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A Tribute to Professor Nina Miley

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NINA MILEY

After thirteen years of varied and memorable service, Nina Miley retired from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in May of 2004. In 1965, Professor Miley earned her B.A., *magna cum laude*, from the University of North Alabama with a major in English and a minor in Design. Following graduation, Professor Miley taught English and Art at Alcee Fortier Senior High School in New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1969, Professor Miley left teaching to rear a family. She has two children, Thorin Miley and Katy Miley, both of whom she admires greatly. During the time her children were growing up, she served as a community advocate for energy efficient design in low and moderate income housing. In 1977, she received a demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to implement one of her designs.

In 1988, Professor Miley entered Washburn Law School in Topeka, Kansas. In her first year, she became the first woman to win the Freshman Oral Advocacy Competition. Throughout her law school years, she participated in moot court and was the President of Washburn's Moot Court Board. She graduated from Washburn in 1990 and was named Washburn Law School's Outstanding Woman Graduate.

After taking the Kansas Bar Exam, Professor Miley received a full scholarship to the University of Illinois to earn her Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. In July of 1991, she came to the University of Oklahoma Law Library as a reference librarian. She subsequently served as Interim Director and Associate Director of the Library. During her tenure as Interim Director, she wrote and received a grant to automate the circulation department.

In 1997, she moved to the position of Associate Director of Legal Research and Writing and served there until her retirement in 2004. Professor Miley invented the concept of eight small sections of research and writing. It has been a successful model and commended by the American Bar Association in its site evaluations.

Professor Miley maintains an active license to practice law in federal and Kansas state courts, and is a member of the American Bar Association and the Legal Writing Institute. She maintains her interest in housing, focusing on innovative rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures. In 2003-2004, she conducted research and wrote the documentation for a building that is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. She will continue to work in the fields of law and housing.

THANKS FOR KEEPING THE DOOR OPEN

Charles W. Brown*

Like many students in their first week of law school, I experienced a wide range of emotions, including everything from anxiousness and anticipation, to insecurity and utter fright. The Socratic method was intimidating, the reading assignments were extensive, and I found it challenging just locating the correct classroom. Among all the confusion and doubt, my first class with Professor Miley not only alleviated the uncertainty, but it also reminded me of why I decided to attend law school.

As my research and writing professor, Professor Miley provided me with many valuable tools that I will use for many years, including becoming “a friend of the Bluebook” and the ability to streamline five paragraphs down to one. However, it was her open-door policy for which I will always be most grateful. Professor Miley informed us early in that first semester that she was available outside of class to address any concerns or questions. Like many students, I quickly found my way to her office. We initially met to discuss typical issues such as citations and writing style, but these meetings rapidly evolved into discussions involving everything from family and friends to favorite quotes from *The Godfather*. We consistently met throughout my three years at the College of Law, and she was instrumental in shaping many of the most important decisions that I have ever made. It was because of this open-door policy that I, along with many other students, was able to successfully accomplish my goals at the College of Law. I am confident that without her advice and guidance, the three-year journey would not have been as enjoyable or memorable.

The College of Law is losing an irreplaceable asset. Professor Miley’s leadership, scholarship, and eternal smile will be dearly missed. It is an honor to know that my graduating class will always be referred to as “Miley’s last class.”

As you encounter other adventures and challenges during life’s journey, rest easy knowing that you have left the University, the law, and your students in a much better position. I am forever indebted to you for the conversations, the guidance, and your endless optimism. I am truly blessed to count you as my teacher and my friend.

Thanks for keeping the door open.

* Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice Honors Program. B.B.A., 2000, Cameron University; J.D., 2004, University of Oklahoma.

MY FRIEND, NINA

*Deborah Case**

It is a pleasure to be asked to share my thoughts with you about my friend, Nina Miley. Nina was devoted to all of the students she taught in legal research and writing, which for many years encompassed every student of the law school. Her door was always open to students, and she fretted over their success like a mother hen. I know the students appreciated her attention, as I heard many positive comments about Nina from her students over the years.

Every time that I saw Nina in the law school, she was laughing or stopping briefly to chat with a student or a member of the faculty or staff. I loved to talk with her about gardening. I have yet to talk with her about a plant that she didn't know, including its history.

Nina was a voracious reader. She was always telling me about some new medical development that she had discovered through her reading. I often told her that she should have been a doctor instead of a lawyer! She has been an invaluable source of information to many people over the years. Her cheerful, positive attitude will be missed. However, knowing Nina, she will be teaching in some capacity during her retirement because that is where she belongs.

NINA'S ENTHUSIASTIC START

*Shelly Clement***

I was at the circulation desk when Nina first walked into the University of Oklahoma College of Law Library. I believe it was a Saturday. She was not supposed to start as the reference librarian for a few days, but she had come early to look around and get acquainted with the library. It was a hot, humid, zaps-your-energy, Oklahoma summer day, and Nina was so enthusiastic, lively, and ready to start her new position. In no time, we were having a good time getting acquainted. She brought energy and knowledge to the job, and because she had run her own business before, she brought good business sense to the library. Nina loved doing reference work and loved working with the library users, which generated good public relations for the law library. Nina has not only been a great colleague, but also a great friend.

