

In Memoriam: Thomas H. Reynolds (1935–2022)

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Thomas H. Reynolds, a long-time member of the Berkeley Law Library and the law librarian community, died on December 23, 2022. Tom worked in the Berkeley Law Library for forty-three years (1958–2001). He specialized in foreign, international, and comparative legal materials, becoming one of the world’s most respected experts in foreign and comparative legal research.

Tom was truly a product of the University of California, Berkeley. He arrived on campus in the early 1950s and received his A.B. in 1954. While in school, he became a shelver at the Berkeley Public Library. He used to say that he “grew up in a library.” Tom attended law school at Berkeley, then known as Boalt Hall, and lasted one year. He then went to library school at Berkeley and received his M.L.S. in 1958. Upon graduation, he saw a job opening at the law library and was hired as an assistant reference librarian in 1958. He was instrumental in setting up the Robbins Collection¹ at Berkeley Law and for many years was the primary selector of materials for the entire library. To many of the faculty at that time, Tom was the face of the Berkeley Law Library.

As he developed his expertise, Tom emerged as the leader in developing and supporting two very important research tools—the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP)* and *Foreign Law: Current Sources of Codes and Basic Legislation in Jurisdictions of the World* (now known as the *Foreign Law Guide*). He served as the General Editor of the *IFLP* from 1983 to 2010. He was able to bring the *IFLP* into the electronic age and improve the print publication. Tom is probably best known as the Co-Editor and driving force behind the development of the *Foreign Law Guide*. The original idea was to create a pamphlet covering a few non-US jurisdictions and highlight English-language translations, especially in the areas of commercial, tax, and business law. The idea came about in response to the growing number of requests for translations at the Berkeley Law Library’s reference desk. The pamphlet never appeared, but a looseleaf service did, which eventually became a multivolume set published by Hein in 1989. The publication went online in 2007. The *Foreign Law Guide* was an award-winning publication that became an integral part of reference collections worldwide. Both the *IFLP* and the *Foreign Law Guide* became indispensable tools for researchers and librarians who focus on foreign, international, and comparative law, and these publications continue to be the mainstays of research in these areas of law.

During his many decades in the profession, Tom was very active in the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL). He attended conferences, gave presentations, and served on various boards and committees.² He was presented with the AALL Presidential Certificate of

¹ Established in 1952, the Robbins Collection “holdings include civil law, religious law encompassing the canon law of the Roman and Greek churches, and the Protestant churches; Jewish and Islamic law; and secular law including classical Roman law, *ius commune*, and English common law.” See “About Us: The Robbins Collection and Research Center,” Berkeley Law, accessed Mar. 30, 2024, <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/research/the-robbins-collection/about-us/>.

² For more information, see “Thomas H. Reynolds, 1933–2022,” American Association of Law Libraries, accessed Mar. 30, 2024, <https://www.aallnet.org/inductee/thomasreynolds/>. See also Thomas H. Reynolds. “Interview with Thomas H. Reynolds.” Interview by Patrick E. Kehoe. *An Oral History of Law Librarianship*, July 2, 2013. Spinelli’s Law Library Reference Shelf, HeinOnline.

Appreciation for Dedicated Services as General Editor of the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals* in 2001, and he was inducted into the AALL Hall of Fame in 2010.

I came to know Tom during the early 1990s. As a newly minted academic law librarian, I was responsible for establishing Boalt Express, the Berkeley Law Library's new document delivery and research service. I had come from a mid-sized law firm in San Francisco, and while I knew Robert Berring, I had no previous knowledge of Tom and his role in the library. Boalt Express ended up receiving many international and foreign law questions from law firms around the country. This was not an area I handled during my law firm days, nor had library school covered these kinds of resources. When a question came in, I would go to Tom—after 10 a.m. since he never arrived before then—and ask questions. Tom knew a lot about research and had an amazing memory. However, he didn't always want to share his knowledge with others. Consequently, I would follow him around the library and watch what he pulled off the shelves. He even tried to lose me in the library stacks a few times. I also learned where he kept his notes for the *Foreign Law Guide* and where he stashed a lot of the new materials he was reviewing. Through crumbs and tenacity, I began to learn from Tom, even if it was through indirect means.

I moved on to other academic law libraries, and I returned to Berkeley Law in 2003 as the Foreign, Comparative, and International Law Librarian. While Tom had officially retired, he continued to serve as the *IFLP* General Editor and worked diligently on the *Foreign Law Guide*. Eventually, Tom stepped down from the *IFLP* and sold the *Foreign Law Guide* to Brill Publishers. I was lucky enough to take over both projects.

Tom was a self-taught law librarian. He possessed strong foreign language abilities, was invaluable to the comparative law faculty at Berkeley, and would have been the first to say that he was at Berkeley at the right time. As a result, he developed a first-class foreign and comparative collection at Berkeley Law. Walking through the stacks at the law library, you can still see the materials he selected throughout his career. Tom left a permanent impression on the Berkeley Law Library, the law librarianship profession, and researchers worldwide.