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Morris L. Cohen

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MARIAN GALLAGHER: A MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Morris L. Cohen*

In an academic career that spanned over forty years, Marian Gallagher left a unique mark on American law librarianship, and thereby on American legal education. She trained many outstanding law librarians, inspired an even greater number of us, and provided leadership in her own library and throughout her profession. She was also, as George Schatzki and others have said, funny and happy, warm and sensitive, bright, thorough and efficient.¹ Through her individuality, her wit and her manner, she brought color, verve and style to a profession. Her special contribution to law librarianship and legal education stemmed from a combination of those accomplishments and personal traits. What she did was inseparable from what she was; her deeds flowed naturally from her character and her personality.

Marian Gallagher proved that an individual can make a difference—she made a difference in the life and progress of her profession, in the development of her library (often with little financial support), and, most importantly, she made a difference in the lives and careers of her students, colleagues and friends.

Despite the straightforward and uncomplicated image she portrayed, Marian Gallagher's persona seems, on reflection, more complex. In thinking about her and talking about her with mutual friends since her death, I realized that most of us knew her only on the surface. She was in fact a very private person, particularly after the loss of her husband. While reviewing what I really knew about Marian for this piece, I began to sense certain inconsistencies in her personality and professional life. I was able to identify three such paradoxes—the superb teacher who maintained that she was neither scholar nor theoretician; the woman who enjoyed the company of men and found her pleasure in their games, yet brought to librarianship traits usually considered feminine; and the successful and respected administrator who often lacked the resources she needed for her library. Without diminishing the lovable qualities we all cherished in Marian, these contradictions revealed, to me at least, an even more interesting and

* Librarian and Professor of Law, Yale Law School.

1. Schatzki, *The Law Librarian*, 56 WASH. L. REV. 354 (1981).

remarkable person. I will therefore address those paradoxes briefly here.

Although she was an outstanding teacher of both law students and law librarians, it is curious that she always disclaimed scholarly pretensions and described herself as more interested in the practical than the theoretical. She wrote no books and relatively few articles over her long career, and was in this respect the opposite of her East Coast counterpart, Miles O. Price of Columbia University. She said she disliked writing, and what she did write was functional and practical, rarely speculative.

Law school faculties, like those of library schools, consist largely of scholars and theoreticians teaching prospective practitioners. It was perhaps Marian's great strength that she applied her knowledge and experience, leavened by a very pragmatic view of law and librarianship, to the teaching process. Her oft-quoted list of desirable characteristics in her students reflects this pragmatism. That list included a capacity for "getting filthy shifting books" alongside a Summa Cum Laude.

Marian enjoyed the company of men and loved games which are usually considered masculine—football, golf and poker were among her particular favorites. At a time when sex discrimination and gender advocacy were major social and political issues, she was not identified with feminist causes even though she abhorred invidious discrimination of any kind. It is therefore striking that the qualities she brought to her work and to her profession were those which are now identified as feminine or feminist. She was caring and nurturing, sensitive to the needs of others, and sought to resolve differences by conciliation and compromise. This curious mixture of the masculine and feminine in her make-up is intriguing in light of the current praise for androgynous management styles.

Despite her success in the larger professional worlds of law, legal education and librarianship, Marian had to struggle constantly to obtain the resources necessary to develop and even maintain her own library. Service on numerous university and bar association committees, appearances at White House and governors' conferences, and personal friendships with high officials in the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government did not allay her efforts to secure adequate funding for her library. Just one example was Marian's sad and moving plea in the Summer 1971 issue of the *University of Washington School of Law Alumnus* for what she called, with tactical deprecation, her "rinky-dink" law library.

Was this simply another example of the biblical verse, “[a] prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house”?² Although this lack of support was a continuing frustration, it never diminished her loyalty to the state and the university she loved, and never tempted her to move to greener pastures. Marian *was* honored on her home turf and was recognized locally as a national treasure, but the anomaly remains perplexing. Perhaps law students and librarians knew better the value of the library than legislators and bureaucrats. It is to her great credit, however, that despite the difficulties under which she labored, Marian built a great library and administered it with wisdom and love.

Marian Gallagher lived her life to the fullest. She worked hard and played hard, and enjoyed both. Beyond the affection and respect she aroused in her many friends and colleagues, I think her greatest contribution was as a teacher. Marian’s wit and knowledge made her teaching memorable, not only in the classroom, but in the library, in professional meetings and in the intimacy of personal encounters. At a time when mentoring is sought and prized, we realize that she was mentor to us all.

2. *Matthew* 13:57.