

**JULY 31, 2025**

## ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

### AALL 2025 / WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

If you attended the [2025 Annual Meeting & Conference](#) in Portland, we want to hear from you! [Please take a few minutes to share your feedback](#) and let us know what resonated, what could be improved, and what you would like to see more of. [The survey will close Friday, August 22.](#) We appreciate your time and insights!

Audio recordings of most conference programs will be available soon—stay tuned!

[BEGIN SURVEY](#)

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CONELL CLASS OF 2025

This year, **68 newer law librarians** took part in the [Conference of Newer Law Librarians \(CONELL\)](#), kicking off their AALL journey with a full day of learning and connection.

Highlights included:

- A dynamic leadership panel moderated by [Brian Huffman](#) (University of Hawai'i), featuring Immediate Past President [Cornell H. Winston](#) (United States Attorney's Office), [Tawnya Plumb](#) (University of Wyoming), and [Abby Dos Santos](#) (Caplin & Drysdale).
- Interactive Speed Networking to build connections with fellow attendees.
- Engaging Roundtables to explore AALL's many volunteer opportunities.
- A lively Marketplace to meet representatives from AALL's [chapters](#), [caucuses](#), [committees](#), and [special interest sections](#).



The day concluded with a memorable tour of Powell's City of Books—a perfect Portland send-off!

## ON-DEMAND LEARNING

### UPCOMING COFFEE CHAT

Be part of the conversation! Register for next Monday's [AALL Virtual Coffee Chat: Debriefing the CRIV Platform and Database Survey](#), taking place on **August 4 from 2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. (CDT)**. Visit [AALL eLearning](#) to stay up to date on future topics and to register.

### SHARE YOUR COFFEE CHAT IDEAS

Contribute to the growth of AALL's community of experts by sharing cutting-edge trends, best practices, and innovations spanning a diverse range of topics, igniting inspiration among your fellow professionals. Do you have ideas or topics for future coffee chats? **Please share your ideas with [elearning@aall.org](mailto:elearning@aall.org).**

### SUBMIT A WEBINAR TOPIC

Do you have an idea for a webinar? The [Continuing Professional Education Committee](#) is looking for fresh ideas to create engaging and relevant webinars—and we need your input! [Submit a webinar proposal](#) and share the topics that will support your professional growth. Your ideas will help shape upcoming programs tailored to your interests. Have questions? Please email [elearning@aall.org](mailto:elearning@aall.org).

# BUILD YOUR SKILLS, BOOST YOUR CAREER—EXPLORE AALL'S SELF-PACED COURSES

Ready to level up your expertise—on your own schedule? Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned pro looking to sharpen your skills, [AALL's self-paced courses](#) offer flexible, practical learning designed to meet you where you are.

Each course delivers real-world strategies you can apply right away:

- [Introduction to Law Library Budgets](#): Learn the core concepts of budget planning and financial management in a law library setting.
- [Strategic Thinking for Law Librarians](#): Strengthen your ability to think big and implement projects with purpose and precision.
- [Foundations of Legal Research](#): Gain the tools and confidence to conduct effective, efficient legal research.
- [Evolving Collection Development for Law Librarian](#): Build collections that align with user needs, budget realities, and changing formats.

Start learning today—your future self will thank you.

LEARN MORE &  
REGISTER

## LEADER IN YOU

Each month the [Leadership Development Committee](#) highlights a librarian leader and asks them a few questions about their leadership journey.

**Pauline S. Afuso**  
**Public Services Librarian**  
**Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library**

### What does leadership mean to you?

Trust. When I look at the people who lead me, and who are good leaders, I trust the decisions they make. I trust that my leader will help the team accomplish a task, make the right policy decision, or course correct if needed. Trust develops when leaders have created a collaborative working environment, when we can communicate openly with team members, and we can wholeheartedly support our colleagues.

If you look at great leaders, they all share wonderful traits—honesty, integrity, intelligence, compassion, steadfastness, and the ability to motivate others to do their best. These qualities are what creates the trust others have in our great leaders, and they motivate us to be better librarians and our best selves.

