

2000

Professor Mary Jenny

Debora Person

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/land_water

Recommended Citation

Person, Debora (2000) "Professor Mary Jenny," *Land & Water Law Review*: Vol. 35 : Iss. 1 , pp. xxi - xxii.
Available at: https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/land_water/vol35/iss1/2

This Special Section is brought to you for free and open access by Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Land & Water Law Review by an authorized editor of Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship.

MARY JENNY

By Debora Person

Mary Jenny was the Head of Public Services at the University of Wyoming College of Law Library for the last five years. As law library faculty, she taught a highly regarded class in advanced legal research, served as technical advisor for the *Land and Water Law Review*, and judged local law student competitions. The graduating class of 1999 honored her with their votes for "hooding professor" for the graduation ceremony.

Before coming to Wyoming, Mary was the Economic Development/Outreach Librarian at Oregon State University in Corvallis. She taught legal research at Louisiana State University. For a time, she engaged in private practice in the northwest and spent a year working with Alaska Legal Services.

She was a member of the American Library Association, Washington State Bar Association, Oregon Library Association, and WESTPAC, the western division of American Association of Law Libraries, where she served on the Public Relations Committee. WESTPAC's mascot, in fact, was Mary's idea. Shopping one day, she picked up a stuffed bison and enlisted the assistance of a colleague to sew a miniature Hawaiian shirt for the toy. She took it to the conference, holding it out as a representative of the western states. The bison, Woolly, has been widely accepted and now has a place of honor at the registration table at the regional conferences.

Maintaining friendships with international colleagues as far away as Australia and China, she made frequent outreach efforts. In 1995, she wrote a grant proposal to enable a Lithuanian librarian to visit Wyoming law libraries. Mary housed her, fed her, and took her sightseeing to Yellowstone. At the end of her stay here, Mary drove her across the country to the national A.A.L.L. conference. In return, she visited Vilnius to tour the new library they had established and gave a presentation on the status of American law libraries.

Not everyone was aware of Mary's generous nature. The chocolates that filled the library's candy dish came from her. The students in her class always had a spread of treats for their final. She lent her house key to students who were looking for a quiet place to study for the bar exam and offered her spare room to any student, colleague or friend that might need a brief retreat.

She enjoyed reading and gardening. She liked to sit and listen to the rain. But those of us who knew her will remember her mostly for her fondness for animals. Owner of two Great Danes, both of which she rescued

from breed rescue societies, she had a soft spot for all dogs. Anyone with a dog story or in need of pet advice went to Mary. She shared her own collection of books, good Internet sites, and doggie treats. During Mary's illness, my own young dog was diagnosed with lymphoma and given two months to live. A week after I told Mary, a ten-pound package arrived in the mail, filled with gourmet dog food and an assortment of doggie treats.

In spite of her illness, she never lost her sense of humor or her determination to fight. Even her distressing hospital visits turned into entertainment when she related them. When, after months of frustrated dealings with the bureaucracy of the Social Security Department, she found out that her social security payments wouldn't begin until July 15, she announced that she was going to outlive the arrival of that first check. She died August 6, 1999.

When her disease was diagnosed, she said that she had done all the things she had wanted to in her life except for taking a trip to China, and she was not counting that possibility out yet. She never made it to China, but she did make it back to Wyoming for the graduation ceremonies this year. We were pleased to see that she had not changed and that she had long been spared the most painful symptoms of her disease.

Mary will always be a part of the law school and a part of the memories of the graduates who attended the University of Wyoming College of Law during her years here. People who associated with Mary will remember her gruffness, but this may be the first many have heard of her generosity. These characteristics contributed to making her the complicated and intriguing person we knew. Our association with Mary gave us the opportunity to be better, smarter, more insightful people.