

FROM PARALEGAL TO LAW LIBRARIAN: PANDEMIC EDITION

I enrolled in library school at San Jose State University's iSchool in 2018 after working in personal injury, family, and antitrust law as a paralegal. I didn't have a clear goal toward working in law librarianship. Honestly, I didn't know that law librarianship was a thing. I knew that I was struggling in my current industry because I didn't have enough interaction with other people, and I didn't feel like I was making a difference. I also did not meet very many happy attorneys who were clearly fulfilled in their career. I chose the MLIS program because it was interdisciplinary, and I believed it would help me with whatever career I ended up in.

A year into the program I was enrolled in a law librarianship class and met lots of librarians that worked in multiple niches who found great enjoyment in their careers. When my professor posed the idea of working in law librarianship, I struggled with imposter syndrome. I was concerned that my failings in my previous career would carry over into my imagined new one, and that I wouldn't succeed. I found incredibly helpful mentorship in my program, my internships, and most importantly with the people at San Diego Law Library, who offered me a part-time position in 2019. One of the things that sets our industry apart from others, I believe, is the value put on sharing information and building one another up. We are librarians, (like the "Keeper of the Keys" at Hogwarts) and sharing information and pathways to success is literally in our job description. I'm so grateful for how natural growth, mentorship, and the desire to help comes out in this profession.



I had my interview for my current full-time role at San Diego Law Library on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, nine days before San Diego County shut down. I was offered the full-time role on Friday, March 20, which incidentally is the same day I married my husband. I was incredibly fortunate to work full-time, remotely, for San Diego Law Library for a full year before the library reopened. During that time, I graduated with my MLIS, took over our YouTube channel, and put my technology and user experience skills to the test as all our services went online. I also served as secretary for the San Diego Area Law Librarians (SANDALL) chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries and hosted one of their first remote webinars.

Today, I still teach classes remotely via zoom and manage our video content. Our classes are still virtual, and we reach more people than we ever did before. One of our law library branches is open again, and I get to provide reference services both remotely and in person, depending on my schedule. My position is hybrid, and I really enjoy the flexibility. The transition back to in-person has been messy, but I continue to be impressed by the kindness and comradery of my department and library staff. I'm now vice president of SANDALL and looking forward to our in-person holiday party in a few weeks. Things may not look exactly like they did before the pandemic reshaped our world, but I am incredibly hopeful for my future in law librarianship.

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