

Assistance: Foreign and International Law Librarians Willing To Help Non-Experts”

(<http://www.oceanalaw.com/default.asp>)

list posted directly on FCIL site, rather than the Oceana site; adding a separate mini guide of experts specifically available to mentor and assist librarians starting in the field of FCIL. The group thought the website was a great resource for those who are new to FCIL librarianship, especially those who are the only specialist at their institution.

PR for FCIL website: The group talked about publicizing the website, and its content via listservs, chapter and SIS newsletters, Spectrum articles, etc.

Actions Items:

- Recruit volunteers to create and update content on FCIL site
- Recruit volunteers to assist with transition of files form UGA site to AALLnet
- Recruit volunteers to add to list of mentors or willing to offer assistance for new FCIL librarians
- Form subgroup to work on PR for website
- Solicit suggestions from FCIL membership re: content they would like to see on website



Memories of the 96th Annual AALL Meeting in Seattle

By Emmanuel Mensah Darkey,
2003 Ellen Schaffer Grant Recipient

It was Friday, July 11, 2003 as I was getting myself ready for the 96th Annual AALL Convention in the cozy apartment of Chris Simoni. I wondered what it would be like in Seattle. I tried vaguely to remember my readings in World Geography about Seattle and Tacoma – about the vegetable and fruit growing industry, the fishing industry, the Boeing industry and so on and forth. But that was a long time ago, in the mid 1970's. Things must have changed now, I thought to myself; because things can change very fast in this part of the world!

Three years ago I was in Chicago, but what I saw now were dramatic changes – whole buildings have been pulled down and bigger and more magnificent ones built in their stead, new roads were being constructed everywhere I passed. The Pritzker Legal Research Center of the Northwestern School of Law has also undergone many changes to my admiration- new staff, new equipment and furniture and other marvelous things. Then I thought of the AALL Conference, what was it going to be like? The FCIL –SIS Members and Rhonda Gold - how were they going to receive me? Such were my lingering thoughts as I joined Professor Chris Simoni and his beautiful wife Julia, to fly from Chicago to Seattle for the 96th Annual Conference.

The flight from Chicago to Seattle was good and enjoyable. I sat by one of the windows of the airplane. As I looked

down from the window of the flying-machine, I could see such a wonderful scenery – meandering ice streams of rivers, ragged snowcapped hills with small patches of lakes, rectangular grid pattern patches of landscape which I guessed should be plots of farms and other beautiful things which made my heart rise and thrill within with happiness.

At Seattle, I was comfortably put up at the 6th Avenue Hotel. The next day, July 12, I went through registration formalities with Professor Chris Simoni. Later in the day, I met Professor Penny Hazelton (at my request). We had very fruitful discussion and she gave me some useful pieces of advice and encouragement.

On Sunday, July 13, I met Rhonda Gold, Ken Rudolf and Victor Essien. They all received me very warmly and congratulated me on winning the Ellen Schaffer Foreign Librarian's Grant. With Ken Rudolf, I attended the President's Luncheon for International Attendees. At the FCIL- SIS African Law Interest Group meeting, I was privileged to meet some members of the FCIL. I also gave a presentation on Rule of Law and Law Libraries in Ghana.

Other receptions and meetings I attended gave me the opportunity to meet and interact with several AALL members. We engaged in discussions of problems and issues of common concern. I was asked several questions about my country, whether this was my first visit to the United States, the incidence of HIV/AIDS, how I like Chicago and Seattle and of course about my Library, the students and how I was getting on

with my work as a law librarian in Ghana.

Before I begin to say something about my country and library, I must also say that I was very much impressed by the exhibitions mounted at the Conference. I visited most of the stands and had useful discussions with most of the vendors. I talked to Lexis/Westlaw and I told them that they should consider some scheme for third world countries like Ghana who cannot afford the high prices so that we can also benefit from their technology.

When I came back to Ghana, the first thing I did was to go straight to see Mr. Bentsi-Enchill of Data Centa. Mr. Bentsi-Enchill has been laboring for the past 11 years to computerize Ghanaian legal materials. I told him that the Faculty of Law must use his products because we have the infrastructure – computers and LAN. Our only problem however, is money and he must help us in spite of the teething financial problems of his company. I told him further that the market for his products should start with the students because when the students are hooked to online publications, then he has captured the market because they will go out and propagate it.

Mr. Bentsi-Enchill has agreed to slash down his price by 50% for the 33 computers that we have in the Faculty with an option to increase it to 50 in the future – that works to approximately \$10,000. He has also agreed to be paid in local currency. Unfortunately however, the Faculty could not find the money to buy these products. But we are not discouraged and we are still talking with him.

I have also given copies of the complimentary business cards I received from members at the AALL meeting to Mr. Bentsi-Enchill so that he can introduce his products to you.

My country Ghana is in West Africa. Comparatively, it is slightly smaller than the state of Oregon. It has a population of about 20,000,000. Ghana has a tropical climate; warm and comparatively dry along the southeast coast; hot and humid in the southwest and hot and dry in the north.

Temperature ranges between 20⁰C – 30⁰C throughout the year. The summer temperatures in Seattle were just like colder times in Ghana. – this partly explains why while I was in Seattle I was always tightly dressed in shirt and coat etc (as one of the participants jokingly asked me “why are you always in three layers?”)

Ghana is one of the few peaceful and dynamic countries in Africa. It is also the first country south of the Sahara to successfully and peacefully transfer power from an incumbent government to a new government in a multiparty free and fair election.

Ghana like other African countries is not free from the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As at the end of June 2002, a total of about 500,000 cases had been reported. Now people are educated on the causes, methods of transmission and prevention and control of the epidemic.

