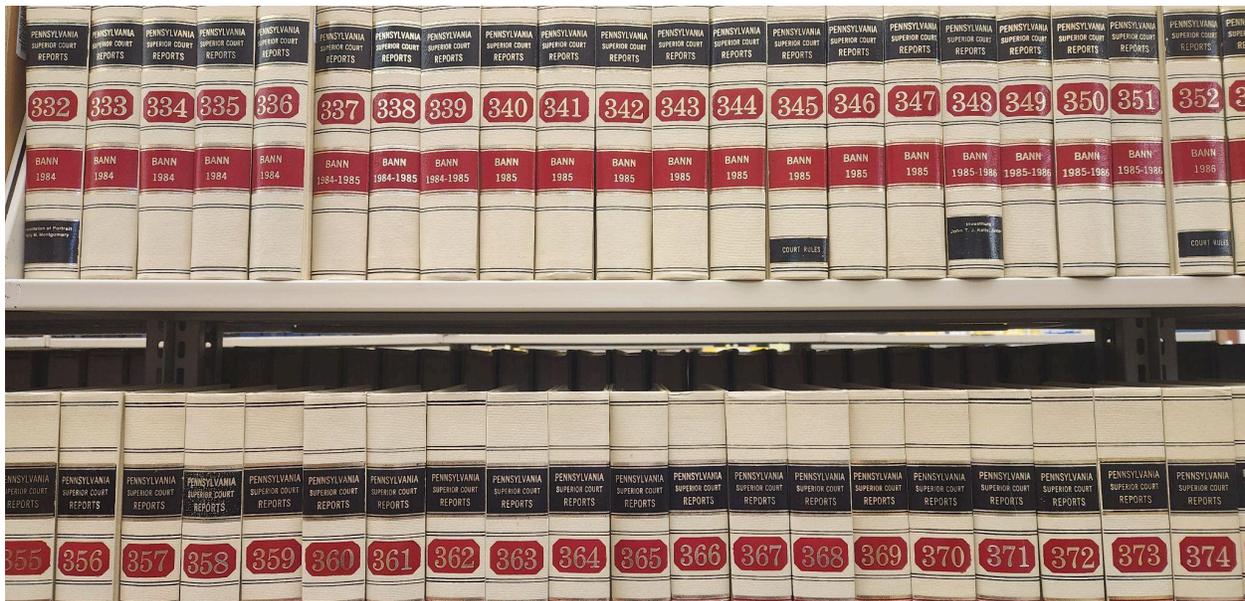


wplla NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association

A Column of Content



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Member News

See what's going on with WPLLA below!

- In February, a few of us attended a “Ten Evenings” lecture through Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures.
- February is also Library Lovers Month & Black History Month, so we'd be remiss to not mention it here! Some of our member libraries have set up some great outreach / events to celebrate all month.
- We are anticipating our next in-person meeting at the Annual Luncheon in May.
 - Note: this is typically held on the third Thursday of the month, central to Pittsburgh, and set to start around lunchtime - a more detailed invite will be sent to WPLLA members as the date approaches.
- We've formally opened nominations for two big items:
 - Next year's 2026-2027 WPLLA Board: see survey here <https://forms.gle/F3pNF9Jo3B8GDBo76>
 - Open until April 2nd, 2026
 - 2026 WPLLA Nomination Form for The Debra May AALL Conference Memorial Scholarship** - <https://forms.gle/iM39nJsYMo5ePm5n9>
 - Open until March 31st, 2026

**for more information about this year's AALL Conference, see page 11.



Showing the Love

By Various Members

As February was Library Lovers Month, many of our member libraries received feedback and messages of support from their patrons. It is with open hearts (and minds and yes, books too!) that we share such words of gratitude. During the darker months, it's easy to forget how one act of kindness can really turn someone's whole day around. Here's to more sunny days.

