newsletter, *Chapter Leadership Bulletin* — “designed to make the jobs of chapter leaders easier by providing useful information about chapters and AALL resources that benefit them” — and the chapter leadership training roundtables at each Annual Meeting.

- Membership in AALL was opened in 1999 to more of today’s law library personnel and others who foster their success, such as library trustees, information technology specialists, research specialists and other allied professionals.

**AALL has provided significantly increased support and resources for law librarians and the profession of law librarianship.** During this period, the Association has expanded its support systems to help members in their daily jobs and in their growth as professional leaders. A few examples include:

- The AALL Resource Guide Series, supported by LexisNexis™, is an eight-part series that helps law firm managers understand the value and role of law librarians in law firms. It began publication in 1998. The last issue in the series, “Changing Roles of Law Librarians,” was published in the summer of 2002.
- Beginning in 1993, the *Biennial Salary Surveys* were regularly published, first in print and later electronically via AALLNET. The salary surveys provide members with a powerful tool to use for up-to-date information about salaries for law librarians and other organizational characteristics.
- The first “Diversity Symposium” was presented at the 1996 Annual Meeting and annually thereafter, providing an important forum for exploring issues pertaining to diversity in law librarianship and the larger community.
- The AALL Minority Leadership Development Award was established in 2001 to help new minority law librarians attend the Annual Meeting and become active in AALL.

- AALL’s first endowed scholarship, honoring John R. Johnson, was established in 1994 with funding from LexisNexis™. The Institute for Court Management Scholarship was established in 1999 to encourage law librarians to attend the Court Executive Development Program at the Institute for Court Management. The George A. Strait Minority Scholarship Endowment was created in 2001, supported by West, to further the education of minority students pursuing a degree in law librarianship.

**AALL offers a wider array of professional development opportunities for law librarians than ever before.**

Members have continually indicated that professional development should be the Association’s highest priority. In response, AALL has revamped its educational program within the last nine years. The Association now offers professional development opportunities other than the Annual Meeting:

- Member involvement in educational programs increased in 1996 with the adoption of a new “AALL Professional Development Educational Policy” and the creation of a Professional Development Committee, assisted by the director of programs and later an education manager, both full-time staff positions.
- Regional educational programming began in 1996–1997. Over the years, the programs have covered such topics as “Negotiation Skills for Librarians,” “Advanced Cataloging,” “Applying Copyright Law in Libraries,” “Managing Multi-Location Libraries” and “Legal Reference Services.”
- From 1997 to 2000, interactive satellite video conferences, supported by West, were offered annually as an additional means of providing distance educational programming to large numbers of members.
- The first Biennial Joint Study Institute, co-sponsored by AALL, the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, the Canadian Association of Law Librarians and the Australian Law Librarians Group, in 1998 took place at the University of

Cambridge in England. Subsequent institutes were held at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., in 2000 and Royal Roads University in British Columbia, Canada, in 2002.

- The first “Paraprofessional Forum” was offered at the 1999 Annual Meeting.
- Moderated listserv discussions, sponsored by the Professional Development Committee, began in 1998 and eventually covered a variety of critical topics, such as “End-User Electronic Competencies,” “Managing the Reference Inquiry,” “Law Libraries in the Depository System,” “Valuable Internet Resources,” “Alternative Funding Sources for Law Libraries” and “Cataloging Electronic Resources.”
- The “Desktop Learning Opportunities” series began with an article titled “Be a Better Writer” in the March 1998 issue of *AALL Spectrum*. Subsequent pieces addressed on-the-job challenges, such as “Internet Filtering,” “Summer Associates,” “Evaluating Electronic Resources” and “Meeting Management Tips.”
- The “Competencies of Law Librarianship,” approved in 2001, defined the requirements and changing nature of the profession. It guided AALL’s educational efforts as well as expectations for members, educators and employers.

**AALL has greatly improved its communication with members. It now offers new and improved ways of keeping members informed of Association activities and services:**

- AALLNET, the Association’s Web site, was introduced in 1996. By 1997, AALLNET was one of only three national association sites to receive a Gold Circle Certificate of Achievement from the American Society of Association Executives. The site was redesigned in March 2000 to better meet members’ needs for enhanced information and easier navigation, including individual home pages, the Members-Only

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section containing access to the AALL membership directory, and personal profiles that can be updated online.