### Is there a particular AALL product/program/article that was especially helpful for you as you developed as a leader?

I attended the [Conference of Newer Law Librarians \(CONELL\)](#) many years ago, just after I finished library school. One of the speakers was Donald Dunn, who was there to tell us how to navigate the [Annual Meeting & Conference](#), and what we could do to make it a successful experience. While I cannot remember if he mentioned leadership specifically, he did say that for the career-minded folk, moving up the ladder into leadership positions would be difficult. The library directors at the big firms and law schools were fairly young and would not be retiring for quite a long while. He did, however, say that we could get valuable experience by participating in AALL and regional chapters. He encouraged us to volunteer for committees, present at conferences, and run for office of our local chapter.

This advice stuck with me, because for a long period of my career, I did not even work in a library, I worked for a legal publisher. Volunteering and being active with the [Minnesota Association of Law Libraries \(MALL\)](#) and AALL gave me connections to law librarianship, and it exposed me to so many new people with different experiences and ideas. It was awesome! While I have seen many outstanding programs (the keynote address by Bryan Stevenson comes to mind), this advice from CONELL has stuck with me for over 30 years.

### Which leadership skills were the most difficult to develop?

One of the more difficult skills is leading without being a bully or stepping on other people's toes. Have you ever been in a group where everyone is an introvert and you are supposed to discuss something, but no one wants to talk? I am normally an introvert, but in these situations, I often feel a compulsion to fill the silence and start the conversation, get the ideas generating, and do something.

### What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Be confident. Most of the time, you were selected by someone or multiple people to be in your leadership position. You are a leader. It is not a crime to ask questions, and you are not going to be fired if you make a mistake



as long as you try to fix it, learn from it, and move on. Learn to apologize if you are wrong, and please be sincere. Changing your mind because you have new information or a different perspective? That is not a sign of wishy-washiness. That is a sign of maturity. I do not think the same way that I did when I was in high school and I thought *The Fountainhead* was the most amazing book. Everyone should be allowed to grow and change. We are human after all.

### What are you doing to ensure your continued growth and development as a leader?

Paying attention. For example, since I work in a public government library, I do not get the cool AI tools or newest versions of the various legal databases. But that does not mean I'm not reading about it, wishing we had it at our library, and bugging vendors in the exhibit hall for demos. You cannot be a good leader if you can't keep up with what is affecting everyone in the profession. I am not an expert, but I'm not completely clueless. I also try to stay active with local chapters and AALL. This is where I can meet new people and see how they are functioning as leaders in their organizations. It is so interesting to see how different people can thrive as leaders, even if they are different from me.

Do you know a great leader? Recommend a leader for us to spotlight in the Leader in You column. Send your recommendation with a brief description of why you think they are a great leader to [Pauline S. Afuso](#), chair of the [Leadership Development Committee](#).

## PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

### MAKE A CONNECTION THAT MATTERS—JOIN AALL'S MENTOR PROGRAM

Whether you are just starting out or looking to give back, [AALL's Mentor Program](#) is your chance to build meaningful, career-shaping connections. With over 100 successful matches and counting, the program pairs newer members with experienced professionals for guidance, support, and inspiration.

Looking to grow? Ready to share what you have learned? [Sign up today](#) to become a mentor or mentee—and be part of a community that lifts each other up.

### WEBINARS NOW AVAILABLE ON-DEMAND

- [CRIV Vendor Roundtable: Shared Responsibility—Navigating Security and Privacy in Library Technology](#)
- [AALL Webinar Law Archive - Free Legal Scholarship Repository](#)
- [AALL Webinar: Academic Law Library Collections: Looking to the Future](#)

Find many more continuing education programs and webinars on [AALL eLearning](#).

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### QUICK LINKS

[AALL Events Calendar](#) | [AALL eLearning](#) | [AALL Education on AALLNET](#) | [AALL Body of Knowledge](#) | [AALL DEI Resources](#)

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