Nongovernmental organizations, educational institutions, religious organizations, and of course the government, are doing their best to send the AIDS message to the people especially in the rural areas, where because of ignorance and poverty, some

people still do not believe that AIDS can be transmitted through sex.

The faculty of Law of the University of Ghana was established in 1960 to train lawyers to service the public and private sectors of the country. In the 2001/2002 academic year, the law course in the faculty was changed from an undergraduate degree course running for three years to a graduate course running for 2 years. Currently the faculty has about 200 students.

In the last decade there has been a growing but limited stream of foreign students from other Commonwealth African countries who have trained in the law faculty and then returned to their home countries to be called to the bar.

Until the 2003-2004 academic year, when the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology established a law faculty, the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana was the only law faculty in the country. This coupled with the fact that the law faculty library has the most comprehensive law collection in the country, has placed it and the staff who manage it in a crucial and important position in the legal information delivery system.

Generally, libraries in Ghana have faced many years of neglect because of the fact that the priorities of government and policy makers have always been placed elsewhere. Libraries take a lower priority in funding to health care, food, education and other basic needs. Most libraries in Ghana depend on foreign donations to supplement what comes from government. My library, for instance, has continued to enjoy the goodwill and support of the Public Affairs Section of

the United States Embassy through its Democracy and Human Rights Fund.

In 1997, the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy in Accra and the American Library Association (ALA) sent a Library Fellow to provide training and consultation to the staff of the Ghana Supreme Court Library, University of Ghana Faculty of Law Library, Parliament and the Ghana School of Law Libraries to broaden the staff's knowledge of American legal research, United States librarianship and law librarianship. In all, ten librarians from seven law libraries took part in the program.

After the training, the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy through its Democracy and Human Rights Fund provided computers and a cataloguing software to the Faculty of Law Library and two other law libraries. The Public Affairs Section (PAS) also paid for a year subscription of Internet connectivity to these libraries (to date, it is only my library which is operating the system). With the Internet facility, the Library started providing e-mail service to the faculty staff and also begun creating a database of the library's holdings. The former Dean of the Faculty, Professor Akua Kuenyehia and other members of staff became interested and convinced that technology could be brought to the library.

Under an educational partnership program between Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago and the University of Ghana Faculty of Law, the library was roped in with Northwestern School of Law required to support and develop the University of Ghana Faculty of Law Library. In July

2000, I visited Northwestern School of Law Library for training. The Librarian of the Northwestern Law School, Professor Chris Simoni, also visited the Faculty of Law Library to provide training to the Library staff in accepted law library practices and to recommend strategies about implementing information technology in the library. Following his recommendations, I again appealed for assistance from the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy (PAS) to procure an updated version of the SLIMS 3.4 cataloging software for the library. They responded by providing us with entirely new Cataloging software (Winnebago) the kind they were using in their own library. The Dean of the Faculty also provided two new computers for the library and an additional sixteen to the faculty offices

With the assistance of Professor Chris Simoni, we were able to export data from the old database to the new database. Now the entire database of the library is available on the faculty LAN – the first available Online LAN in the University. OPAC Online Public Access to the holdings of the library enables users from different faculty offices to have online access to our collection.

The Internet and the LAN are a novelty in the faculty. The students are eager to learn and to use the Internet. The training I received from Northwestern School of Law Library has improved my competence greatly and I now handle the Internet training and the orientation programs for the new students with authority and much confidence. Our major problem, however, is unreliable power supply and the unstable and unpredictable Central University ICT

network system. I hope, however, that when the new Law Faculty building is completed, provision will be made for a generator and also an ICT personnel will be employed to take care of our computing needs.

Finally, I want to conclude with much gratitude to all those who have contributed in cash or in kind to make it possible for me to attend this great 96th Convention of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). I am particularly grateful to all members of the AALL and FCIL-SIS for their support. My sincere gratitude and thankfulness to Ellen Schaffer, Ken Rudolf, Rhonda Gold, Victor Essien and other members of the Foreign Librarian's Grant committee for giving me this great opportunity. I sincerely hope to build on it.

I want also to address special thanks to my mentor, Professor Chris Simoni, his wife Julia and all the staff of Pritzker Legal Research Center of Northwestern School of Law for preparing me fully for the convention. My good friend Jim Macmasters, I thank you so much for your care and wonderful companionship. May you all be rewarded for your efforts.

Submitted by: Emmanuel M. Darkey
(Asst. Librarian), Faculty of Law, P. O.
Box 70
University of Ghana, Legon, Accra,
Ghana.



Worth Noting: AALL Executive Committee Presentation on the Indonesian Legal System

by Annette Demers

The tumultuous history of the Indonesian legal system came to center stage at AALL in July thanks to the FCIL Executive Committee. Dan Lev, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Washington, offered a candid view of the bitter history of a country ravaged by corruption.

Professor Lev has a Ph.D. from Cornell University and is a specialist in the comparative politics, legal systems, and human rights of Southeast Asia. He has published several works in this area, including the 2000 title, "Legal Evolution and Political Authority in Indonesia: Selected Essays" published by Kluwer Law International. His book, "Islamic Courts in Indonesia", from the University of California Press, is published in English and Indonesian. His other publications include: "The Transition to Guided Democracy, Hukum dan Politik di Indonesia" (Law and Politics in Indonesia), a collection of his essays in Indonesian translation, as well as other articles and essays on Indonesian and Malaysian politics, legal institutions, and human rights. He is a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Legal Pluralism in the Netherlands².

Professor Lev's presentation began with a cautiously hopeful account of recent efforts by Indonesia to initiate legal

² From University of Washington, Department of Political Science.
<http://www.polisci.washington.edu/direct/directorylist.asp?personneltype=faculty>
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