

STARTING A NEW CHAPTER: MY JOURNEY FROM LAW PRACTICE TO LAW LIBRARIANSHIP

You know the feeling when you read your horoscope and think, “Wow! That is so me!”? That’s exactly how I felt in the summer of 2021 when I stumbled upon a job posting for a public services law librarian at my alma mater, the University of Mississippi School of Law. It felt like a sign, only instead of telling me that Mercury was in retrograde and to avoid unnecessary communication, it was describing my dream job.

At the time, I was running a small-town law practice. Stressed-out, sleep-deprived, anxious; all too common descriptors for practicing attorneys, and they definitely applied to me. The challenges of dealing with demanding clients and running a business had me burning the candle at both ends. I knew something had to change.



My husband and I were on our honeymoon in New Orleans, Louisiana, when I saw the job posting. The only thing I knew about law librarianship was that it existed. But a career that combined my favorite parts of the law with my favorite place, the library, seemed too good to be true. When we got back to the hotel from our stroll along Bourbon Street, I drank a bottle of water, took three Ibuprofen, and got to work fixing up my resume. Hitting the send button, I had no real expectations of getting the job, but it felt good to know I was taking steps toward something better.

When the call came for an interview, I was surprised, but I was determined to seize the opportunity. I bought a new suit; read every article I could find online about law librarianship and academic law librarian interviews; I even took free online continuing education courses in librarianship. I was not going to let this opportunity go without giving it my all.

And it paid off! I got the job! Now, after almost two years, I can honestly say it was the best decision I ever made. It really is my dream job. Along with teaching legal research, I have had the opportunity to develop our Law and Technology course, attend the AALL Annual Meetings, meet incredible people, work with incredible people, and actually have work-life balance. I hope to help my students that are going into private practice avoid making the same mistakes I made. I always encourage them to make their mental health a priority. I don’t have a MLS degree, so my path to law librarianship is unconventional. But I think it’s a testament to the incredible potential in our field. Without a library degree, I have still been able to find success and contribute. I firmly believe that law librarians are more necessary now than they’ve ever been. We are in the best position to become the experts and guides on the transformative technologies impacting the field of law today. Our experiences, whether we are traditional candidates, only have a JD, or only have a MLS degree, can offer unique insights and strengths for the future of our profession. We can and should make space for more voices in law librarianship.

I never would have guessed, even two years ago, that this is where I would end up, but I’m so glad I did. I feel excited for the future, happy, grateful . . . my horoscope did say, “You may feel especially emotional today.” Nailed it.

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