

Conversation with Jane Holland and Susan Yancey, Longtime Houston Area Law Librarians

Susan is retiring October 15, 2014 and Jane is retiring December 31, 2014.

- *What was your path to becoming a law librarian?*

*Susan:* I had an internship with Roy Mersky at the Tarlton Law Library at the University of Texas while in library school. This led to a job at a law firm (Hutcheson & Grundy). I went on to work in other firms and also spent time at Infoscope Partners and consulting firm McKinsey & Co. before coming to Vinson & Elkins.

*Jane:* After library school, I got a job at the University of Oklahoma Library as the interlibrary loan librarian. My very first day on the job, I met a student looking to borrow some microfilm. He was pursuing his Master's Degree in Soviet Area studies. That student ended up being my now-husband, Clarence! We got married and moved to Houston so Clarence could work at NASA translating for the Apollo-Soyuz mission. Through some connections made from early members of HALL, I got a job at Fulbright & Jaworski in 1974 and have been there ever since.

- *What are the major ways in which your job is different than it was when you started?*

*Susan:* I have many fond memories: book trucks loaded with cases to make copies; spending all day filing loose-leaf reporters; re-shelving books each morning after attorneys' marathon research sessions all night; keeping the microfilm/fiche machine working; trips to the local courthouse for copies of filings; trips to the public library to make copies of articles; training people to use the Shepard's print volumes...

*Jane:* Everything! We used to keep the Lexis terminal in a locked room to make sure the attorneys charged everything back. We signed our first Lexis contract in 1975.

- *What is your most fun memory?*

*Susan:* Working the "reference desk" at the G-7 Economic Summit in Houston in the 90s (before the internet); also "chair races" around the library when attorneys used to actually hang out there

*Jane:* Meeting and working with the librarians in other countries following the Fulbright/Norton Rose combination; librarians are wonderful all over the world – attorneys are attorneys all over the world! Also, fun with other librarians at AALL meetings all over the country.

- *What is your biggest accomplishment?*

*Susan:* Finding a career I thoroughly enjoyed

*Jane:* Transitioning the firm and my attorneys into the digital age (kicking and screaming)

- *What would you have done differently if you could?*

*Susan:* I would have used every day of my vacation time.

*Jane:* Audit some web development and/or management courses ten/fifteen years ago. I used all my vacation time—I don't regret that!

*Any other thoughts/advice?*

*Susan:* My experience working outside of law libraries (corporation, startup, and global consulting firm) gave me much-needed perspective. Also, I enjoyed being involved in HALL – we have a wonderful, friendly group.

*Jane:* I have enjoyed the relationships developed with our attorneys – they are our “customers.” Librarians have a unique position at the firm (despite the attorney/non-attorney divide) in that we know and understand the attorneys’ cases and workload. They call us with their projects and concerns. Most of the other administrative departments do not enjoy this type of relationship. Unlike my colleagues in the Directors group, I always enjoyed socializing with attorneys at firm events.

I recommend joining a librarian group outside of law such as SLA, TLA, or ALA for a look at how the rest of the library world works.

- *What do you like to read to keep up?*

*Susan:* I like the Law Library of Congress In Custodia Legis blog, the 3 Geeks, AALL's Spectrum, and the Dewey B Strategic blog.

*Jane:* I like to read PinHawk, beSpecific blog, and the Library of Congress magazine

- *What's next for you both?*

*Susan:* I am going to spend more time at our ranch near Brenham, Texas.

*Jane:* More travel – our next trip is to Belgium.



Susan Yancey



Jane Holland