When asked, "why do you love / support / use your local library?" the answers ran the gambit:

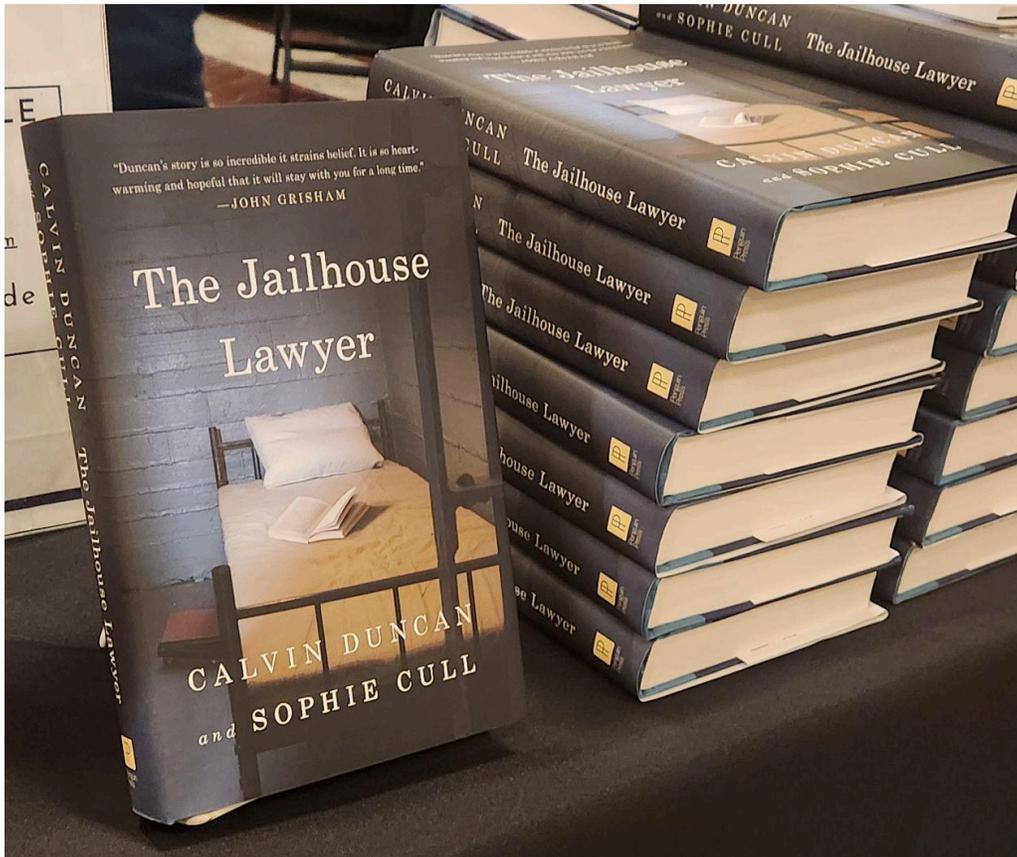
It's more of a community center than just a library.	Everyone should love to read something!!	The library has easy access to amazing books and endless knowledge
I read a lot	The library allows endless books for my kids.	Centralized resources, access to knowledge, community anchor
Love the atmosphere! Holds great memories from high school and college.	I love to read!	Support local libraries! Support education! Have fun and get lost in a good book!
Our amazing librarian, Ms. Hommey, is amazing, and has deep knowledge of books to recommend to me - great stories.	I love libraries because knowledge is power and libraries give power to the people.	I do not read novels or read for fun but if it wasn't for libraries prior to the internet there would be no place to find recorded information.
I was told as a youngster by my mom that, "Reading is the eyes of the world." That always stuck with me.	As an adult now, there's a certain magic in reading a book that has been read, loved, and warmed in the hands of your fellow community members.	I love my library because it's a peaceful place where I go to find my next adventure.
Local libraries support the community through fellowship, education, and entertainment – all for free!	It is so convenient having the Law Library at work to pick up and drop off books!!	Thank you for the work you do! You are doing such great things.

It is imperative that we acknowledge the good and receive our praise (no matter how mild) with grace. Also, keeping a list of anecdotes from patrons could be a great companion piece to show with your data to your shareholders.

An 'Evening' Out

By Britiny Hommey

- WPLLA was fortunate to receive tickets from Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures to attend one of their programs featuring writers Calvin Duncan and Sophie Cull - most notable for their book *The Jailhouse Lawyer*. See photo below, which was on display and for sale at the event by White Whale bookstore.



