

# Kathy Farmann:

## *An Inspiring Woman Remembered*

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On January 25, 2002, members of the Law School community, past and present, lost a dear friend, colleague and mentor. Kathleen Elizabeth Farmann, director of the Kresge Law Library from 1965 to 1985, passed away quietly and on her own terms after a brief illness at Regency Nursing Home in South Bend.

Kathleen Farmann grew up in Washington, D.C. She graduated with honors from Trinity College in 1941 and Catholic University of America School of Law in 1945. Upon graduation, Kathy practiced antitrust and corporate law in D.C. at Covington and Burling from 1945 to 1953. Kathy was a pioneer, practicing law in an area where, as a woman, she was definitely in the minority. But knowing Kathy, I'm sure this only made her resolve more fervent. I don't know why Kathy decided to abandon the practice of law, but fortunately she next chose a career in law librarianship. In 1957, Kathy received her master's degree in law librarianship from the University of Washington.

From 1957 to 1965, Kathy served as an assistant librarian and assistant director of research services at the Ohio State University, and then as law librarian at the Hawaii Supreme Court Library, before assuming the position of director of Notre Dame's Law Library. During her tenure at NDLS, the library's physical space was expanded in 1973 and the library's collections more than doubled, growing from 69,000 volumes to 164,823. All

of these accomplishments, however, are overshadowed by the mark that Kathy left on so many lives here in the Law School — her colleagues, students and friends all celebrate Kathy's life. We are thankful for the moments we shared with her.

I recently read a book titled *7 GREATEST TRUTHS ABOUT SUCCESSFUL WOMEN*. This is not the type of book I would normally pick up, but for some unknown reason, when I saw it while browsing the new book shelf at the St. Joseph County Public Library, I felt compelled to take a look. On the cover were printed the words, "Play by your own rules and succeed on your own terms." When I began to think about my tribute to Kathy, those words and the "truths" came back to me: resiliency, passion, nurture, intuition, creativity, self-value and sensitivity.

Kathy had a resiliency that enabled her to rise above the challenges that were presented to her. She practiced law at a time when there were few women practicing law, let alone in the areas of antitrust and corporate law. She had a determination — a passion — to overcome obstacles and barriers. And she exhibited this passion not only in her love of the law, but also by encouraging all whom she took under her wing to strive to overcome the obstacles and barriers that life sometimes presents. Kathy was a nurturer — be it to a friend, colleague or student. She helped us realize our ambitions.

She possessed a keen intellect and extraordinary insight that some might characterize as intuition. Her knowledge went beyond book knowledge and straight to common sense and fundamental principles. She had a way of informing and persuading by engaging people. She kept them interested because she was able to hear not only what they were saying but also what they were thinking. She could hear their unspoken responses as well as their spoken responses.

I remember that she once told me that I had to develop a "Mona Lisa" smile, in response to my overreacting to a situation. She told me not to let anyone know that they had upset me. I had to learn how to handle such situations, and not allow them to handle me. On another occasion, she told me that I had to visualize the word "elephant" on a person's forehead before I responded. She said that how I responded might make me feel better and I might move on thinking that it was over, but they might not forget. She offered me creative solutions to my shortcomings, and gave me advice that I have never forgotten.

Kathy's self-value was one that relied less on the approval of others and more on relationships with others. Her sense of self was developed by the relationships that she truly valued. Her everyday interactions with friends, colleagues and students defined her.

Kathy truly played by her own rules and succeeded on her own terms. The contributions that follow from her friends, colleagues and former students tell her story and highlight her successes far better than anything that can be measured by a list of standards in a book. I will miss not being able to visit with Kathy and hear her laugh or ask for her advice. But I know that I will always have Kathy with me in my heart, which is something that I will always cherish.

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BY CARMELA KINSLOW

HEAD OF ACCESS SERVICES, KRESGE LAW LIBRARY

## FORMER COLLEAGUES:

**Granville Cleveland, Professor Emeritus, Notre Dame Law Library:**

— Irish Toast —

May you always have work for your hands to do. May your pockets hold always a coin or two.  
 May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.  
 May rainbow be certain to follow each rain.  
 May the hand of a friend always be near you.  
 And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Dear Kathy,

I am so sorry that I could not be with you during your final moments. I will always regret that. You gave so much of yourself to others. Thank you for all the things you did for me in my life. You brought me to Notre Dame. You taught me how to look at the entire picture of life and how not to limit myself to small things that have little meaning. You showed me the importance of character in life. I feel very proud and lucky that you are my friend.

