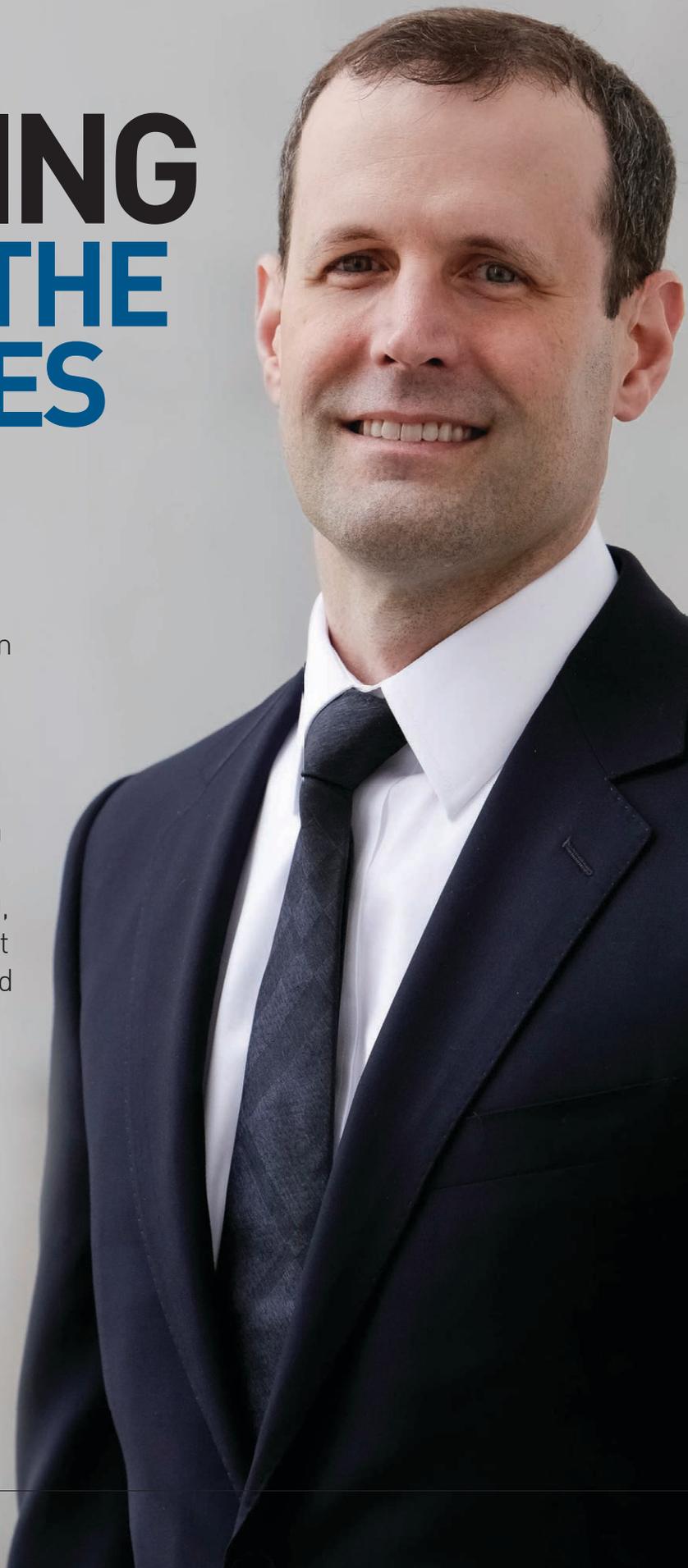


LEADER PROFILE

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE CHALLENGES

Andrew Winston had a passion for practicing law, but, after seizing an opportunity to complete a practicum at an academic law library while finishing his library science degree, he decided to change course and focus his attention on a career in law librarianship. Since becoming a member of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) in 2010, Winston's professional development and leadership skills have continued to expand as he has pursued new leadership opportunities within the Association and within his career. A proponent of advocating for one's law library as well as one's own career, he enjoys the daily challenges involved in helping his team excel in serving congressional and other government users, as well as researchers from across the country and around the world.



Andrew Winston developed an interest in law librarianship after practicing law at large law firms for eleven years. Winston earned his JD from the University of Virginia in 1998 and obtained his MLS from Drexel University in 2011. He started his career at the University of Richmond's Muse Law Library, where he performed a practicum during the final quarter of his library science program. He expected to return to the law firm world after finishing up his library science degree, but after he completed the practicum, his plans changed. "That experience made me reconsider my path and where I wanted to go," said Winston.