- The event was held at the Carnegie Music Hall, which felt grand.
- See photos below for venue and program description.



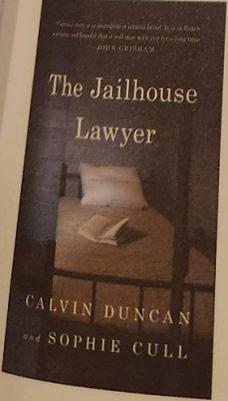
Photo Credit: Britiny Hommey

- Image description: the above image shows the open and lit venue of the Carnegie Music Hall. The presenters are not yet seated and the audience seats are about half empty as attendees filter in. The entrance hall is also just as ornate and beautiful.



Calvin Duncan & Sophie Cull

Monday, February 9, 2026



Calvin Duncan knows what it means to be fighting for his life.

In 1981, he was arrested, charged, and determined guilty of a murder he didn't commit. Duncan was incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, known as Angola, or the Alcatraz of the South, and put on death row.

What could he do?

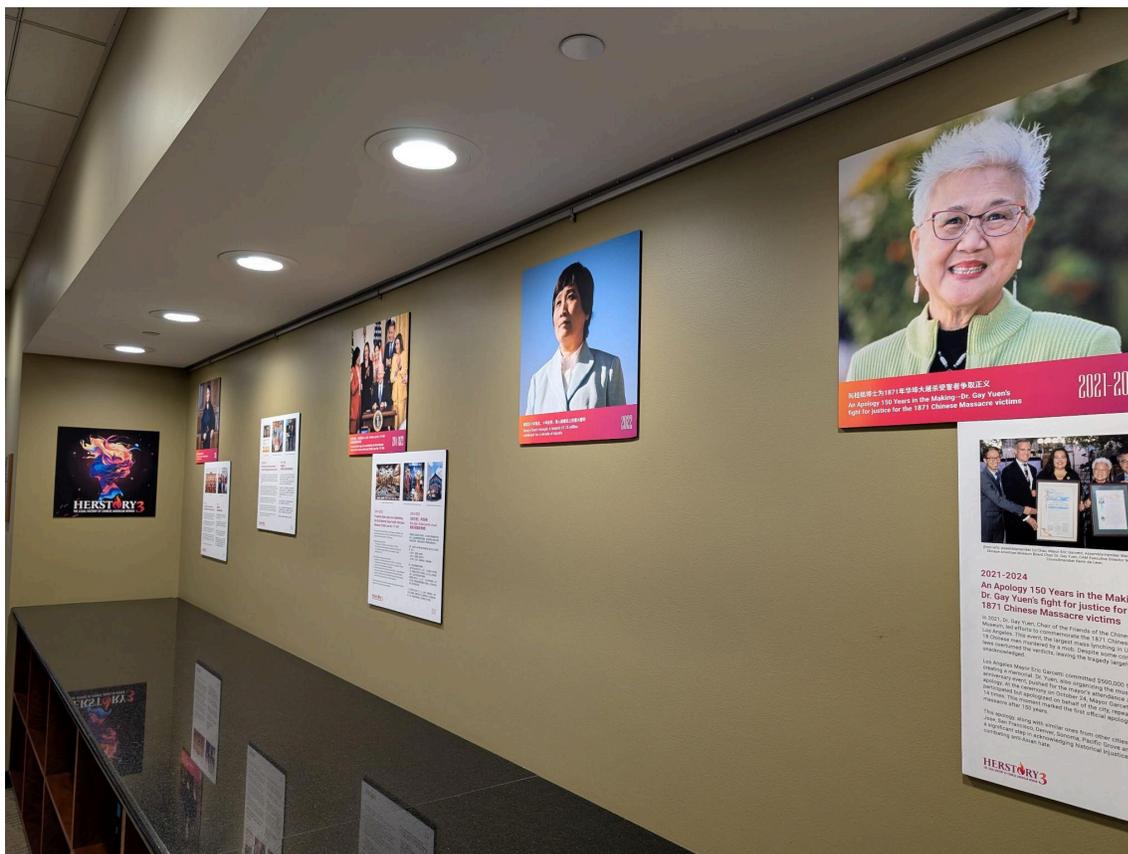
His lawyers, up against a judge who had sentenced other men on similar evidence, told him he had one recourse: to study the law while imprisoned.

