

In Memoriam:

EVERETT O. ALLDREDGE



1912-1973

EVERETT OWEN ALLDREDGE, archivist, outstanding leader in records management not only in the federal government but throughout the United States, and nineteenth president of the Society of American Archivists, died of cancer in Washington, D.C., on September 9, 1973, just short of his sixty-first birthday.

Allredge spent his early years in Mount Vernon, Indiana, where he was born September 22, 1912, attended the public schools, and was graduated as valedictorian of his high school class, winning a scholarship to DePauw University. There, equally brilliant academically, he received his degree with Phi Beta Kappa honors in 1933, together with a fellowship for postgraduate study in history. He completed his formal education with graduate study in history at Harvard University between 1933 and 1940, supplemented by research abroad at Tübingen and Cambridge Universities in 1935. Characteristically, he broadened his concentration on history by extensive additional work in philosophy, literature, political science, economics, and religion; by such extracurricular activities as debating, drama, and editorship of his college newspaper; and by leadership of student efforts to avert World War II, including chairmanship of a World Peace Conference in Boston in 1939.

Inspired to enter public service by G. Bromley Oxnam, president of DePauw, Allredge took a federal civil service examination for junior professional assistant, which he passed with the highest grade in the country. Soon thereafter, with his appointment in October 1940 as junior archives assistant in the National Archives, he began a distinguished thirty-year career in the federal government, most of it in the same institution. The first two years, brightened by rapid promotions, were spent working successively with archives of the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and various independent agencies. With another promotion Allredge moved to the Board of Economic Warfare, where for a year he served in the Document Security Section of the Intelligence Division, devising one of the early document retrieval systems in the federal government—a forerunner of the system later used by the Central Intelligence Agency. Meanwhile, in 1941, Allredge had married Margarete Becker, whom he had met in Boston, and in 1943 a son, Charles, was born.

Allredge's real contributions to records management began in August 1943 with his enrollment in the United States Naval Reserve. At the Naval Training Center in Bainbridge he finished at the top of his training company, entitling him to a commission, but Lt. Cdr. Emmett J. Leahy, Director of the Navy's Records Management Division and a former colleague at the National Archives, moved more swiftly. Allredge found himself assigned to Leahy's office as a lieutenant, junior grade, and soon afterwards he established and became the first officer-in-charge of the Naval Records Management Center in Philadelphia. Allredge repeated the process in Los Angeles and later established other successful Navy records centers in Mechanicsburg, New York, and New Orleans. For

these accomplishments he was awarded the Navy Commendation Ribbon in 1946 for outstanding performance of duty.

With the end of World War II, Alldredge donned civilian clothes to become Chief of Field Program Planning in the Office Methods Division of the Navy. In this capacity he not only directly supervised the Navy records centers but also established and directed the work of district records management officers who provided records management assistance to naval activities in each naval district. In 1948 Leahy, then executive director of the National Records Management Council, headed a task force on records management for the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government (Hoover Commission). One principal recommendation of the task force was the establishment of a nationwide chain of records centers to serve the entire federal government. Alldredge provided much of the factual data used in the task force report to support this recommendation.

Logically, therefore, when most of the task force recommendations were approved by Congress and were assigned to the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration for implementation, Alldredge was one of the first staff members appointed in its new Records Management Division in January 1950. As in the Navy Department, his responsibilities were to establish and provide leadership for records centers and records management assistance, but this time on a government-wide basis in each GSA region throughout the country. His phenomenal success with the records center program brought him GSA's Distinguished Service Award in 1954.

When the Second Hoover Commission was organized in 1954, it established a task force on paperwork management, which Alldredge was again called upon to serve as a consultant and as a group leader for a staff study on records centers. The commission endorsed the work already done by the National Archives and Records Service in records management but urged that it be expanded in scope to include the management of such areas as correspondence, forms, reports, directives and instructions, mail operations, office files, and office machines. To carry out these recommendations Alldredge was shifted in 1956 from his position as head of the Records Center Division to that of head of a newly established Program Development Division in the Office of Records Management. In that capacity he developed and promoted records management clinics to indoctrinate senior government officials, handbooks to provide technical guidance, and workshops to offer practical application of the principles explained in the handbooks. Today twenty-four of these handbooks and sixteen corresponding workshops are being widely used, with others in preparation.

From November 1959 until his retirement in May 1971, Alldredge served, with brief interruptions, as assistant archivist for records management. Here he was responsible not only for the development of handbooks, workshops, and other program materials, but also for other ele-

ments of the records management program such as management surveys of agency practices and audits of agency programs, and for most of these years he also directed the operation of fifteen federal records centers. For a six-month period in 1968 he was personally detailed to develop a data archives program for the National Archives and Records Service.

