

Barbara Ringer

Barbara Ringer was appointed Register of Copyrights on November 19, 1973, the first woman to serve in that position. She was one of the principal architects of the copyright revision bill, which was enacted into law on October 19, 1976, as the Copyright Act of 1976.

Born in Lafayette, Ind., in 1925, Ms. Ringer received a bachelor of arts degree from George Washington University in 1945 and a master of arts degree from the same university in 1947. She graduated from the Law School of Columbia University in 1949.

Ms. Ringer joined the staff of the Copyright Office in 1949 as an examiner. She served successively as head of the Renewal and Assignment Section (1951); assistant chief (1955), acting chief (1960), and chief of the Examining Division (1961); assistant Register of Copyrights for Examining (1963); and assistant Register of Copyrights in 1966. In each of these positions she was intimately involved with the 20-year program for the general revision of the U.S. copyright law.

Between May 1972 and November 1973, she was director of the Copyright Division of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris.

A writer and lecturer, Ms. Ringer is the author of many studies, published monographs, bibliographies, and articles in legal and professional journals, including the article on copyright law in the 15th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. A representative of the United States at intergovernmental meetings and diplomatic conferences on copyright matters, she was general rapporteur of the 1974 Brussels conference, which adopted the international Convention Relating to the Distribution of PROGRAMME-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite. From 1962 to 1972, Ms. Ringer was adjunct professor of law at the Georgetown University Law Center.

In 1977 in a ceremony at the White House, Ms. Ringer received the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, the highest honor designed for extraordinary achievement in federal service, for her leadership in the revision of the U.S. copyright law that culminated in the 1976 Copyright Act.

Ms. Ringer retired from federal service on May 30, 1980, and joined the Washington, D.C., law firm of Spencer & Kaye. In 1993, she returned to the Copyright Office to serve as cochair of the Librarian's Advisory Committee on Copyright Registration and Deposit and then as acting Register of Copyrights from November 1993 to August 1994.