MARIAN GOULD GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY:
AN ORAL HISTORY

University of Washington School of Law
Seattle, Washington

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Robert Berring was head librarian at the University of Washington Law School from July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982. Mr. Berring left the law school to become Professor of Law and Librarian at Boalt Hall at the University of California at Berkeley. He now is also Dean of the School of Library and Information Studies.

I talked with Mr. Berring by phone. He said that when he came to Washington, he considered it his mandate to "continue Marian's work- to maintain the fine quality of the library."

He added, "The major challenge was in the area of computerization. The bibliographic file for WLN was in place, but had not been implemented. And I attempted to expand the use of LEXIS and WESTLAW." Mr. Berring described his administrative style as "highly personal"; as a result, he took an active role in book selection.

"In many ways," he said, "one would expect it to be impossible to follow Marian Gallagher because of her reputation and marvelous ability. Actually, it was an easy task, because the library was in wonderful order, and Mrs. Gallagher was so graceful in offering advice.

"When asked if the average person could tell whether the administration had changed after my arrival, I often told this story. Because I do not drive, I would walk to work in jeans and then change clothes. One afternoon a call came for me. Vickie (Moor) could not find me, but she told the caller, 'I know he's here, because his pants are still here.' She laughed and added, 'Well, I guess things aren't like they used to be.'

"The important thing I learned from the University of Washington was how to obtain and retain good staff. Mrs. Gallagher had a gift for making people feel they were important. The staff had a reputation for knowing their jobs. When I came, the library could take care of itself."