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Judy Morgan, OCU's Unsung Heroine

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JUDY MORGAN, OCU’S UNSUNG HEROINE

Daniel J. Morgan*

A law library is like the underwater portion of an iceberg. It supports the above water towers and spires that attract all the attention, but the real foundation of the iceberg is hidden beneath the surface. For decades, in so many ways, Judy’s management of our library has kept the law school afloat.

There may not be a harder library job in legal education than responsibility for the OCU Law Library. How can I support this audacious assertion? Quite easily, as it turns out. The ABA and AALS law school librarians have always been a potent force in legal education, especially regarding accreditation standards. Librarians from well-endowed old school institutions and state schools with access to taxpayer support have long fed their collective “edifice complex” (remember the panoramic shot of Julia Roberts in the great hall of the Georgetown Law Library in The Pelican Brief?). For accreditation standards, this has always translated into more books and bigger buildings. On several occasions over the years, the accreditation committees would arrive, saying, “Take us to your huge book stacks and show us actresses cavorting in your Great Hall!” Judy would then work her magic, demonstrating that efficient and targeted use of limited resources combined with excellent personal service and leadership overcomes the edifice complex. Her talent played a major role in the AALS accreditation of OCU.

Judy was unflappable, whether the immediate challenge was an accreditation visit or mother nature. I vividly remember an April evening in the late ’80s when the basement of the Gold Star Building flooded after a near miss by a tornado which was followed by a deluge that had faculty and students alike wading ankle-deep in the hallways outside of the major classrooms. To make things even more exciting,

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OCU maintenance men showed up and began running electric cords for the pumps through the water. Professor Margie Downing and I, observing this, began to leap up and down, screaming, “Dang it, you’ll electrocute us all!” Judy simply (and silently) raced through the water unplugging the cords, thereby saving us all—a typical understated but totally effective Judy Morgan performance. Marge and I made a lot of noise. Judy got the job done.

When Judy wasn’t rescuing us from electrocution or protecting us from pesky accreditation drones, she was running a user-friendly library, making sure that students, faculty, and community patrons received first-class service. Her staff, always well trained, has always been at a patron’s elbow, asking, “How can I help?”

It is a great tribute to Judy that her successor, Lee Peoples, has honed his leadership and library skills in this tradition and exemplifies Judy’s commitment to service and excellence.

It will always be remembered that Judy managed to deliver first-class service on a third-class budget, never calling attention to herself, but always doing a stellar job for our school. She is truly the superstar of the Gold Star Building!

I suspect that Judy will have an active retirement. She and her husband, Pat, have a country home in north Edmond which will be filled with visiting grandchildren, horses, and hunting dogs. Judy, in her special way, will continue to look after them all.