By no means were Alldredge's records management activities limited to NARS. The clinics, workshops, surveys, and audits took him into nearly every federal agency at one time or another. For over twenty years, directly or indirectly he guided the programs of the Information and Records Administration Conference, composed of agency records management personnel in Washington. He was an active participant in the sessions of the agency records officers, limited to records managers in the largest and most important agencies; in the agency management officers group, drawn from professional management officials in major departments and agencies; and in a Naval Reserve company of management analysts and engineers. Outside the federal government he was a frequent speaker at chapter and national meetings of the American Records Management Association; he was Washington Chapter president and later executive secretary of the Association of Records Executives and Administrators (1971-73); and a member of the Advisory Council for Administration, American Management Association, 1962-68.

Special mention must be made of the contributions made by Alldredge to the Society of American Archivists. He was a long-time member, one of the original fellows named in 1958, a faithful contributor to the *American Archivist*, an active chairman of active committees like Local Arrangements and Membership Development, and, of course, vice president (1962-63) and president (1963-64). His administration was marked by efforts to revitalize the Society's committees, to increase the size and the professional competence of the membership through regional symposia, and to strengthen the ties of the Society with other professional organizations. His presidential address, "Still to be Done" [*American Archivist*, 28 (January 1965): 3-16], urged the undertaking of a series of worthy short-term and long-range projects, many of which, regrettably, can still be described by the title of his address.

Many professional honors came to Alldredge in addition to the appointive and elective offices and positions which he held. Besides those already mentioned, these included ARMA's Emmett J. Leahy Award for preeminence in records management (1969), a citation for distinguished public service by the Information and Records Administration Conference (1971), and the first annual Federal Records Management Officers' award for outstanding leadership (1971), henceforward to be known as the Ev Alldredge Award in recognition of his distinguished service in the field of records management.

Not so well known to Alldredge's professional associates were his religious activities. Brought up a Methodist, he was leader of young people's religious organizations during his college and university days. Once in Washington, however, he made the historic First Congregational

Church his spiritual base. There he taught an adult Bible class for eighteen years and served variously as archivist, historian, and moderator. He also produced two books for the church, one a centennial history and the other, written with his wife, a biography of one of its ministers and a close personal friend, Carl Heath Kopf.

Retirement lasted barely two years for Alldredge. He retired to engage in consulting work, to serve as executive secretary of AREA, to write, and to spend more time with his family; but within weeks, cancers had been found and were under treatment. Despite this handicap he carried a heavy consulting load, advising federal agencies, state governments, and international organizations, and still managed to crowd in his AREA responsibilities and some travel with his wife around the United States and to visit their son and his family in Europe. Only in the last few months, when treatment was no longer effective, did the pace slacken and eventually stop.

And so departed one of the towering figures in archives and records—an articulate and convincing speaker, a clear and logical writer, a dedicated and inspiring teacher, an inquisitive analyst, an adept organizer, a dynamic administrator, and a man with a wide acquaintance and many friends. Ev Alldredge will be remembered, as the IRAC citation puts it, “for distinguished public service matched by few Government employees; for boldness, tenacity and energetic leadership in carrying out the Federal Records Act; for imaginative innovation in the quest for excellence in the management of Government paperwork; for unwavering zeal and dedication to a worthy cause; and for innumerable acts of friendship.”

HERBERT E. ANGEL
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A Remembrance

The passing of Ev Alldredge is incredible to me, and my mind, loose from its moorings, swims in a welter of memories. All archivists and records managers, whether they know it or not, are in his debt, and the litany of his professional achievements is almost endless. But it fell to me to have known him intimately for over thirty-two years, as our professional careers intertwined. From the moment in November 1941 when I, as a neophyte, met him in the National Archives Building, to my last visit with him in July 1973, we had a rich personal relationship.

It was on two levels. On the official level he was my superior—in the Navy and as civilian in the Navy Department and NARS. On the other level we were equals, interacting as individuals, all rank and order eclipsed.

Officially, Ev had a mercurial temperament—he could order, cajole, plead, expound, project, manipulate; he could be by turns tender, demanding, direct, and indirect. But he did these always with an impish glint in the eye and the merest hint that he was engaging in a charade to get the job done.

Unofficially, our rapport was profound. Simply put, over the decades we ceaselessly explored with gusto the times, men, and events. Discussing almost anything with Ev was an incandescent experience. Typically, we would get some bit of grubby business out of the way and launch into a colloquy about a topical or philosophical matter.

Often Ev, a Congregationalist, and I, a Unitarian, talked about what religion was, and at the end I would remain unshaken in my agnosticism and he in his natural theism. But I think we shared the same values. Through the years we rejoiced in one political event, recoiled from another. We deplored our national policy in Vietnam, but Ev especially saw it as a fundamental contradiction between Christian professions and Christian practices.

The last words Ev said to my wife and me were "Fly the flag, Isadore." I replied, "High!" As we embraced, I thought I saw a flicker of the old glint. We both knew, I think, that it was our last moment together. I wept inwardly.

And so Ev is gone. My remembrance of him will be forever green, verdant with the promise of eternal spring. I thank Fate that in Nature's ordering of things he passed my way.

ISADORE PERLMAN
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