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## TRIBUTE TO EILEEN SEARLS

S. BLAIR KAUFFMAN\*

The first time I met Eileen Searls she taught me the power of hands-on management: she hugged me. I don't know if everyone else gets a hug, but I'm sure they must at least get a smile. Eileen smiles often and obviously loves her work. She has been a law librarian for fifty years at Saint Louis University.<sup>1</sup> It would be hard to find anyone more passionate, enthusiastic, or loyal to the profession. These qualities have made Eileen an exemplary role model for scores of others "who have had the privilege of knowing or working with her." In addition, these qualities have helped Saint Louis University develop an exceptional law library: one that attracts and develops exceptional librarians who, like Eileen, are loyal and enthusiastic about their work.

Coincidentally, Eileen's career began at the same place and at nearly the same time as two other well-known figures in law librarianship: Roy Mersky<sup>2</sup> and Jackie Jurkins.<sup>3</sup> Of course, Roy went on to eventually be the emperor of world-wide law librarianship, operating from his base at the University of Texas, and Jackie followed a quieter career path that took her to the Multnomah County Law Library, in Portland, Oregon, where she was eventually elected President of the American Association of Law Libraries. All three graduated from the University of Wisconsin Law School in the early 1950s, and Eileen and Roy have even more similarities: both obtained three

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1. Eileen Searls received her B.A. (1948), J.D. (1950), and M.A.L.S. (1951) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She worked at the Yale Library (cataloging Japanese materials) from 1951 through 1952, and at the Saint Louis University Law Library ever since 1952.

2. Roy Mersky currently holds the title of William Stamps Farish Professor of Law and Director of Research, University of Texas at Austin Jamail Center for Legal Research, Tarlton Law Library. He received his B.A. (1948), J.D. (1952), and M.A.L.S. (1953) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He worked at Yale Law Library from 1954 through 1959, then as Director of the Washington State Law Library (1959-63) and the University of Colorado Law Library (1963-65), before joining the University of Texas as law librarian, in 1965.

3. Jacquelyn J. Jurkins is the Director of the Law Library and Law Librarian at Multnomah Law Library, in Portland, Oregon. She received her J.D. (1951) and M.A.L.S. (1952) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She served as President of the American Association of Law Libraries in 1984-85.

Wisconsin degrees, beginning with their undergraduate degrees, in 1948, followed by law and librarian degrees, and both began their careers at Yale. I don't know what the University of Wisconsin was like at the time these three attended law school, but I am told there was a nearby bar called The Library, which was popular with law students. Perhaps, library work held some other level of attraction to Wisconsin law students. At any rate, Wisconsin certainly produced some influential law librarians, and Eileen was at the lead. When Eileen graduated in 1950, she took a position as Catalog Librarian at Yale, but quickly moved on to Saint Louis as their Law Librarian the following year. She has been at Saint Louis University ever since.

At Saint Louis University, Eileen built a library that is both advanced and far thinking in its use of technology and sensitive to the needs of individual users. Along the way Eileen has positively influenced the careers of numerous librarians. Thanks to her efforts, the Saint Louis University Law Library is well recognized nationally and has received many awards. For example, it is one of the only libraries in the country to hold Network Level Enhance status on OCLC, which allows its catalogers to make permanent changes to the OCLC database. For the uninitiated, OCLC is one of the major bibliographic utilities holding catalog records for many of the libraries of the world. Having access to the OCLC database is the rough equivalent of allowing judges access to the reporter system to change reported decisions. This degree of trust certainly says something quite positive about the respect extended to the Saint Louis University law librarians from their colleagues nationally. Eileen's ability to move her library forward comes from her own special management style, which is both positive and nurturing.

Eileen is the queen of networking. While some achieve professional success through exercising the power of their ambition, Eileen's style is more restrained. She is a builder of communities and a natural born networker who has used her talent to bring people together to advance librarianship long before the term "networking" came into vogue. Many of the library consortia that are so ubiquitous today trace their roots to Eileen's efforts more than twenty years ago in St. Louis, where she helped found the Mid-America Law School Library Consortium. At the urging of her dean, she persuaded the directors of approximately one dozen academic law libraries to form a cooperative organization for sharing resources. Working as a group, this organization of fairly modest law libraries was able to establish itself as a leader in the use of new technologies for sharing resources. In fact, the innovative use of technology by this consortium exceeded what most of the more well endowed libraries were doing on their own. For example, when most people still thought "fax" was a misspelling of "facts," the Mid-America Consortium was able to get a grant for installing fax machines in each member library for quickly delivering interlibrary loan copies. Shortly after CD-ROMs appeared as a viable media for storing computer data, this consortium was able

to get a grant for putting CD-ROM-based OPACs in each member library, capable of searching library records either by individual library or as for the entire consortium as a group. These innovative ideas were not the brainchild of any single member, but demonstrated the power of many people working together, and the person who brought them together was Eileen.

Many other libraries followed the example set by Eileen and the Mid-America Law School Library Consortium. By the late 1990s, nearly twenty law library consortia were included in the list of consortia prepared by the American Association of Law Libraries Council of Law Library Consortia. One of these was yet another group spearheaded by Eileen: The Conference of Law Libraries of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities. All benefited from the successful example Eileen set with the Mid-America group.

Eileen's enthusiasm extends beyond librarianship and includes her adopted city, St. Louis. When the two of these come together, Eileen is in her prime. One of my all time favorite librarian conventions occurred when the Mid-America Association of Law Libraries met in St. Louis some fifteen years ago. Eileen was our hostess and took full advantage of this opportunity to show off the city she loves so dearly. I doubt whether many people think of St. Louis as one of the world's (or even America's) great cities, but you need Eileen for a tour guide. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and it is impossible to spend time with Eileen in St. Louis without sharing some of her appreciation for that great old river town. Between educational meetings and seminars at downtown hotels, she managed to get us inside the walls of the city's best law firms, to the tops of its tallest buildings (I am told, St. Louis is the site of the first sky scraper) and inside of some of its splendid old mansions. It is a meeting not to be forgotten, just as none of us who have known her will ever forget Eileen.

