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## A Tribute to Eileen Haughey Searls

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## A TRIBUTE TO EILEEN HAUGHEY SEARLS

VINCENT C. IMMEL\*

The Saint Louis University School of Law was blessed in 1952 when Eileen H. Searls joined its faculty and became its law librarian. There is no other person who has rendered longer service, and more important service, in developing the law school and making it the school that it now is, with the possible exception of Alphonse G. Eberle, a long-time dean of the school before World War II. Few, if any, law librarians have as much knowledge of law books and law librarianship as she, or as great a talent for building an excellent law library almost from scratch.

The law school was closed during World War II, and when it reopened following the war, the school was woefully unprepared in every respect to meet the needs of the ex-GIs clamoring for a legal education. The building was inadequate; the budget was inadequate; there were not enough faculty and staff. Above all, the library barely met minimal standards in either the size or quality of its collection. The situation was not much better when Eileen joined the faculty in 1952. Without an adequate budget or staffing, she set out to build a law library that was needed to support a respectable law school. She was tireless in her efforts, spending hours in the Library of Congress, going through its castaways and salvaging those books she needed for our collection. She searched second-hand book dealers' lists to fill gaps in the collection; she bartered with other libraries, trading some of her duplicates for those of the other school. She had a talent for negotiating "good deals" with the book dealers. She weeded out the libraries of law firms who were interested in making gifts of some of the books they no longer needed. I doubt if any librarian ever built as good a library using fewer dollars than Eileen did during those days.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, all available library stack space was in use, and it became necessary to put part of the collection in storage. Although we had been promised a new building, the money crunch became so great that our plans were put on hold. It was during this period that we saw Eileen's power of persuasion reach its highest peak. West Publishing Company offered us a complete second set of the Reporter Series at a considerably reduced rate. We would need the second set if our plans for a new building were ever realized. Although the University agreed to advance the money for their pur-

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chase, we had no place to put the books. Eileen persuaded the publisher to store the books for us until we could get our new building, without any commitment on our part concerning when that building would be completed. I am sorry to say that the publisher stored that set for us for several years.

Through Eileen's cooperation with Washington University's law librarian, before the computer era, the card catalogues of the two law schools were cross-indexed so that by going to the card catalogue of either school, a researcher could ascertain if either of the schools had the publication he or she wanted. During the years of the budget crunch at both schools, Eileen and her Washington University counterpart worked out an agreement to avoid duplicating the other school's holdings of some of the lesser used books in certain areas of the law. Through this cooperation, both schools had better access to more books than they otherwise would have had.

Our building committee was in operation long before a new building was authorized. It and its successor committees were in operation for almost forty years before the last stage of our present complex was completed a few years ago. The one thing that these committees had in common was the membership of Eileen Searls. While I cannot speak for the later committees, she was the most important member of the early committees. Many of her ideas and computations contained in the earlier plans were incorporated in the later plans. These included not only the organization of the library space, but also the arrangement and size of faculty offices, classrooms, lounges, hallways, and stairwells. These computations included the size of classroom tables and the amount of space between the rows of tables. One architect commented that he had never before received such a detailed and specific plan from any building committee. She was very careful in detailing the specifications for the lighting throughout the building. For years, we were accustomed to seeing her running about the law school with blue prints in one hand and a tape measure in the other. It was her many valuable suggestions to the architects that enabled us to come as close as we did in getting what we wanted from the floor space that was allocated to us and with the money that was available.

She has always kept abreast not only of new library technology but also the new technology for use in faculty and administrative offices and in the classrooms. New methods for duplication, and new kinds of typewriters and printing, were usually put in use in the library before they were available elsewhere. It was through her foresight that as the computer age was developing, many of the new library staff hires were people who were knowledgeable in the new field or willing to learn it. She and her staff were instrumental in putting together the various law and general library consortia that are now tied together on the web. Her services and that of her staff have been sought by many libraries, including the Library of Congress and the Harvard Law School. It is clear that she and her staff have been in the vanguard in using these new techniques. She had a knack for attracting and training competent assistants and

persuaded several of them to get law degrees. Several of these former assistants now are the librarians of county and law school libraries throughout the country.

Her services to the school outside the library have been as great as her services as a librarian. In her early years, she taught courses in legal research and writing. From the beginning she was an active member of the faculty and participated in all stages of faculty governance. Her advice and suggestions on curricular matters, admissions and exclusions, and hiring and retention, were always thoughtful and helpful. She realized more clearly than most of us that a great law school and a great law library had to be developed together. She fought fiercely for the development of both.

For years she was the only woman on the faculty. Although there were few women students in those days, Eileen willingly served as their role model and spent many hours counseling them on how to succeed in their law school work and how to survive in the male-dominated profession. Many of our students, particularly those in the evening division, were married. She was very helpful in organizing the wives of these students into what was called the "Dames" club. Similarly, she was very active and helpful in organizing the wives of alumni into an association called the "Queen's Bench." Both of these organizations were of inestimable help to their members, to the law school, and to the students.

Along with Dean Childress (Professor Childress at that time), Eileen was active in inaugurating the school's first journal, the *Intramural Law Journal*, predecessor to the *Saint Louis University Law Journal*. She was willing to devote her time and effort to any academic innovation that would increase the use and importance of the law library.

Before there was such a thing as the National Law Day celebration, the big social event of the year for the law school, faculty, students, and alumni, was the law school's annual Law Day Dinner Dance. It all began as a dinner for faculty and students that was held, if you can imagine it, with Searls' blessing, in the reading room of the law library. She has always been active in encouraging and promoting the closest relations possible among the faculty, students, and alumni.

Eileen's loyalty and devotion to the law school and to the university has not been limited to her generous giving of talent, time, and effort for almost fifty years. Look for her name on the DuBourg Society's list of contributors to the University and you will see proof of her magnanimous generosity in sharing her treasure with the law school.

The School of Law, and all of us who are part of it, are deeply indebted to Eileen Haughey Searls for all she has done. None of us would be where we are today, were it not for her devotion to her job, the legal profession, this school, its faculty, its students and its alumni, but above all, to *her* library.

Eileen, we are very grateful for your unflagging and devoted service to all of us through these many years. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!