LEADER PROFILE

MAP OUR FUTURE
Adelman earned her BA and MLS degrees from the University at Buffalo and her JD from Albany Law School. Her first job out of library school was working for a company that provided contract library services in Atlanta. After a year doing that, she landed a job at the large law firm, King & Spaulding. In 2001, she made the switch to academic libraries, serving as the reference librarian before being promoted to head of public services at the Georgia State University College of Law Library. In 2006, she found her way back to New York as head of collection management before being promoted to associate director at the University at Buffalo School of Law (UB). She now serves as the institution’s director of the law library and vice dean for legal information services. In 2011, she received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Librarianship.

In further testament to Adelman’s leadership, she was tapped to serve as University at Buffalo’s interim vice provost for University Libraries (June 2018–July 2019).

“Serving as interim vice provost for University Libraries was definitely a surprise,” said Adelman. “This opportunity allowed me to learn a lot about how the university works, who the main contacts are, and how to get things done faster. I think it was a great benefit. I also learned a lot about myself. I probably would not have run for AALL president if I hadn’t had that position.”

Adelman has taught Legal Bibliography and New York Legal Research in the law school setting and Legal Information Sources in the library school setting. Her most recent teaching endeavor was a legal research class for undergraduate law majors at UB Law.

She is also the lead author of the book *New York Legal Research*, now in its fourth edition. Further, she has published articles, book chapters, and tutorials on topics related to teaching legal research and academic law libraries.

Having been an AALL member for 21 years, Adelman served as chair of the Appointments Committee and Executive Board Strategic Directions Committee, and as a member of the Executive Board Finance & Budget Committee. She also served as chair of the Annual Meeting Program Committee, leading the charge for several innovative process changes to make the AALL Annual Meeting & Conference educational programming more responsive to the needs of law librarians and legal information professionals. She has also chaired AALL’s Academic Law
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**Q&A**

**QUICK HITS WITH BETH ADELMAN**

Describe the AALL community in three words.
I am going to go with Community, Connection, and Collaboration. The three Cs, because those three words sum it up for me.

Best book you recently read?
The best book I recently read is called “The Book of Form and Emptiness,” by Ruth Ozeki. It’s literary fiction and a little bit fantasy. I highly recommend it.

Guilty pleasure?
Dark chocolate-covered marzipan. Marzipan is a candy-like confection made from almonds that is a very popular specialty in Germany.

Favorite way to unwind after a long day?
I would say a long walk, or a hug from my granddaughter.

Favorite travel destination?
Anywhere in Asia. I was in Singapore in June. I have been to Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Singapore.

Libraries Special Interest Section. Adelman represented AALL as a member of the U.S. News & World Report’s Joint Task Force Steering Committee that proposed changes to the survey questions about law libraries used in the magazine’s rankings.

Here, she discusses her goals for the coming year, the importance of creating a pipeline to the profession, and what she finds most rewarding about her job.

**Now that your term as president has officially begun, what is first on your agenda?**
My top priority is increasing the pipeline to the profession and ensuring there is more diversity within it. I am looking to create a Pipeline to the Profession Special Committee, which is one of the goals of the new 2022-2025 strategic plan. I am also looking to create an Awards Review Special Committee and a Body of Knowledge Special Committee, since it’s been a few years since the BoK domains come out—the Committee would look at the current domains and assess if anything needs to be updated/added.

**What goals or initiatives has the AALL Executive Board set for the coming year? What will be their areas of focus?**
I think that one important area of focus is to harness some of the good ideas that were recommended in the IDEA Special Committee Report. We will be looking at what recommendations we can carry forward into our 2022-2025 strategic plan. We are also discussing drafting a more general code of conduct. We currently have a Meeting & Events Code of Conduct, but not a more general one.

My focus at the beginning of my term will be to get the special committees up and running, and I will also determine how the IDEA Special Committee Report can be integrated into the strategic plan.

**One of the new goals of the 2022-2025 AALL Strategic Plan is Pipeline to the Profession. How do you foresee recruiting more students into the profession?**
AALL has already begun implementing some of the items in our new 2022-2025 strategic plan, such as creating a student page. But I believe we need a special committee to look at the possibilities and make recommendations. I think the biggest issue that we have is finding the best way to communicate about the career opportunities that exist within law librarianship, and that AALL is here to help those interested in a career in law libraries/the legal information profession. I believe communication with not only library schools, but also law school career services departments, to tell them about AALL and the world of law librarianship will be helpful in recruiting more people into the profession.
How do we harness those communication chains in the long term, knowing that players change? New employees in those offices makes it very difficult to keep the communication going. So, how do we get around these issues to promote the profession and the Association? That’s what we need to know to start exploring the pipeline.

The theme for next year’s AALL Annual Meeting is “Map Our Future.” How does this tie into your goals as president as well as the new strategic plan?

The theme for the 2023 Annual Meeting & Conference in Boston is about the future. Identifying where we want to be and figuring out how to get there, rather than letting the wind carry us. It fits generally into our new 2022-2025 strategic plan, because it’s not tied to any specific goal or strategy. I tend to think of it as a lens or a way to look at our goals and problems that need to be solved, such as increasing diversity, membership retention, and attracting more students into the law librarianship profession.

What are some ways to make the profession of law librarianship more inclusive and diverse?

Trying to identify ways to recruit more diverse members, as well as retain them within the profession. Both are important, but retention seems to be problematic in many organizations and institutions, not just in library associations. I have seen this at universities and with other employers. You can do a lot to attract people to an employer or the profession, but it is the retention piece that seems to be very problematic, and it’s not something that can take care of itself. I think the Association’s going to have to work at retaining our membership. We need to take affirmative steps to ensure we have educational programs, mentorship opportunities, and resources aimed at retention, so members have solid reasons to stay engaged with AALL and renew their memberships year after year.

How do you stay engaged and passionate about your work?

I would say that I am very lucky because I love my work. Aside from some very short time periods in my employment history, I don’t have to work at staying engaged and passionate. I feel very self-motivated because of how much I enjoy it.

What is one of the most valuable lessons you have learned in the professional leadership positions you have held?

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned is that I can only control my own actions. I can’t necessarily control the actions of others. I can try, but I think that is an important lesson to keep in mind. Particularly in my environment.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I absolutely adore my library colleagues here at the University of Buffalo—both in the law library as well as the university library. I enjoy working with the law school faculty. Even though I don’t get to work closely with students all the time because of my administrative work, I enjoy working with law students. Last semester, for example, I taught a class. It was very time consuming and challenging because it was a different kind of class, but I developed a close connection with those students throughout the semester that was very rewarding. I really enjoy seeing their eyes when the lightbulbs turn on in their minds when they truly grasp a concept.

What is the value of being a member of AALL?

For me, it is not just the education that I received that I can take advantage of, but also the networking. I have, over the years, met most of my library colleagues through AALL. I have made some close friendships, but also professional relationships where I honestly believe that if I called any member of AALL and asked for help or advice about something law librarianship related, I would get help or a referral to somebody who could help. It feels very much like a community in that way.

What is the best career advice you have ever received?

It sounds sort of cliché, but very early on when I was struggling in one of my positions, one of my co-workers who I would talk to when I was feeling low would say to me, “Keep your eye on the ball.” Remembering that phrase when times are difficult has helped me through a number of frustrating and difficult situations.