

LEADER PROFILE

# MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION

Throughout his career, Allen Moye, current chair of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) George A. Strait Scholarship & Fellows Committee, has been steadfastly helping students get the education and skills they need to succeed. His love for teaching and watching students grow professionally has been one of the most rewarding aspects of his career in law librarianship.



Criminal defense, that is the type of law Allen Moye thought he wanted to practice when he made the decision to attend law school at the University of Richmond in 1987. After earning an internship spot with a criminal defense attorney following his first year of law school, he quickly realized criminal law wasn't for him. "At that point I was just trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I started working in the law school's library and I had an internship with the Virginia State Law Library. I found that I really enjoyed researching and helping other students," said Moye. He received his JD in 1990. "After I graduated, I did some work for the Virginia Industrial Commission (researching and writing memos on Workers' Compensation claims) and I also did research for a personal injury firm," recalls Moye. After being encouraged to pursue

he was ready to move on to the next step in his career, a directorship. Moye began his current role at DePaul College of Law in January of 2005. Besides supervising the College of Law's technology support team, Moye is an associate professor, and serves as director of the Rinn Law Library. He is responsible for the financial and personnel management of the library, as well as the quality of information resources and support for faculty research. Moye also teaches in both the JD and MJ programs. "The position at DePaul was actually vacant in 2003, but I wasn't quite ready to move then," notes Moye. "As it turned out, they had a failed search and re-advertised the position a year later. By that point, I was ready to move on."

Moye is a member of several professional library associations, including AALL, which he joined in 1994, along with the American Bar Association, American Library Association, Mid-America Association of Law Libraries, and the Chicago Association of Law Libraries. He served as chair of the George A. Strait Minority Scholarship Review Special Committee from 2016-2017, and as chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee from 2004-2005. In addition, Moye served as president of the Mid-America Law Library Consortium from 2017-2019.

Here, he discusses his path to becoming a director, why it's important to incorporate technology into law school education, and what skills are needed to help students succeed in today's legal environment.

### How do you stay abreast of changes in the field?

Changes are happening so quickly that it can be hard to keep up. Just because the change is the latest thing doesn't necessarily mean it's the greatest. If there is a change that I think will be beneficial for my staff, our patrons, or in the classroom, I am happy to adopt it. As an example, we have been adding more e-books and digital resources to the collection to meet the needs and learning styles of our students. I find the director's listserv a good way to keep up with new developments, to learn what other directors are talking about. I also pay attention to alerts from major vendors about new products and services coming out. And, of course, *AALL Spectrum* and *KnowItAALL* are really good resources for learning about developments in the field.

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law librarianship from the folks at the University of Richmond—including Steve Hinckley, who was the director of the law library at the time, and deputy director, Joyce Janto, Moye decided to pursue his MLS part-time from Catholic University, while working as a reference librarian. "A few years after I graduated, the University of Richmond offered me a temporary reference librarian position, which also gave me the opportunity to teach; that's when I got hooked. I did this for about four years, and it was a great experience. It solidified my intention to become a law librarian."

Moye took over as associate director for public services at George Mason (now Scalia School of Law) in 1998, and received his MLS in 1999. After spending six years in that role,

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- CHICAGO, IL

## QUICK HITS WITH ALLEN MOYE



### Superpower you wish you had?

Flight. The ability to fly without a plane or a pilot.

### Words to live by?

Keep it simple. I think all too often we try to overcomplicate things, when there may actually be a simple solution or explanation.

### Favorite TV show to binge watch?

It's a toss-up between *Black Mirror* and *The Crown*.

### Favorite weekend getaway?

After living in Chicago for 14 years, any place that's sunny and warm.

### Favorite book or author?

*The Feast of All Saints* by Anne Rice. It was one of the first books that she wrote and remains one of the best books I've ever read.

ABA requirements of an equivalent level of security for the position, it can still work out for anyone not interested in pursuing a tenure role within the organization.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

I think at this point, I would have to say teaching. I enjoy working with students, who are enthused and eager to learn something new. I teach Advanced Legal Research in addition to an Introduction to American Law and Legal Systems course, which is one of the foundational courses of the MJ (Master's in Jurisprudence) program. I have been teaching this course for about two years. I teach both an online and live version. The live class is for a special cohort of Chicago Police Officers that provides them with a foundation about the law to help them advance in their career. It has been a very rewarding experience. When you're working with highly motivated individuals and you see that lightbulb or "ah-ha" moment when they get it, or when they come back and reach out to you and say, "I really enjoyed the class, I learned so much," that's very gratifying.

### What can you share about your path to becoming a director?

I was ready to move, when I felt that I had achieved all that I could as an associate director. I enjoyed my time at George Mason. I learned a lot, and worked with some really great people, including Deborah Keene, who was the director, and Femi Cadmus and Roger Skalbeck, who both moved on to directorships of their own. The idea of being able to "run my own shop" and be involved at a higher level in terms of policy making, as well as implementation, seemed like the next logical step in my career. Like some others in this profession, I think my path to becoming a director was more accidental than providential, but it could have been a little of both. That is why I say it is good to remain open because you never know what or when opportunities might become available.