- The Association's new magazine, *AALL Spectrum*, debuted in 1996. The monthly magazine features substantive articles on issues affecting law librarianship and legal information, AALL news, and commentary.
- The first Members' Briefing appeared in the October 1996 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, covering access to government information in the electronic age. The quarterly insert has since explored topics such as publisher relations, AALL Headquarters, the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and the practice of law in the 21st century.
- AALL supports listservs for more than 100 AALL groups, including chapters, committees and SISs.
- In 1998, announcements were distributed directly to members' desktops via broadcast e-mails. An archive of AALL news releases from 1996 to present is maintained on AALLNET.
- The *Year in Review* annual reports began in 1995–1996 as a way of highlighting the Association's achievements for members while outlining future opportunities.

**AALL has become a visible leader in information policy and a strong advocate for users of legal information.** Primarily through its Washington Affairs Office, AALL has advanced and promoted a wide range of information policy issues, such as copyright, database protection, the *Uniform Computer Information Transactions Act* and other intellectual property areas, legal publishing, and access to government information. The WAO is a highly persuasive and respected force with Congress, policy-makers and the library community. It also supports state legislative initiatives, sponsors an informative Web site, and maintains an advocacy listserv.

AALL has influenced policy in other areas as well:

- AALL participated with other library associations in the process that created the "Principles for Licensing Electronic Resources" in 1997.
- In conjunction with the 1995 and 1999 Annual Meetings, AALL conducted the highly successful National Conferences on Legal Information Issues.

- AALL led the legal citation reform movement, which culminated with the publication of the *Universal Citation Guide* in 1999.
- AALL implemented an ambitious publisher relations program by expanding the role of the Committee on Relations with Information Vendors. The CRIV's new duties included site visits to publishers and sponsorship of reverse visits of publishers to libraries; developing CRIV Tools to help librarians with day-to-day work responsibilities; maintaining the CRIVPage, a content-rich Web site; and quickly distributing CRIVGrams, which contain important information about legal publishers and vendors, to librarians via e-mail.
- The AALL Fair Business Practices Special Committee created the "AALL Guide to Fair Business Practices for Legal Publishers" in 2002.
- Through its Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee, formed in 1998, the Association educated state and court officials on how to provide better access to government information in electronic form.
- AALL sponsored occasional Law Librarian/Legal Publisher Colloquiums, most recently in May 2001, where participants discuss critical issues of common interest — e.g., disintermediation and the changing nature of legal research.
- The Association adopted the "AALL Preservation Policy" in 1994, recognizing the importance of preserving legal information in all formats.
- AALL adopted the "AALL Guidelines on the Fair Use of Copyrighted Works by Law Libraries" in 1997.
- AALL began awarding grants to support research in areas identified by the AALL Research Agenda in 1996 when the AALL/Aspen Law & Business Grant Program funded a project to develop a new legal search engine.
- With an endowment established with a generous pledge from LexisNexis in 1999, the AALL Research Fund provided a secure financial base for the Research Committee to carry out the newly revised Research Agenda. The new agenda encourages research on technology, interdisciplinary research and changes that affect law librarianship. The initial grants funded projects that focused on worldwide access to instruction in legal bibliography via the Internet and on how lawyers conduct legal research.
- The AALL-funded "Economic Study of Law Book Pricing" analyzed trends in law book pricing over the past decade, including the impact that price changes have had on library collections. The project was completed in 2002.

**AALL is now a leading sponsor of research related to the needs and interests of law librarians and critical to the development of the profession of law librarianship.** Recognizing that research on subjects important to law librarians is crucial, AALL has identified those subjects and has provided support to ensure that the research is conducted.

Although I have almost surely omitted many readers' favorite AALL initiatives and could only provide brief descriptions of those that I did include, many members will agree that this record of achievement over the past nine years is impressive. It is probably one that would not come immediately to mind. We are all so much a part of the present, it is hard to remember the way things were, even nine years ago. But all of this happened just during the time Roger Parent, AALL's newest honorary member, served as executive director. I do not think it was an accident. Having had the privilege and good fortune to serve as president with Roger at the helm, I know that his many skills as an association professional, combined with an incredible ability to listen, distill and communicate, made him a superb executive director for AALL at a very crucial time for the organization and for the profession. He will be very hard to top, as will the record of AALL in the Roger Parent years.

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