With a desire to succeed and become a servant of the public, Daniel R. Campbell spent his nights studying to become a legal information professional while working full-time jobs during the day to pay for schooling. As a librarian who has had the opportunity to work in all three professional settings—academic, private, and government—he attributes his success to ongoing continued education, a resource he still takes advantage of in his career today.

Campbell, director of library and attorney services for the U.S. Court of International Trade, set specific goals throughout his educational journey and worked extremely hard to achieve them. He served in the United States Navy until 1986 and decided to pursue a degree in legal studies from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City upon his exit from service. "After two years, I decided that I wanted to attend law school and thought that a general legal studies degree would not provide me with the most useful education to prepare me for law school," said Campbell. Therefore, he transferred to Jersey City State College and switched his major to English, with a focus on writing, as he thought this path would better prepare him for the LSAT and later, law school. He graduated with a Bachelor's in English in 1991.
Daniel R. Campbell

“Stay relevant, be curious, and most importantly, keep learning!”
Daniel R. Campbell

Since Campbell needed to work in order to afford further schooling, he began looking for a full-time job. “Since my long-range plan was to ultimately go to law school, I wanted a job that kept me in the legal field, so I obtained a graduate certificate in paralegal studies from Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) in New Jersey, and later obtained a position in FDU’s general counsel’s office,” he said. Although expecting to perform more generic and traditional paralegal-related tasks, the main focus of his position entailed performing legal research in the university library. “It was during this time that I became interested in legal research and helping to solve the various legal issues the office dealt with.” He was accepted to Seton Hall Law School in 1993 in the part-time, four-year, evening program.

“During my first semester of law school—actually during my first few weeks of law school—I realized I needed to find a different job since the general counsel worked late hours and expected me to do the same,” said Campbell. “So I obtained a position at a New Jersey law firm, working full time while attending evening classes at Seton Hall.” He went on to work at the firm until his last year of law school, when he accepted another position at yet another New Jersey firm as their first law librarian. In 1998, he accepted a position as head of circulation at Rutgers Law School-Newark, where he attended night school to obtain his MLIS.

In 1998, Campbell also joined the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), and has since been active on several committees. His most recent appointment is serving on the AALL Spectrum editorial board for a second term. He is also an active member of the Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section.

Following, Campbell recounts his journey to becoming a government law librarian, describes the skills librarians need to succeed, and shares his thoughts on the ongoing changes in legal education.

**How did you initially enter the field?**
During my first year of law school, I got a job in a law firm library working reference, conducting research, and writing memos on various emerging legal issues of interest to the firm. After a year or so of interacting with the attorneys, I got a pretty good feel for what practicing law was like. By my second year of law school, I decided I preferred library-related work and never looked back.

**What inspired your career path?**
I’d have to say my inspiration to become a law librarian stems from my never-ending desire to learn new things. I also enjoy the frequent “thrill of the hunt” opportunities that being a law librarian provides, as well as the fulfillment of helping others resolve complex legal issues.

**What made you choose to work in government law libraries?**
I viewed returning to the federal government as a long-term career and retirement investment since I already had four years of government service in the Navy. Also, having worked in all three types of organizations, I feel the federal government offers more job stability and opportunity to advance. The public service aspect is also very important to me.

**Describe a typical day in the office?**
I manage several programs at the court, including library services, the archives program, and the court’s educational and continuing legal education programs. While a majority of my time is spent simply managing the librarians and attorneys who take care of the day-to-day aspects of these programs, I make it a point to know—and do—the work associated with each of these services. I find that this keeps me in the loop and helps me better understand the various issues brought to me by staff.

Additionally, I work closely with the court’s legal advisor, providing legal advice and services.
How has your job changed over the years? Besides adding the many hats described above to my hat collection, the speed at which information is provided and disseminated has made the timeliness in which we provide current awareness information a vital factor in our success in this area. Further, although we are still the keepers of the books (in all formats), we are now the organizers and creators of the information provided to our clientele.

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What type of patron traffic do you get at your library?
We assist all court staff, including judges, law clerks, judicial assistants, the clerk of court, and the various sections within the clerk’s office. We also assist bar members and, to a lesser extent, litigants with matters before the court. While physical traffic has diminished over the years, virtual traffic has increased significantly and has even surpassed what the physical traffic once was.

What’s your favorite thing about your job?
Having the opportunity to develop and deliver new products and services that will help my organization execute its mission in a more efficient and effective manner. I also find great personal fulfillment in working with colleagues who truly have a sense of service and a sincere dedication to the mission of the Court of International Trade and the Federal Judiciary.

With librarians being expected to do more with ever-shrinking budgets, how do you demonstrate your library’s value?
Making your services known and delivering an accurate and timely work product creates fans, and fans like to talk to others about what makes them happy in their lives. Good customer service also goes a long way and typically leaves an indelible impression, especially when combined with a superior work product.

Have you taken advantage of any additional educational opportunities since obtaining your degrees?
Yes. Besides attending the AALL Annual Meeting & Conference and participating in the various learning opportunities AALL offers throughout the year, I regularly attend various classes offered through the federal judiciary’s many training programs. In addition, my court’s internal training program is quite robust, and learning opportunities are made available on a regular basis.

What skills are in high demand for law librarians today?
Today’s librarian must be tech-savvy and have the willingness and ability to create and teach classes. They must be flexible and understand that with the changing nature of the legal landscape, they must be willing to assume new responsibilities that are not necessarily related to traditional libraries or the librarian profession.

How do you anticipate legal education will change in the next few years?
As law school class sizes, law school faculties, and law schools in general continue to shrink—and the needs and expectations of the younger generations are addressed by law schools—methods of teaching will continue to change and law schools will find new ways for students and faculty to interact both inside and outside of the classroom.

What career advice would you give to newer law librarians?
Stay relevant, be curious, and most importantly, keep learning!