Photo Credit: Britiny Hommey

- Image Description: The program pictured highlights *The Jailhouse Lawyer* describing: “Calvin Duncan knows what it means to be fighting for his life. In 1981, he was arrested, charged, and determined guilty of a murder he didn’t commit. Duncan was incarcerated at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, known as Angola, or the Alcatraz of the South, and put on death row. What could he do? His lawyers, up against a judge who had sentenced other men on similar evidence, told him he had one recourse: the study the law while imprisoned.”

Herstory: The Legal History of Chinese American Women

The Barco Law Library put out an exhibit in collaboration with the University Library System titled, “Herstory: The Legal History of Chinese American Women.” In total, the exhibit spanned two locations. Curated by lawyer and former Taiwanese senator Dr. Chang C. Chen, the exhibit explores Chinese American women’s contributions to civil rights, labor, reproductive, and other areas of U.S. law over the past 150 years. Thanks to Karen, for providing the images/content below!



Highlights include:

- 2005 Justice Doris Link-Cohan and the groundbreaking marriage equality case
- 2014-2023 President Biden signs law establishing the first National Asian Pacific American Museum (Public Law No. 117-40)
- 2022 Sherry Chen’s triumph: A historic \$1.75 million settlement for a decade of injustice
- 2021-2024 An Apology 150 Years in the Making-- Dr. Gay Yuen’s fight for justice for the 1871 Chinese Massacre victims



Further highlights:

- 2021-2024 AAPI History Becomes a Mandatory Course in Public Schools
- 2021-2024 Fighting for fairness: The battle against race-based admissions
- 2024 Let Doctors Heal, Not Judge-- Navigating the Post-Dobbs Reality
- Democracy is but a numbers game: The fight against SB 264 and the marginalization of Chinese Americans
- 2015-2024 Herstory in Progress: The Rise of Chinese American Women
 - An excerpt: “In 2015, when I began documenting the legal history of Chinese American women, I found few notable figures, with exceptions like Congresswoman Judy Chu and Secretary Elaine Chao. By 2020, I compiled a list of 40 Chinese American women judges and 25 city, state, and congressional council members. However, among 31,770 judges nationwide, Chinese American women make up less than 0.1%. 2023 federal data shows Asians make up 7% of the workforce, but only 4.4% in law.”

AALL News

AALL/Bloomberg Law Continuing Education Grant

- Deadline to apply - **May 18th**. Grant funding varies annually depending on the number of applicants and funds available, but historically grant recipients are awarded up to \$500-\$2,500 each grant cycle.
- All AALL members are encouraged to apply. The grant supports the development and sharing of educational programming across AALL, including chapters, special interest sections, committees, and caucuses, among others. Past awards have funded speaker fees, webinars, and more.
- Learn more at the [link here](#).

The Education Edge - an AALL Newsletter

- Looking for ways to support your professional growth? Have you checked out the latest edition of AALL's newsletter, [The Education Edge](#)?
- Find the most updated issue at the link above. Each issue now includes a *Question of the Month*, inviting members to share their insights, experiences, and tips with colleagues across the AALL Community. Selected responses will be highlighted in the following month's issue-so your ideas can help inspire others.
 - This month, we're asking: What tips do you have for **presenting with confidence**?

Unbound

- The Fall 2025/Winter 2026 issue of Unbound: A Review of Legal History & Rare Books is available at <https://www.aallnet.org/lhrbsis/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2026/02/LHRBSIS-Unbound-Vol16No1.pdf>
 - Interested in joining a special interest section? AALL has numerous to choose from, check them out [here](#).