* Registrar, University of Oklahoma College of Law. B.S., 1977, University of Oklahoma.

** Acquisitions and Government Documents Librarian, University of Oklahoma Law Library. A.A., 1981, Northern Oklahoma Junior College; B.A., 1983, University of Oklahoma; M.L.S., 1988, University of Oklahoma. Librarian at the University of Oklahoma Law Library since 1988.

REMEMBRANCES OF NINA

*Patrick J. Ehlers, Jr.**

As a first year law student, I met Nina Miley in the library at the College of Law. To a clueless first year, Nina seemed like a research magician. She was always willing to help and that help always came with a smile. During my participation on the international law moot court team, Nina's research assistance was invaluable in deciphering the complex realm of international law. Whenever I reached a dead-end in my research, Nina was able to show me a way around the roadblocks to an answer that always made sense.

Beyond her role as a research librarian, Nina was, for me, one of the finest educators I had the pleasure of meeting during my time at the College of Law. She instilled in me a genuine interest in researching the law, and as I began to practice in the area of death penalty litigation, that interest paid enormous dividends. In a number of cases where I was able to obtain relief for clients, I can attribute my success directly to what I learned from Nina. The diligence and creativity with which she approached legal research are skills I admire and now strive to emulate.

From the moment I met Nina and asked my first naive question, I knew that she was someone I would grow to value. Her patience and willingness to help meant a great deal to a first year, and her thoughtful guidance is something for which I will always be grateful.

Nina, please stay in touch. I wish you all the best.

* Assistant Federal Public Defender, District of Oregon. B.A., 1989, University of Massachusetts (Amherst); J.D., 1993, University of Oklahoma.

ABOUT NINA MILEY, AND TO HER

Frank Elkouri & Edna Asper Elkouri***

In their daily living, some folks move around with a cloud always hovering – and maybe raining – over their head. One of our dear friends is not one of those persons. Quite to the contrary, she moves about in her daily living with her own personal sun hovering over her head, casting wonderful sunshine over all of the people with whom she has any kind of contact or relationship. That friend of ours – and of a great many other persons – is Nina Miley.

We first knew Nina when she was one of the professional librarians making the University of Oklahoma College of Law Library one of the finest around. She later contemplated teaching legal writing at the College of Law, and to us that seemed to be at the same time wonderful and unfortunate, the latter because the law school would lose Nina's valuable service as a librarian. Some of us suggested to Nina that she should continue in that position; our ulterior motives being that she had been so helpful to us as a librarian. However, she was determined. Quietly and politely she made the change.

As it turned out, the trade was just fine for the College of Law, for she also contributed by her performance as a professor teaching the very important subject of legal research and writing. Nina filled that position with the same high level of competence and responsibility, and with the same sunny and winning personality that we had always been assured of in her librarian position. Also, as in her previous position, Nina gave each student the attention that they deserve and paid each the respect that we all like to receive.

Finally, when Nina switched from the library to teaching, it mattered very much to us that she was still part of the law center family so that we could still enjoy her company. Nina, we will miss having you here in your retirement, but we do wish you the very best wherever you are! Very best wishes to you, Nina Miley!

* Professor Emeritus, University of Oklahoma College of Law. B.A., 1943, University of Oklahoma; LL.B., 1947, University of Oklahoma; LL.M, 1948, University of Michigan; S.J.D., 1951, University of Michigan.

** B.A., summa cum laude, 1950, University of Pittsburgh; J.D., 1953, George Washington University.

WELL WISHES

*Marilyn K. Nicely**

I have known Nina since 1991 when she first came to the University of Oklahoma as a reference librarian. Nina's office was next door to mine, so we had many occasions to share our work experiences. In the summer, Nina and I used to eat a brown bag lunch outdoors on a bench across the street. We had many good times.

Nina has always been energetic, enthusiastic, and eager to help others. The students loved Nina. She was very proactive in her reference service. She kept an eagle-eye out for anyone who looked the least bit puzzled and helped them find what they needed.

Later, Nina served as Interim Director of the Law Library and then as Associate Director. She was very proactive in these roles too. She enjoyed leadership, which made it easy for the library staff to work together. In 1994, Nina transferred to the Law School to teach legal research and writing. Her knowledge of library resources was a very important contribution to this program.

Nina has had a positive impact on many of our lives – staff, students, and faculty. She will be missed, and we wish her well in her retirement. Nina has always been very energetic and active, so she will no doubt continue to be an inspiration to others throughout her retirement.

* Technical Services Librarian and American Indian Law Subject Specialist, University of Oklahoma Law Library. B.A., 1967, Ohio University; M.A., 1973, Arizona State University; M.L.S., 1974, University of Oklahoma. Librarian at the University of Oklahoma Law Library since 1976.

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