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Meet My Mentors—Janet Wallin and Caroline Heriot

My career as a law librarian was greatly shaped by two extraordinary professional librarians who served as my mentors. These two women, Janet Wallin and Caroline Chandler Heriot, were quintessential role models.

I entered the University of Maryland College of Library and Information Services in 1973–74, with the intent to attend law school after graduation. Because I also wanted to work in a law library, I decided to apply to law schools with evening/part-time programs. I narrowed my search to three schools, which I visited; the last was the University of Toledo College of Law. I was immediately struck by the pleasant atmosphere of the law school community there and, in particular, the library. The law librarian was Professor Janet Wallin.

Professor Wallin began her undergraduate study at Michigan State University and started her legal education at Toledo. She moved to Chicago and ultimately

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graduated cum laude from Loyola University Chicago School of Law in 1960. She worked at DePaul University College of Law from 1958 until 1962 before returning to Toledo in 1963 as its director.

Professor Wallin completed her legal education at a time when few women went to law school, and she maintained a dedication to women's legal issues throughout her life. She worked on the boards of a number of organizations throughout the southern Michigan-northern Ohio region. She was always a woman of action and always a leader. The area surrounding Toledo and Monroe, Michigan, is forever in her debt.

I arrived at Toledo not too long after the move from what is now Gilham Hall into the College of Law building on the west side of the campus. Professor Wallin's work on the design for the new building and the actual move was still a fresh memory. The plan for the original building had to be altered for financial reasons. The completion of the second phase years later created a law library that is the lasting tribute to her vision and dedication.

Soon after I arrived, Professor Wallin offered me the position of head of the circulation department despite my lack of library and supervisory experience. I know that my first year must have been trying at times for her and Rhoda Berkowitz, the Associate Law Librarian. I was met on the job by a seasoned group of law student desk workers who challenged my ability to provide direction. Somehow both the library and I managed to survive my lack of experience. Professor Wallin patiently watched and guided my development, and she graciously corrected my errors.

Professor Wallin had a passion for her work as a librarian and a teacher. Her speciality was real property, a course she taught during the winter and spring quarters. She was a campus leader who chaired or served on nearly every major law school or university committee. Her office was close to the entrance to the law library, without anyone or anything as a buffer. She was always available to students, faculty, and the general public. She instilled in me a real sense of service to the public. I have tried to be true to that spirit of helpfulness throughout my career.

My commitment to professional library associations is rooted in Professor Wallin's belief in their value. She encouraged me to attend meetings of the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries, an organization that she served as president in 1967-68. At these meetings, she would introduce me to some of the leaders of the profession. I marveled at how easily she interacted with everyone and admired how well known and respected she was. Professor Wallin was a person of compassion and thoughtfulness. I will always remember her enjoyment of a good social gathering and her engaging smile. She was classy, always impeccably dressed. She was a true professional, both as a teacher and as an administrator.

When I entered my last two quarters of law school, I sought Professor Wallin's advice about my future career. She displayed keen insight, and I am sure that she gently pushed me toward the correct decision. I had interviewed at the

Marshall-Wythe Law Library at the College of William and Mary for the position of Associate Law Librarian. I wanted the chance to participate in the move to the new building. Furthermore, I was intrigued by the opportunity to work for Caroline Chandler Heriot.

Caroline Heriot, or Miss Heriot as she was called, was a native of South Carolina. Her library science and law degrees were from the University of North Carolina. She was truly a "genteel Southern lady." By the time we met she had already worked at the University of North Carolina and headed the law libraries at the University of Iowa, the New Mexico Supreme Court, and Loyola University New Orleans.

Miss Heriot had been hired as law librarian at William and Mary by Dean William Spong because of her outstanding experience as a library administrator and her ability for designing libraries. I remember her spreading out the blueprints and discussing the new building with me when I interviewed with her. The new library would be her crowning glory and a lasting tribute to her vision of how library service could be expressed spatially. When I returned to Toledo, I know that Professor Wallin sensed my excitement about the position and the challenge at William and Mary. I waited eagerly for word about the position. One morning Professor Wallin called me into her office and told me to go home at lunch and check my mail. Sure enough, a letter offering the position at William and Mary awaited me.

Caroline Heriot was a polished and expert administrator who included me in all aspects of the library's operation. She allowed me to assist her in planning the move to the new law school building. Because the existing law library was located in three separate buildings, this was no easy feat. Under Miss Heriot's direction, I planned and shifted small collections in the two auxiliary library areas. After satisfactorily completing these tasks, she allowed me to help plot the move of the collection into the new library. I still enjoy planning and implementing shifts to this day. Miss Heriot also taught me a great deal about budget planning. She provided me with sage advice about what battles to fight and how to fight them with dignity and a steadfast reliance on truth. I learned how to write proposals using sound empirical research and pertinent comparative data. I learned from her the importance of a strong work ethic, and I came to appreciate her passion for the profession.

Miss Heriot encouraged my continuing interest in professional activities. When I arrived she was just completing her two-year term as president of the Southeastern Association of Law Libraries (SEAALL), and she encouraged me to become an active participant. SEAALL has provided me with many of my greatest professional friendships and memories, and I owe Miss Heriot and the chapter a great debt. She also graciously introduced me to her close friends Frances Hall and Mary Oliver, two of the greatest librarians in North Carolina and leading figures in AALL. She made a point of introducing me to many librarians during my first two AALL Annual Meetings.

Miss Heriot's personal courage and grace after the diagnosis of her cancer taught me the difficult lesson of how to conduct oneself in the face of death. Her tenacious struggle revealed her depth of character and her dignity. The cancer would ultimately triumph over her body, but it never defeated her spirit. One of my happiest moments was at the joint meeting of the Southeastern Chapter of AALL and the Southeastern Conference of AALS in Williamsburg in 1981. It was one of the last times I was privileged to be in Miss Heriot's company, and it was wonderful to see how thrilled she was to have everyone admire her new library.¹

Both of my mentors were truly professional legal educators and administrators. Their passion for their work, their dedication to this profession, and their nurturing and supportive manner were great blessings to me. I hope that I was worthy of their support and encouragement, and I continue to strive to be the type of librarian of whom they would be proud. I hope that I will reward their legacy to me by becoming an inspiration and mentor to others.