From the Shelf

A Selection of Recent Reads¹

- *The Glass Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel
 - This book was published in March of 2020, so unfortunately it did not receive much attention as much of the world was in a state of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With interconnected characters, this novel tells the story of one man's ponzi scheme and the ramifications of everyone involved. Loosely based on the Madoff scandal. Other books by Mandel include: *Station Eleven* (2014) & *Sea of Tranquility* (2022).
- *The Decagon House Murders* by Yukito Ayatsuji
 - Touted as a Japanese 'cult classic,' this book is most notably comparable to Agatha Christie's "And Then There Were None." Set on an island where an infamous event happened in a uniquely shaped house, a group of mystery book lovers set out to stay at the Decagon House on the island for a week. This novel will have you guessing who the killer is until the very end.
- *The Astral Library* by Kate Quinn
 - Alexandria "Alix" Watson has learned one lesson from her barren childhood in the foster-care system: unlike people, books will never let you down. Working three dead-end jobs to make ends meet and knowing college is a pipe dream, Alix takes nightly refuge in the high-vaulted reading room at the Boston Public Library, escaping into her favorite fantasy novels and dreaming of far-off lands. Until the day she stumbles through a hidden door and meets the Librarian: the ageless, acerbic guardian of a hidden library where the desperate and the lost escape to new lives...inside their favorite books. The Librarian takes a dazzled Alix under her wing, but before she can escape into the pages of her new life, a shadowy enemy emerges to threaten everyone the Astral Library has ever helped protect.
- *Alice Isn't Dead* by Joseph Fink
 - *This isn't a story. It's a road trip.* Keisha Taylor lived a quiet life with her wife, Alice, until the day that Alice disappeared. After months of searching, presuming she was dead, Keisha held a funeral, mourned, and gradually tried to get on with her life. But that was before Keisha started to see her wife, again and again, in the background of news reports from all over America. Alice isn't dead, and she is showing up at every major tragedy and accident in the country. Other books by Fink include: *It Devours!* (2017) and *The Faceless Old Woman Who Secretly Lives in Your Home* (2020).

¹ If you would like to suggest a book you have read recently (fiction, nonfiction, audiobook, etc.) send an email to Britiny Hommey; include in the subject line: **WPLLA Newsletter Book Suggestion**.

Last Call for Comment

Job Opportunities:

The Tenth Circuit Library has two openings for [Denver, CO](#):

- Library Assistant
- Technical Services and Acquisitions

The Brooklyn Law School also has an opening for an Assistant/Associate Librarian of Legal Research Instruction & Curriculum.

- Brooklyn Law School is located in vibrant downtown Brooklyn, New York City. We have a fantastic team at BLS Library and look forward to having new colleagues join us! This position is eligible for a hybrid schedule. To view the full job description and to apply for the position, please click [here](#).

More local to the Pennsylvania region, the Beaver County Library System is looking for a new Director for the Monaca Public Library. For the full [ad, click here](#). See the general job description below:

- The Monaca Public Library seeks a Part-Time Library Director. This is an administrative and professional position. The Director operates within the framework established by the library's by-laws and the Library Board of Directors, performing duties with a high degree of independent judgment and initiative. **Deadline to apply:** March 27th 2026
 - Hours: 20-25 hours / week, including some evenings & Saturdays
 - Qualifications: Associates degree with at least 9 library credit hours; must meet/ exceed the Office of Commonwealth Libraries' certification criteria

AALL Conference Quick Look:

- For those even minutely interested in attending next year's conference , I've linked AALL's information [here](#).
 - **Date + Location:** July 18 - 21, 2026 in Cleveland, OH. This runs from Saturday - Tuesday.
 - Conveniently, Cleveland is roughly a two-hour drive from Pittsburgh, PA!
 - If there are members who wish to carpool, utilize the listserv - whether you're going for 1 or 2 days or the full conference, having a conference buddy can make a world of difference. There will be additional reminders as the date gets closer, but it's good to start planning early.
 - WPLLA will be putting out a survey to gauge carpooling & room-sharing options.

Highlights from the WPLLA listserv

- [How AI Tools Can Help with Legal History Research](#) by Kerr published 3.17.26
- [27 Ways to Access Scientific Research](#) by Pacifici published 3.05.26

WPLLA Contacts

Members: consider becoming an active part of our organization by assisting with the newsletter, or serving on our social media team. We promote our profession every day through educational events, forums, social events, and more.

WPLLA Board and Committees 2025 - 2026

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Daniel Parker

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A Column of Content is published online, quarterly, by the Western Pennsylvania Law Library Association

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Washington, PA 15301

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