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# from the editor

By Catherine A. Lemmer



## The Story of Us

A shelf-browsing stroll in my library led to a serendipitous find: *Introducing the American Association of Law Libraries*. Published in 1983, this slim volume includes a brief chronology of the events that shaped AALL and law librarianship from the Association's founding in 1907 through 1983. A quick browse of the chronology reveals that our profession owes a great debt to A.J. Small, curator of the Law Department of the Iowa State Law Library, who suggested a gathering at the 1906 meeting of the American Library Association "to consider the advisability of a separate organization of law librarians."

The 12-page chronology notes important markers throughout three-quarters of a century of AALL history. Here are just a few:

- 1930: Rosamund Parma, the first librarian at the University of California Law Library (Berkeley), is elected the first female president of AALL; she serves two terms (1930-1932).
- 1937: Southeastern Association of Law Librarians is approved as AALL's first chapter.
- 1961: Elizabeth Finley is the first private law librarian elected as AALL president.
- 1970: More than 100 registrants attend the first Conference of Newer Law Librarians.
- 1973: Student memberships are established.
- 1981: William E. Jepson assumes his position as AALL's first executive director.

What is readily apparent is that despite economic depressions, wars, and significant changes in the legal environment, the organization stood strong and flourished. And though it is interesting to see these historical markers, even more interesting is the documentation of our profession's unique identity. It is one of inclusion and constant evolution!

So how do we preserve our unique identity and ensure that our visionary outlook continues? Common sense indicates that achieving this goal will require that we, as a profession, evaluate our succession planning strategies. David Clutterbuck's 2012 work, *The Talent Wave: Why Succession Planning Fails and What to Do About It*, suggests that we have been going about it all wrong.

Clutterbuck advocates that we stop viewing succession planning as a simple, linear program controlled by human resource processes, forms, and documents and move instead to a "dynamic process of aligning employee aspirations and talents with the constantly evolving needs of the organization and of providing employees with the resources and support they need to grow into new roles." In short, stop thinking pipeline—planning to move identified individuals into identified positions—and focus on developing, preparing, and mentoring individuals who the organization will need to fill future roles (even if we don't know what those roles are yet).

As any good iconoclast does, Clutterbuck gives us an alternative to the human resources pipeline strategy. His work details a new strategy based on good questions and a series of conversations:

- Conversation 1: Employee's internal dialogue
- Conversation 2: Employee and stakeholders
- Conversation 3: Employee and organization
- Conversation 4: Among and between social networks.

What is most interesting about Clutterbuck's proposal is that it frees the process from human resources control and position descriptions. His strategy puts career planning into the hands of the employee and focuses the organization on developing and preparing an individual in a way that aligns the individual's interests with the organization's needs.

His strategies are likely to become even more relevant as more members of Generation F (the "Facebook Generation") join our ranks. Generation F, schooled in and shaped by the world of the web, will have even less patience for archaic hierarchies and pipelines. A successful succession strategy will need to encompass the expectations of a generation accustomed to valuing contribution over title, crowd funding, crowd sourcing, intrinsic motivation, and fluid teams.

As 2014 draws to a close, I plan to schedule Clutterbuck's first conversation with myself. I hope you will as well. We are part of a vibrant profession that has weathered more than a century of world events and evolution. We need to make sure we are prepared to take on the challenges of the next century. Taking the time to seriously evaluate, modify, and implement our succession planning strategies will ensure that we leave a strong platform for the next generation. ■

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