

## Miles Price as Teacher

By FRANCES FARMER\*

Miles Price's reputation as one of our foremost law librarians is well known throughout the law school and library world. A careful craftsman, an able administrator, and a devoted spokesman for all other law librarians—young and old—he justly earned the high regard of all who were fortunate enough to come within the circle of his influence.

Less well known than his general reputation as a librarian were perhaps his special attributes as a teacher of law library administration. It is to this aspect of his career—his role and qualities as a teacher—that I wish to devote a few comments.

Were I to try to describe crisply his "role," it would be to suggest that he was to all of us a kind of master shepherd who tended his ever-increasing flock with exacting care, personal consideration, and professional pride. As for his "qualities" I would be driven to recall a remark attributed, I believe, to Humphrey Bogart. When asked to distinguish between an "amateur" and a "pro," he said simply that a "pro" is someone who always gives his best even when he does not feel like it. As a teacher Miles Price was a "pro" in the best sense of this much-used word. He did not spare himself or his pupil, yet to the job of taskmaster he also brought an abiding interest in the progress and welfare of all who were subject to his tutelage. Like other great teachers, he taught by example rather than precept, and the example was that of a dedicated man who took pride in his work and his profession. Hopefully it rubbed off on all of us.

Permit me to punctuate these remarks by a personal reminiscence. My memory goes back to the late thirties. I was privileged to be in the second of his summer programs—programs that subsequently did so much for our entire guild.

That year Miles dispatched his family to their Maine summer residence so that he might devote himself exclusively to the class. Of the 13 en-

rolled, four of us were depending upon this instruction to put us in shape for promised jobs.

What was it like to be in that class? *Mutatis mutandis*, I think it must have been similar to Marine training at Paris Island. The daily schedule, unflinchingly adhered to, began promptly at 8:00 in the morning and never ended before 6:00 in the evening, without benefit of coffee breaks and with only a small amount of grudgingly-bestowed time for lunch and dinner. Then what? By 7:30, we were back in the law library to be greeted by Miles who was already there avidly waiting to take us in tow. Little wonder we learned all we could possibly absorb in eight weeks, including every nook and cranny of that celebrated collection and every possible hint on how a well-directed law library gets to be one. It was a tough but memorable experience.

When the course had ended and we had returned to our respective habitats, we learned that our taskmaster had a softer side. Miles had taken occasion to write to our various superiors to report that we had pursued our study diligently and that, in his opinion, we were entitled to an extended vacation with pay.

But that was not the end of it. Keeping in touch with his students through the years took a considerable toll of his energy and time—an endless stream of inquiries from many of us never failed to bring detailed answers from Miles, most of them typed by him after a busy day as director of his own shop. It was his determination to keep in close touch with his students that enabled him to become, and to remain over the long years, the effective one-man placement bureau of the law library profession.

To revert to the beginning, Miles' established reputation as a librarian may have obscured his reputation as a teacher. The balance needs to be redressed and, as one of his former students, I am happy to add this tribute to the many he has so richly earned.

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