

she is saying and it helps her to verbalize those issues in increasingly complicated and nebulous areas of emerging law. Talking with her also helps me to understand the problems my firm's attorneys face and to appreciate the amount of work and time it takes for them to accomplish the quality legal representation they must provide. Talking about the law with your wife is fairly geeky, I'll admit, but after all, I'm a librarian.

I Am Not Bored—And Here's Why*

Penny A. Hazelton**

¶1 Just for the record, I have had the same job (and job title) since 1985. Before then I worked in academic and court law libraries for ten years. If I can add correctly, that means I have been in this business for twenty-five years—plenty of time to be bored! Somehow, though, I am not bored. In reflecting on why I still like my job, I have decided there are four things that have kept me interested and excited: teaching, my library staff and professional colleagues around the country, the variety of my responsibilities, and outside passions.

¶2 Teaching smart law and law librarianship students forces me to learn new things. The information world is changing quickly around us, and it is very hard to keep pace. I went to law school even before there was a Westlaw or LexisNexis—the really *olden* days!

¶3 Students today are computer savvy and approach research and the use of legal research tools differently than I do. They help me see alternative ways to teach important principles. They help me improve library services. They challenge me to have answers to questions I have not even asked myself yet! I have learned to accept that they will know things that I don't know. But I still know some things they do not know, so we are even! And all the time and effort spent preparing, correcting papers, and trying to make research interesting is worthwhile when a former student seeks me out at an alumni affair to tell me that, in her job as a clerk for the Supreme Court, she is using on a daily basis the research skills that I helped her learn. Wow! That kind of feedback keeps me going for weeks and weeks!

¶4 I was not using the Internet very much in my daily work, so I agreed to teach a series of continuing legal education workshops on Internet Legal Research. I was terrified of this teaching opportunity. What if the participants in these hands-on sessions knew more than I did? (I assumed they would, of course!) Could I figure out how to use the laptop and video projector in a professional manner? With a lot of help from the wonderful Gallagher Law Library reference librarians and some faculty colleagues, I managed to get myself up to speed enough to teach almost a dozen of these three-and-a-half-hour sessions over the past two

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years (my reference librarian colleagues teach these as well). This teaching has given me the confidence I need to experiment more with Internet work in my Advanced Legal Research class, to the great delight of my students.

¶15 Teaching the Selection and Processing of Law Library Materials course (an overview of technical services in a law library with a heavy emphasis on collection development) offers many opportunities to think about the big picture that defines what we do every day in the law library. Student assignments are often based on real-life issues, and the ideas generated in class inform the decisions made in the law library. I love teaching this class! The interrelationships between teaching and the practice of law librarianship are cool.

¶16 I have been directing the Law Librarianship Program at the University of Washington Information School (formerly the School of Library and Information Science) since 1985. Students with law degrees come for a year of study and work to become law librarians. There are new, fresh students every year—from two to a dozen. They remind me of when I began my own career in law librarianship—what I didn't know then! Yikes! And that reminds me of how much they must learn before they, in turn, enter this profession.

¶17 I not only have these students in two classes during the year, but I work with them as they look for employment in law libraries. This responsibility keeps me in regular contact with my colleagues in various law libraries all over the country as I help place the students in jobs and academic fieldwork positions. That's why I got into this business in the first place—law librarians are so great! The network of friends and colleagues you build in this business with only a small effort is quite remarkable. The law librarianship students constantly remind me of my great fortune in finding this profession.

¶18 The opportunity to work with remarkably smart and capable law librarians and staff at the Gallagher Law Library is one of the other things that keeps me on my toes and far from bored with my work. Each day they challenge me to be a better librarian, better boss, better teacher, better mentor, better leader—basically, a better person. No standing still here.

¶19 The variety of work also keeps me interested and excited about my job. I teach, help train new law librarians for the profession, do administrative and management work to keep the library running day-to-day, act as faculty business manager for two law reviews, and squeeze in some writing and other professional work. Sometimes the variety makes me nuts as I commit to too many things that need to be done by Thursday. But, truly, the variety is what keeps me going through the hard, time-consuming, or unpleasant tasks.

¶10 Recently, I have spread my wings a little further. I worked with the law school to redesign and reconceptualize its Web site. This taught me a great deal about cooperation, communication, the need for a purpose and shared values, and the challenges of working with a staff who did not report to me! Oh, and I also learned a lot about Web sites—the design and especially the staff time it takes to keep them current and relevant.

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¶11 Since I have been here at Washington a fairly long time, I find I am now one of the senior female faculty members. I feel a special responsibility to participate more fully in law school and faculty affairs and governance. I have chaired the faculty Initial Appointments Committee for the past two years, making six permanent faculty hires. (Now there is a job to tear your hair out over!) This experience taught me how challenging it is to work with faculty on a regular basis. They never volunteer for anything, they don't like to be told what to do, and they will always second-guess faculty committee recommendations. I remembered why I like working with librarians and library staff.

¶12 The last thing that keeps me interested in my job is that I really enjoy going home. Family, traveling, reading, gardening, cooking, stamp collecting, and quilting are a few of the other things I love to do in my life. You will notice that none of them require a computer or other electronic gizmos. Doing something completely unlike what I do during my day job makes me eager to come to work every day. Maybe it is that variety thing again.

¶13 I learned long ago that my professional work would never be done or caught up. So why work fourteen hours a day, seven days a week? Balancing the work I get paid to do with the other things I love to do is a great stress-reliever. My job is not boring because I look for ways to force myself to learn what is new (or my students or staff or colleagues force my hand!) and try to apply that in the day-to-day world. And because I refuse to let my job, alone, define who I am.

Life at Midcareer: An Opportunity to Reflect*

*Jean M. Holcomb***

¶1 When the e-mail arrived offering me the opportunity to share my thoughts as a midcareer law librarian about the challenges and opportunities available at this point in my working life, I couldn't resist a chuckle. The author of the e-mail obviously hadn't met me in person before issuing the invitation to participate in this exercise.

¶2 Some would suggest that there's little to laugh about at being pegged as midcareer. I disagree wholeheartedly. An unrepentant optimist, I choose to define my placement in this midcareer set as a compliment.

¶3 My first library position and my first job began more than fifty years ago as a preteen working in the summer for my next-door neighbor, the local school superintendent. That summer and each year until I graduated from high school, I processed the new books that had been ordered by the faculty for the school library. The excitement of discovery as I opened each box of books remains one of my fondest memories of that time in my life.

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