One recent development to note is that some institutions are changing how they classify law library directorships. When I originally took over as director, it was a staff position, not faculty. After about two years working in the position, I decided to exercise the option to go on tenure track. But with some changes in the profession and legal academia—shrinking enrollments and a need to realign budgets and priorities—a number of institutions no longer offer tenured library directorships. As long as the school satisfies the

### How has participation in AALL impacted your career and/or leadership capabilities?

It has opened up a lot of doors for me. I have been able to connect and work with a wide and vast network of people. While I am a member of the faculty at a law school, I have a unique and discrete function. I have attended ABA, Association of American Law Schools, and American Library Association conferences, but it is not quite the same as my experience with AALL. Sharing experiences and exchanging ideas with others who are in similar roles has really been helpful. AALL provides a mechanism for doing this, and it has allowed me to enhance my skills and develop in new ways.

In particular, I am very proud of the work I have done with the Black Caucus of the American Association of Law Libraries (BCAALL), which I have been involved with from its inception. I have also served on the Annual Meeting Program Planning Committee and have been involved with the George A. Strait Scholarship & Fellows Committee from its inception as well. The many opportunities I have had to get involved with different types of projects and initiatives, as well getting to know and work with individuals from a variety of library types and backgrounds, has been beneficial to my professional development and growth.

### **What are the biggest technology changes that you are seeing?**

The most significant change is that so much can be done from these small hand-held devices that were at one time limited to making or receiving a phone call. Smartphone technology has single-handedly changed the way we get information and communicate with one another, and it has changed what we expect from technology.

Our phones and our computers are such a big part of everything we do; It has made our world smaller, more pocket-sized and accessible. Yet, in some ways, this technology has also isolated us. How often do we bury our heads in our phones when we get on an elevator with strangers?

### **In what ways do you think technology could be better taught in law school to prepare students to practice law?**

Some faculty shy away from using technology because they are mistrustful of it, or they do not use it that much themselves so they do not really understand how it can be used as a teaching tool. But the truth is that technology is such a major part of everyday life, certainly, when it comes to students and their daily social media habits; it just makes sense to incorporate it in some way. As teachers, we should figure out how to integrate technology into what we teach. Learning which technology resources are used in the practice of law and providing an introduction, or assigning a project using it, may be one approach. Many schools now offer law and technology courses. We are just jumping into this and in January offered two, one-credit Legal Practice courses: one focused on researching using legal technology and the other on intellectual property. Librarians taught both classes.

In my classes, I try to engage students by utilizing surveys and group quizzes that they can take in real time. CALI's (The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction) InstaPoll provides a very simple format where I can ask a question on the fly, and the students can respond on their phone, tablet, or laptop. The results will appear in graph form on the screen instantly, and we can discuss their choices. I think it is helpful to integrate technology into the learning process, because it helps to keep students engaged and exposes them to different modalities, which can lead to better understanding.

### **What skills do law students need to be successful in today's workplace?**

I think student's need more exposure to soft communication skills, things such as professional

manners, office etiquette, and understanding the difference between formal and informal communications. I think many of today's students are unaware of these formalities and do not understand the impact that this can have on their professional career. For instance, if a senior-level person addresses the student as "Mr. or Ms." Smith and the student responds addressing the senior by their first name, thinking that's acceptable, or thinking "it's okay to call me by my first name, because I'm calling you by yours," that could be a problem. In an era where quick responses and casual text messaging have become very commonplace, it's more important than ever to understand that how you address someone can make a difference. You should consider the context, but err on the side of formal over informal. It is not that informal methods of communicating are always inappropriate, but you have to understand that in certain settings, it may not be the best course to take. Some students are not familiar with these skills and many law schools (DePaul among them) have been working to bridge that gap by better preparing their students for practice by teaching them soft skills, such as how to craft an appropriate letter or email for formal communications.

### **What career advice would you give to newer law librarians just entering the profession?**

Be flexible. Transition and disruption in the legal profession has resulted in changes in legal academia. These changes have affected libraries and librarians, in terms of downsizing the print collection, physical space of the library, and adapting to declining enrollments by reducing staff. There is a consensus among some that we no longer need libraries as repositories of information, since everything is on the internet.

While this may sound dire, I would say it is important to remain optimistic and flexible. Librarians are trained to classify, organize, and categorize data; helping to transform it into useful information, which is the foundation and building blocks of knowledge. This skill set is just as important as ever. We just need to think of different ways to apply our talents and abilities. We can still make significant contributions to the goals and overall enterprise of our institutions—often just by thinking outside the scope of the traditional librarian role. ■

#### **AALL2go EXTRA**

Listen to Allen's interview as part of Hein's Oral History of Law Librarianship at [bit.ly/HeinMoye](http://bit.ly/HeinMoye).

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