

# LEADER PROFILE LEAD, FOLLOW, +GET OUT OF THE WAY

Mid-America Association of Law Libraries' Past President Jeri Kay Hopkins's take on what leadership means in the legal information community—and why encouraging and inspiring co-workers might be easier, and more important, than you think.

## JERI KAY HOPKINS

- BRANCH LIBRARIAN
- U.S. COURT OF APPEALS  
8TH CIRCUIT LIBRARY
- OMAHA, NEBRASKA

More than a decade ago, Jeri Kay Hopkins was working as an attorney, running her own practice, when she and her husband, Rick, decided to adopt.

On one of the adoption forms, Rick was asked to identify what his wife would change about her life, if she could. His answer caught her completely off guard.

"He said, 'Her career,' and I thought, 'He's right!'" Hopkins says. "I was spending all my time at the local library, volunteering; that's what I really enjoyed."

After a staff member at the library suggested she look into becoming a law librarian, Hopkins enrolled in the University of Missouri's master of library science program. A few months later, in 2004, she started working at the U.S. Court of Appeals 8th Circuit Library. She received her degree in 2007.

Hopkins has since served as president, vice president, secretary, and board

member of AALL's Mid-America Association of Law Libraries (MAALL) chapter. Her adopted daughter, Bliss, is now 10.

"I never planned to be a librarian," Hopkins says. "But I love my job. It's never the same every day."

The Omaha-based branch librarian recently shared her thoughts with AALL Spectrum on creating a career path, professional leadership, and changes in the legal information industry.

You've held several leadership positions within MAALL. Do you feel the legal information industry **generally has a sufficient number** of leaders?

There are, at least in our area, in the Midwest. In particular, the MAALL

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