**Michael Slinger, Associate Dean, Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law:**

I will always be grateful to Kathy Farmann. Mrs. Farmann — I could never bring myself to call her Kathy — gave me my start as a law librarian, a profession I have been proud to call my own for the past 18 years. I was first impressed with Mrs. Farmann because she asked me to bring my wife Cheryl to my interview at Notre Dame. I had already interviewed at USC and Villanova, and they had not asked me to bring my wife. But Notre Dame was different. It was a family atmosphere, and Mrs. Farmann and her husband Stan made it that way. I have always suspected that my wife Cheryl had as much to do with me getting the job at Notre Dame as anything I did on that interview.

Mrs. Farmann was a wonderful role model for me because she had integrity and talent, but also because she was always kind to me and to others. She went out of her way to make Cheryl and me feel welcome and, yes, part of the Notre Dame family that we all know and love. I have tried during my professional career to emulate Mrs. Farmann and Dean Roger Jacobs, my two wonderful mentors. I hope both Mrs. Farmann and Dean Jacobs are pleased with not only what I have done, but also with how I do it. I consider Notre Dame Law Library to be my professional home, no matter where else I may work. Mrs. Farmann is in large part responsible for making me feel this way. I am so grateful to have worked with her. I will miss her very much.

**Mary Persyn '82 J.D., Director of Law Library and Professor of Law, Valparaiso University:**

I worked for Kathy Farmann all through law school as well as for two years after graduation. I will always be grateful to her for giving me my start in law librarianship. I always appreciated her dedication to keeping an orderly library, where the materials could be easily found by the faculty and students. I also remember with fondness the staff parties that we used to have.

## FORMER STUDENTS:

**Carol Ann Mooney '77 J.D., Vice President and Associate Provost, Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame**

It is unlikely that Kathy Farmann ever blended in. That certainly would have been nearly impossible when she entered law school — at that time, the presence of a female student was remarkable. When I first met her in the mid-1970s, Mrs. Farmann's red hair and red lipstick made their own statement. Kathy had presence and we loved her for it. We also loved her for the way she treated us.

I was one of a sizable number of law students who partially financed our educations by working in the library — staffing the circulation desk, working in technical services and re-shelving books at 7:00 each morning. Working in the library, I benefited from Mrs. Farmann's encouragement during the inevitably dark days of a law student's life, and I also had the opportunity to observe how many other students, in addition to my co-workers, sought her counsel.

Mrs. Farmann was known as the best person in the building to help whip a resume into shape. She also spent a lot of time with minority students. I suspect that she keenly understood the difficulties one faces in being a pioneer, and was able to share insights that few others in the school possessed.

It was clear that she dearly loved three things: her husband Stan, the library that together they had worked so hard to improve and the students. Kathy Farmann



Stan and Kathy Farmann

## *Kathy Farmann: An Inspiring Woman Remembered* (continued)

touched many of us and was one of those people whose presence made a difference in our lives.

### **Honorable Ann Clare Williams '75 J.D., '97 LL.D. (Hon.), U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit:**

I met Mrs. Farmann during my first year of law school. Although I was a little intimidated at first, I was immediately fascinated by her — that slash of red lipstick, the long dangling cigarette, her intellect, her wit, her big heart and the very direct way in which she spoke. She was a very private person, but always willing to lend a helping hand and provide research and writing suggestions. Her legal reasoning and analysis of complex issues was thoughtful, thorough and always on target. Our friendship flourished through the years and she became a cherished mentor who gave me wise advice and counsel. So much that after graduation, I stayed in contact and visited her home during football weekends. And although she declined to attend my investiture ceremonies (she disliked large, public gatherings) I was thrilled that she and Stan could join my family and friends for the dinner celebration the University held for its honorary degree recipients in 1997. She will remain in my heart and her spirit will continue to give me and everyone she touched the courage to face any challenge with wit, intelligence, courage and love.