In addition to his practicum, he interned at the Muse Law Library for six months. "It was really an outstanding place to get started in law librarianship. The librarians there were

"I think it's really important to have a clear understanding of your library's mission and the value that it provides to its major users and stakeholders." Andrew Winston

enthusiastic and dedicated to their work. And I was able to learn the ropes on a variety of reference, research, and collection projects." He then worked as a law librarian in a temporary position at the Congressional Research Service before returning to the Muse Law Library as a research and instructional services librarian.

At Richmond, Winston had the opportunity to work with the library director at the time, Tim Coggins, who he said continues to be one of his main role models for library leadership. "I had the opportunity to work in Tim's library and to observe his leadership style, which is one that I admire a lot," notes Winston. "In fact, even today, when I'm in challenging leadership situations, I'll often pause before I hit send on an email and ask myself, 'How would Tim handle this?'"

ANDREW WINSTON

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After leaving Richmond, he moved to DC to work as a reference librarian at the Law Library of Congress before taking on his current role as chief of the public services division—a position he started just months before the start of the pandemic.

A member of AALL since 2010, he has been active in several leadership positions. He served on and chaired the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee and the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee and now serves on the LexisNexis Research Grant Jury. He is also active with several special interest sections (SISs), including the Academic Law Libraries SIS, Government Law Libraries SIS, and the Research Instruction & Patron Services SIS. He is a member of the Virginia Association of Law Libraries (VALL), having served as president and in other leadership roles within VALL, and is a member of the Law Librarians Society of Washington, DC. Further, he won AALL's 2016 Emerging Leader Award.

Here, Winston discusses the challenges and opportunities the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to his career, and the impact AALL has had on his leadership capabilities.

How has COVID-19 impacted the Law Library of Congress and your particular position? What are the biggest challenges?

The biggest change, understandably, is the access to our collection and physical space. The Library of Congress has been closed to the public since March, and we're currently in a phased restoration of our on-site operations, with a portion of our staff now going on-site to perform essential functions. The library has, of course, established health screening and protocols for those who are coming back into the building.

Although the library has not yet reopened its reading rooms to the public, it has opened an electronic resources center that allows users to come on-site to use subscription databases and digital materials on library premises.

For my division, it was certainly a shift in perspective—we had to immediately adjust to working remotely. We quickly implemented a strategy to maintain full services to our congressional users, which is our foremost obligation. The library's IT experts created a system that allows us to forward our congressional telephone line to the reference librarians to ensure coverage. We

QUICK HITS WITH ANDREW WINSTON

**Words to live by?**

I have become a fan of the platinum rule: "Treat others as they would like to be treated."

Best book you recently read?

I recently re-read one of my favorites, *The Glass Key* by Dashiell Hammett.

Guilty pleasure?

Drinking more coffee than I really should.

Favorite way to unwind after a long day?

Going for a long walk.

Favorite quarantine activity?

Anything to get out of the house.

Favorite movie?

Star Wars Episode IV

Song or musician that always lifts your spirits?

It's a musician—John Coltrane.

GPO and other projects. The collection services division has been on-site the most, performing critical collection development and maintenance.

What advice would you give to those looking to advocate for themselves or their libraries?

It's important to have a clear understanding of the value your library provides to its major users and stakeholders. Getting familiar with your library's mission and vision statements and those of the larger organization can be a good starting point. But it's necessary to go beyond that and be able to articulate your library's mission and how it supports the institution in your own words.

Part of this is staying fully informed about how your library has been contributing to its organization. For my division, that includes things such as first-rate reference services, major research assignments, new legal research webinars, and collection development projects. For other parts of the law library, that might involve preparing comparative law reports for Congress aligned with the anticipated legislative agenda, optimizing collection spaces, planning major digitization projects, or launching innovative outreach initiatives.

Another aspect is finding ways to share information about that value regularly to decision makers. This can be done in multiple ways—through formal reports to your superiors, through informal reports via email about recent successes, and just through conversation—the proverbial elevator speech.

I have found that if you have a good grasp on the value your library delivers and a set of recent examples, it becomes easy to provide relevant, impactful updates when the opportunity arises. And if you've been regularly communicating your library's value, then when the time comes to advocate, your audience will already be well-informed about your contribution to the organization and will hopefully be receptive to what you're advocating for.

