

Three Named as Recipients of Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award

Charles R. Dyer, Roy M. Mersky, and Michael S. Miller recognized for dedication to profession, Association

by Shirley Hart David

Honoring their dedication toward enhancing the image of law librarianship and AALL, Charles R. Dyer, Roy M. Mersky, and Michael S. Miller will receive the 2005 Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award during the AALL Annual Meeting Association Luncheon on Monday, July 18.

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Each of the 2005 award recipients has brought to the profession a strong belief that paying attention to the specific needs of stakeholders can improve the political status of their libraries and serve the libraries well when it comes to power, budgets, and exceeding customer expectations.

Visionary Philosopher

Charley Dyer literally put “public” in the name of public law libraries. Retiring in August, Dyer has served as director of libraries at the San Diego County Public Law Library and executive director to the Law Library Justice Foundation of San Diego since 1987. Dyer has collaboratively led the charge to make California county law libraries more visible to the public.

Serving his first 13 years in the profession as an academic librarian, Dyer began as a reader’s service librarian under the tutelage of fellow award-winner Roy M. Mersky, then associate librarian and assistant professor of law at St. Louis University, and law librarian associate professor of law at University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. Dyer will return to his birth state of Texas, where he received three of his four advanced degrees and keeps current his bar license, to accept the Marian Gould Gallagher Award.

Dyer is a visionary who shares his ideas with others who develop them into groundbreaking programs, such as training the public on basic legal procedures and providing collaborative, live-chat legal reference services through the Internet.

An accomplished writer, Dyer uses his philosophy background to advocate for better libraries, better access to legal information, and the next development to make our lives better. In a section of the law library profession that is not rewarded by its employers for publishing, Dyer has given freely of his time to major publications. He edited and wrote a substantial portion of the State, Court, and County Special

Interest Section (SCCLL-SIS) *Sourcebook for Law Library Governing Boards and Committees* while he produced a greatly expanded California County Law Libraries *Trustees Manual*. He edited *Law Library Journal* when it was still produced by an all-volunteer staff. He also edited the official newsletter of the Council of California County Law Libraries for 10 years.

Dyer is credited with writing the recommendations for the AALL Special Committee on the Renaissance of Law Librarianship. He chaired and wrote opinions for the Relocation Appeals Board for the City of San Diego and edited a book on America’s homeless dilemma. The book, written by a San Diego judge, was distributed by a foundation to California’s state and local legislators and executive office holders.

Among the first to bring library trustees to AALL meetings, Dyer provided the impetus for state, court, and county law libraries to advocate that they be given the opportunity to become AALL associate members. While SCCLL-SIS chair, he successfully advocated for AALL to expand the Chapter VIP Program to bring library stakeholders to the Annual Meeting and to special interest sections.

Dyer’s sustained legislative advocacy for California’s public law libraries is legendary. He often flew up or drove to Sacramento with a trustee in tow to testify at hearings or meet with legislative staff. He organized legislative workshops and garnered support from other organizations. AALL’s lobbyists advocate for public law libraries at the state level due to Dyer’s efforts.

Dyer leaves a legacy of stewardship to both his institution and its varied constituency, the San Diego community, California libraries of all types, and AALL.

Extraordinary Mentor and Activist

Although Roy M. Mersky, the Harry M. Reasoner Regents chair in law and director of research of the Jamail Center for Legal Research and Tarlton Law Library at the



Charles R. Dyer



Roy M. Mersky



Michael S. Miller

University of Texas, says he is not retiring until 2025, his admirers and protégés successfully argued that it is appropriate to bestow upon him the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award at the Annual Meeting, being held in the state he has called home since 1965. Mersky also celebrates his 80th birthday this year.

The number of law librarians he has trained and guided, as a demanding but committed mentor, equals only the work of Marian Gould Gallagher herself. Mersky is credited by many of his contemporaries and employees as changing the image of law librarians from assistants to true professionals. In return he expects long hours and excellence from his employees, which puts them in good stead to lead their future organizations for which he recommends them. He also has defined acceptable law library operations to countless law school deans, serving on “readiness teams” for new law schools.

Mersky was a combat infantry veteran thrice decorated and thrice wounded in the Bastogne Crisis of December 1944. He participated in the march for civil rights at Selma, Alabama. His civil rights activity made his appointment at the University of Texas controversial because it was still integrating its law school when he interviewed for the law librarian position. Later he acted to maintain the constitutional separation of church and state by objecting to an illuminated cross in the federal post office in Austin.

Mersky has continued to stay involved with the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Document Exchange Project, and the Anti-Defamation League. His

interest in human rights also benefited AALL with his founding membership in the Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section and the Spirit of Law Librarianship Award, which he co-established to honor law librarians who give back to their communities.

Fundamentals of Legal Research, which he co-authored, is now in its 8th edition. It continues to be the textbook for numerous legal research classes and companion to every new legal reference librarian. His scholarship includes authoring *The First 100 Justices* and co-editing *The Supreme Court of the United States: Hearings and Reports on Successful and Unsuccessful Justices by the Senate Judicial Committee*.

Mersky’s career began as a lawyer in Wisconsin while he studied for his library degree. In the 10 years preceding his Texas appointment he worked as research associate at the Municipal Reference Library in Milwaukee, chair of readers services and reference services at Yale University, director of the Washington Supreme Court Law Library, executive secretary of the Washington Judicial Council and Commissioner of Washington Supreme Court Reports, and professor of law and law librarian at the University of Colorado. At the University of Texas he set out to establish a world-class law library via groundbreaking programs and a state-of-the-art facility. During his tenure he has organized a host of scholarly conferences; consulted with courts, law firms, and legal administrators; and served on editorial and library vendor advisory boards. During a sabbatical he established the New York Law School Library.

Mersky left his imprint on AALL when he successfully advocated *Current Law Index* as a replacement to the more restrictive *Index to Legal Periodicals* and as he helped establish AALLNET. During the early ’60s he chaired AALL’s Special Committee on the Application of Mechanical and Scientific Devices to Legal Literature, the predecessor committee to the current Computer Services Special Interest Section.

As a professor he teaches graduate courses in library science at the University of Texas School of Information. He has taught as a visiting professor at the Queen Mary and Westfield College in London and the New York Law School and as a visiting fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra.

For more than 50 years Mersky has been a visionary, adventurous, and energetic leader in the law library profession. He has been a committed administrator, extraordinary mentor, productive scholar, gifted teacher, active member of AALL, and a pioneer in the integration of technology into legal research.

Collaborative Leader

Retiring in June, Michael Miller has been a law librarian for 38 years and the director of the Maryland State Law Library since January 1977. Prior to that he was an assistant librarian at the Pennsylvania State Law Library, assistant librarian at the Allegheny County Law Library, and director of the Allegheny County Law Library.

During his career Miller has quietly worked to achieve results without personally

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