### **Ron Dallas '73, '76 J.D., Fort Lauderdale, Florida:**

Mrs. Farmann was a wonderful woman. She was a caregiver who never missed an opportunity to offer words of encouragement or a warm smile and hug. She made the Notre Dame Law School a very special place. She enriched my life as a law student, and she continued to share generously her wisdom, wit and encouragement following my graduation. She and her husband made me a part of their family. Mrs. Farmann will be missed by the many people she loved, nurtured and counseled. We — the beneficiaries of her vision, labor and countless acts of kindness — are entrusted with her immortality. We must be inspired to give tribute to her by following her great example of service to others. May God bless her soul and may we find comfort in the reading from I Corinthians: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

### **Paul Mattingly '75 J.D., Cincinnati, Ohio:**

When investigating law schools in the fall of 1971, I visited something like a career fair at the Ohio State University, a central location for many of the smaller universities from around Ohio. At the time, I thought my career plans would take me to Washington & Lee Law School in Lexington, Virginia. Probably out of curiosity, I stopped by the Notre Dame Law School table, where Kathy Farmann was Notre Dame's representative — and everything changed.

Kathy was my first real contact with Notre Dame. We talked briefly, and she seemed so interested in me. We spoke about what I was looking for in a legal career. She extolled Notre Dame, telling me about how it would fit into my plans and how I belonged there. By the time we parted, she had insisted that I contact her as soon as possible after my return to the University of Dayton to arrange a personal visit to Notre Dame. She practically extracted a commitment from me to do so — I was to call her directly to arrange it.

I made the call to Kathy and came to Notre Dame on a very snowy, impassable day in the winter of 1972. As soon as I entered the library doors near the circulation desk, Kathy saw me, hailed me by name with a huge smile, and welcomed me. There were other students there that day too, and I was shocked that after several intervening weeks, she genuinely recognized me and knew instantly who I was. I had a wonderful day visiting classes and spending one-on-one time with Professors Regis Campfield and Edward Murphy. Kathy arranged that because I sought financial aid and, as I recall, she was on the awards committee.

Of course, I did attend Notre Dame, seeing and working with Kathy from time to time over my three years in school. Those earliest contacts with her, however, are what stick vividly in my mind. They are what made Notre Dame a reality to me. They are what changed my mind. I am sure that there are many others who can relate similar stories about how Kathy touched and influenced their lives in ways she never imagined. She was a wonderful ambassador for the Law School.

### **Honorable Susan Zwick '80 J.D., Circuit Court of Cook County (Illinois):**

I don't believe any person who graced the halls of Notre Dame Law School during the 1970s and 1980s could avoid at least one encounter with Mrs. Kathy Farmann. The unsinkable, larger-than-life librarian who

routinely dusted off neophyte law students, placed them on their feet and marched them into the profession. Mrs. Farmann was a friend and forever a mentor — and it is with sorrow that I find myself now recalling memories that were often shared between us when I was just a student.

From 1977 until 1980, Mrs. Farmann shepherded an unlikely group of new law students through the rigors of law school. Those who shelved books in the early dawn were working for rent and food. Despite the 5:45 a.m. start time, we were initially an undisciplined lot, and frightened of every aspect of law school. Mrs. Farmann allowed her library staff to adopt us. We were given coffee to drink, a sanctuary in which to study and constant advice on life. But life wasn't what we were there to learn — the law was. And Mrs. Farmann always made sure that life's demands didn't swallow us whole. The study of law came first.

For those of us who worked for her, and for any other student who came under her shield, Mrs. Farmann was uncompromising in her demand for individual excellence. And as uncompromising as she was with each of our goals, she was as protective of our dream. If we had trouble in a class, she found us a tutor. If we had a personality clash with a professor, she set up a meeting and mediated if necessary. If we had trouble with the gas company (and they threatened to turn off the heat) she taught us how to deal with the situation, how to negotiate and how to win gracefully. And she expected that we would prevail and graduate, as was the dream.

