2009

Book Review, The First Century: One Hundred Years of AALL History, 1906-2005

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An Essential History concludes with additional, prospective material and a detailed bibliographic essay. The book's final chapters look forward from the Supreme Court's history toward its future. The authors summarize the changes experienced over time by the Court and by its supporting institutions, and add a preliminary examination of the Roberts Court. The bibliographic essay introduces the reader to the wealth of information available on the Supreme Court. It also helps demonstrate how the authors pulled together materials from a vast array of sources to create their own unique and worthy contribution to Supreme Court scholarship.

As a librarian, I would recommend this book to patrons in two particular circumstances. For the law student or legal professional with some background in Supreme Court jurisprudence, the title provides a detailed exploration of the individual justices and larger historical currents that have influenced decision making on the Court. This treatment can help legal professionals expand their understanding of the Court and its jurisprudence beyond the myopic view provided by individual cases considered in isolation. Thus, academic law libraries may be particularly interested in including this book within their collections. For non-legal professionals, the book offers basic overviews of key Supreme Court cases written in easy-to-understand language that effectively defines fundamental legal concepts. Although not exhaustive in coverage, these basic treatments can help nonlawyers understand the role that the Supreme Court and its decisions have played in the development of American law and the history of the United States. Therefore, county, state, and court law libraries open to the public may find the title useful as well.


Reviewed by Kristina L. Niedringhaus

This expertly researched history of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is an excellent resource for any member of the law librarian profession. For those newer to the profession, the book provides superb background on the development of the Association and the profession. For others, the book fills in pieces of history, provides supporting references, contains a wealth of reference material, and can serve as a jumping-off point for further research. The book notes events and reprints both photographs and significant documents from the formation of the Association in 1906 through the 2006 Annual Meeting of AALL in San Antonio.

Author Frank Houdek explains in the introduction that this book is an outgrowth of research done for the Association’s 100th anniversary celebration and outlines what the book does and does not attempt to cover. Houdek states, in part, “[t]his book represents the first attempt to provide, in a single source, not only

10. Frank is well known to Law Library Journal readers and AALL members. He served as the Editor of LLJ from 1994 to 2007 and was President of AALL in 1996–97. He is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor, Southern Illinois University School of Law, having until recently been the Law Library Director there.
descriptions of what happened during AALL's first hundred years, but also accurate information about the sources that document these events” (p.xiii). Houdek describes his history as being told in “snippets and brief descriptions rather than in an analytical narrative that critically examines the issues and events” (p.xiii). In the future, the book can provide the starting point from which Houdek or another researcher can delve into that critical analysis. He has succeeded admirably in providing accurate references to the documents that record the history of the first one hundred years of AALL.

¶29 Yearly Histories—chronological entries detailing the Association’s significant events—make up the bulk of the book. These entries can be read in order or can serve as a reference resource for important events in a given year. The Yearly Histories report on a wide variety of events, including: publication of the first issue of Index to Legal Periodicals and Law Library Journal (December 1908, although it is dated January 1908); the daily rates for the hotel at the fifth Annual Meeting at Mackinac Island, Michigan ($3.50 for a room with a bath); and the historic date when Carol Avery Nicholson became the first African American to serve as AALL president (July 24, 2002). Each of these events, big or small, is accompanied by a citation to a source or sources supporting its accuracy. The 570 footnotes to the Yearly Histories not only confirm the veracity of the entries but also provide further avenues of inquiry for researchers seeking more information.

¶30 Beyond the Yearly Histories, the book offers several other features that make it an invaluable reference for the history of AALL and law librarianship. Houdek provides more than thirty illustrations from the Association’s history. Most of these illustrations are photographs, but copies of original documents, such as the first page of the AALL Certificate of Incorporation from 1935, are also included. There are three appendixes: a list of AALL presidents and of Annual Meeting dates and locations; a list of recipients of the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award and of the Joseph L. Andrews Bibliographical Award; and a selective bibliography on the history of AALL. Each appendix seems specifically designed to support the efforts of future researchers. Finally, Houdek has provided the reader with more than seventy pages of indexing. The length of the index is a testament to its thoroughness and is yet another feature adding value to this useful resource.

¶31 The First Century is an important addition to the literature of our profession. The book is an engaging read as well as an excellent reference tool for the Association’s history. The thoroughness of the footnotes and index yield a readily accessible research resource providing documentation of the profession’s history. This book is highly recommended for all law librarians interested in the development of the Association and the profession.


Reviewed by Sara R. Paul

¶32 Corporate Governance: Promises Kept, Promises Broken is an in-depth examination of the current condition of corporate governance in the United States. Author Jonathon R. Macey’s central premise is that corporate governance—an