
Mark E. Estes's career in law librarianship has spanned 40 years. How did it all begin? A fateful crash while trying to get on the U.S. Olympic cycling team landed him as a graduate teaching assistant for Al Coco, a then-prominent member of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). Since becoming a member of AALL, Estes has been extremely active, donating his time to several committees, chapters, publications, and programs. Although he has moved on from his last position at a county law library, he continues to be active in the law library community, volunteering his time for a profession he truly loves and working part-time at the University of San Diego Pardee Legal Research Center.

“AALL is a way to give back to the profession, to learn about the profession, and to further the role of law librarians in the world.”
Mark E. Estes

You have served on a number of AALL committees. What has been the most rewarding volunteer opportunity for you?

As president and a member of the AALL Executive Board, the chapter visits were rewarding because I got to listen to people from all over the country, I got to visit other libraries, get their ideas, and share those ideas with others. As vice president, coming up with the idea of creating the Members Open Forum. I thought of that idea because back in the tumultuous time of the early '90s the SISs, in particular the Social Responsibilities SIS, had lots of ideas to of H the." o atl ha o off(

strategic planning with yourself or your group at that time, nothing can interrupt it. It's like having an appointment with the executive director or a partner; you show up to the meeting when it's scheduled. Let people know "I've got this time blocked off to do planning, that's what I have to do now without being interrupted." Other times I can deal with some fires, but for planning purposes I had to schedule the time. I think everyone has to do this because otherwise the urgent matters will always crowd out the important tasks.

What's the best career advice you received during your 40-plus years as a law librarian?

The best advice was to attend a government law library program in Williamsburg, Virginia. That was in January 1990, the year I was running for AALL vice president. Why was that the best advice? Because that put me in front of state, court, and county law librarians, and until that time, I had been in private law libraries and academia. These other organizations didn't know me. But on the recommendation of one state law librarian, I attended that conference. I learned a lot, and I met a lot of people. And I think that helped with the election.

What advice would you give to a colleague in the earlier stages of his or her career?

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