But most of all, Mrs. Farmann instilled in each one of us a love for books, and a passion for knowledge. You are only as good as your research she once told me, and to be sure I didn't forget, I wrote those words on my Prosser hornbook. I still have the book, and the quote is now written on a piece of paper, tacked to my computer at work.

It was during my third year that I began to see Mrs. Farmann for the true pioneer she was. Mrs. Farmann graduated from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in 1945. Her practice of the law was so different from the world I was entering, and yet, her stories of the people and events were timeless. In a profession dominated by gentlemen, she remained, first and always, a true and refined lady, and never failed to remind each of us that our vocation demanded character, integrity and class. It did not matter where we hailed from, or what type of law we practiced, as long as we treated all with respect and graciousness.

I will miss Kathy Farmann for her irrepressible

humor (a side she rarely showed to the public, but which was always evidenced by her smile), her unequalled and organized mind, and her ability to bring the best out of all of us. I am privileged to have shared a cup of coffee with her, to have read and exchanged books with her, to have debated politics and history with her, and to have learned, oh so much from her. But most of all, I am privileged to be able to call this remarkable woman my friend. I will never forget all she taught me.

**Irv Vinson, Retired, International Representative of the United Auto Workers:**

When I was informed that Kathleen Farmann had passed away, I wondered what words would be appropriate to sum up her life. Words like kindness and dedication to helping law students like myself came to mind. I found some words written by Stephen Grellet, who said, "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore that I can do, or kindness that I can show to any fellow human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." To my knowledge, Mrs. Farmann never verbalized her philosophy on life, but in my opinion, had Stephen Grellett known her, he would have found her to be the perfect model to make his words a reality, because what he wrote, Kathleen Farmann lived. She will be sorely missed.



**LAW FACULTY SPOUSES BOOK CLUB:**

For almost 25 years, Kathy was a regular at "The Book Club," a monthly gathering of Kathy and about a dozen law faculty spouses. During her years as director of the Law Library, Kathy would slip away during her lunch hour to discuss Cather or Conrad, Marquez or Dinesen. If a book touched on Kathy's own experiences, she would talk a bit about her childhood, growing up in Washington, D.C., and then about practicing law there in the post-World War II years. Another book might set off a story about canoeing adventures with husband Stan.

Kathy managed to be candid in the book discussions without trading on her authority as a librarian. It was her practice to listen keenly and then, as the talk died down, to announce her own firm views. These were not always, or even frequently, in agreement with what the others had spent the previous 30 minutes describing. But they always led to smiles and some friendly teasing — not arguments. Her comments never failed to add a warm and zesty spice to the discussions. The Book Club members agree that it won't be the same without Kathy.

**ADMINISTRATOR & STAFF NOTES**

\* Welcome to **ALEXANDRIA LEWIS**, who joined the Career Services Office as a full-time career and public-interest counselor in January 2002. She earned her J.D. degree from the University of Idaho College of Law in 1998. While a law student, she participated in clinic and mock trial, and was actively involved in many law school organizations, including the student bar association. During and after law school, she interned with several city attorney's offices including in Clarkston, Washington, and Santa Ana, California, before finally accepting a position as a civil litigator in Newport Beach. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Lewis earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration from

Boise State University and worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

\* **SUSAN GOOD '85**, technical support consultant/analyst in the Office of Law School Technology, pieced together a "peace quilt" for the University's Office of Campus Ministry. The quilt, which measures 70 inches by 70 inches, features 49 squares designed by various campus dormitories and groups, as well as by children in area elementary schools.

Campus Ministry unveiled the work on Martin Luther King Jr. Day as part of the University's celebration of the life of Reverend King. The quilt reflected perfectly the theme for the celebration,

"Operation Love: Making a Difference Piece by Piece." Each square represents what Reverend King and his legacy mean to the people who took the time to design and create each square. Ms. Good and her work were featured in the January 22, 2002, editions of the *SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE* and the *OBSERVER*.

\* **CATHY PIERONEK '84**, '95 J.D., director of Law School Relations, published *Discrimination Against Students in Higher Education: 2000 in Review* in volume 28, number 2 of the *JOURNAL OF COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY LAW*. The article is part of the journal's annual review of cases relevant to higher-education attorneys.