How do you stay on top of developments in legal technology?

In my current role, I rely a lot on professional reading. At our law library, we're not necessarily subscribing to all of the law firm practice technologies, because that's not what the majority of our users come to us needing to use. I believe, though, that as artificial intelligence and other more advanced technologies become more widespread and well developed, we will see more and more use of them outside of law firms and legal offices.

have also continued to provide digital reference services to all users throughout the pandemic.

We also modified our legal research instruction program. Before the pandemic, our reference librarians had been teaching mainly in-person legal research classes, although we had just begun offering webinar versions of our classes. This was an initiative that the Law Librarian of Congress, Jane Sánchez, had encouraged us to pursue, and it turned out to be a prescient move. Our head instructional librarian had laid the groundwork for it at the beginning of the year, and we were able to convert all of our public legal research classes and our series of more in-depth legal research classes for congressional staff to webinars.

As a result, we've actually been able to do more teaching and reach a far bigger audience with our webinars. We've also been able to experiment and offer new webinars as we've gone along. Based on this success, when we reopen, our goal is to expand our instruction by maintaining and further developing our webinar offerings alongside our traditional in-person classes.

The law library's foreign law specialists have continued to perform research for Congress virtually uninterrupted during the pandemic. The digital resources division has been active with a collaborative Serial Set digitization project with

It's important for all types of law libraries to stay informed on this topic. *AALL Spectrum* has been a great resource to stay on top of major developments. The vendor exhibitions at the AALL Annual Meeting are another way to gather intelligence on what's new in databases, research tools, and law practice technologies.

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

AALL has been a cornerstone of my career development. I was fortunate to have been selected for the 2014 AALL Leadership Academy, and that experience helped me to begin thinking seriously about pursuing leadership roles in the profession.

Since then I've had the opportunity to chair the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee and the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee. Both of these were great development experiences that taught me a lot about leading teams that were not located in the same place, which has turned out to be very helpful in the recent months of remote work.

Winning the 2016 AALL Emerging Leader Award was a great honor, and I think it made a big impression on my superiors at the law library. And of course, the annual meetings have been invaluable in terms of both professional education and making and renewing connections with colleagues all over the country and around the world. Being an active AALL member has been a tremendous advantage in my professional growth.

How do you stay engaged and passionate about your work?

I've found that there is always something new to learn in my work and approaching it from that perspective is what keeps me engaged and excited about it. Each stage of my career as a law librarian has required me to develop in different ways, and I don't think I will ever feel like I've reached a point where there's nothing more to learn. My current role as division chief has opened up new realms of knowledge to acquire and skills to refine, and that's what keeps me excited about it.

What do you wish everyone knew about law librarians?

Law librarians are unstoppable—in finding information and acquiring resources, we regularly pull rabbits out of hats, find needles in haystacks, and any other relevant metaphors

you can think of. We have a deep sense of professionalism about our work and can be relied upon to approach any project in the law library or elsewhere in our organizations with intelligence, dedication, rigor, and good judgment.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

In this role, what I like most is helping to enable those in my division to do great work. The division includes incredibly talented law librarians with a great diversity of backgrounds, experience, and interests and a high degree of professional commitment to the law library and the profession. Supporting my team and their successes, whether it's through feedback or coaching, helping navigate administrative or organizational challenges, or connecting them with opportunities, is something I find tremendously rewarding.

What advice do you have for newer law librarians?

I have three ideas on this topic. The first one is to be on the lookout for potential role models and mentors. Regarding role models, I read a really interesting article in the *Harvard Business Review* years ago that said a role model doesn't necessarily need to be a role model for everything.

As a law librarian, you might have a role model for, say, reference work, and a different role model for how to be an effective supervisor. You can pick and choose your role models based upon the skill sets that you want to model after them. In my case, the reference librarians in my division frequently serve as my models for reference and for teaching legal research—I learn from them constantly. For leadership and management, I have Jane Sánchez, the law librarian of Congress, and my supervisor Peter Roudik, the assistant law librarian of Congress. And, of course, Tim Coggins, as I mentioned.

Mentoring relationships are invaluable, whether they're formal relationships such as those arranged through the AALL Leadership Academy, or informal ones that develop organically. Use these relationships wisely and tend to them with care—they can have a massive positive impact on your career growth.