

In Memoriam: Mary Alice Hohmann

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IN MEMORIAM

MARY ALICE HOHMANN

DEAN ROBERT F. BODEN
Marquette University Law School

Mary Alice Hohmann, Associate Professor of Law and Law Librarian at Marquette University between 1962 and 1973, passed away on December 26, 1981, after a long and courageous fight against cancer. Professor Hohmann was the first woman appointed to the law faculty at Marquette. She was a native of Holland, Michigan, born in 1933 to Louis and Alice Hohmann. After a year at Trinity College, Washington, D.C., she came to Milwaukee to complete her baccalaureate work at Marquette University, adopted the city and made it her lifelong home. She received a B.S. degree in 1955 and entered the Marquette Law School in the fall of 1956. The recipient for three years of a St. Thomas More Scholarship and a member of the *Marquette Law Review*, she received her degree in June of 1959 upon a distinguished academic record and near the top of her class.

She entered the practice of law in partnership with two classmates, John D. Morrisey and James G. Doyle, leaving that firm in 1962 to join the law faculty and to accept appointment as Associate Law Librarian at Marquette. Later the same year, upon the retirement of Law Librarian Agnes Kendergan, Professor Hohmann was appointed to succeed her.

She began her duties as law librarian at a time when the law library was on the threshold of unprecedented growth and expansion. She had a large role in planning the Legal Research Center building which was built adjacent to the law school in 1967 and into which the library was moved in January of 1968 under a skillful plan devised by her and executed without interruption of library service. After occupancy of the new building, she was on a partial leave of absence to study procedures at the Harvard law library and to pursue a graduate degree in library science, which she received with honors from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1969.

Under her direction, the law library staff was increased and the collection reclassified. As resources became available to expand the collection substantially, she directed an acquisition program which was the foundation for even greater growth in subsequent years. Perhaps her most significant contribution to the Marquette Law Library was the philosophy of librarianship which she brought to it and which has characterized it since. It was her conviction that a law library existed to serve its patrons. Under her administration the perception of the library as a feudal domain of the librarian disappeared forever at Marquette. Hours were extended, circulation policies liberalized, reference services increased, and the staff oriented to her service policy. The happy result has been nearly two decades of praise for library services from students, faculty, bench and bar.

Professor Hohmann was the first woman to teach a law course in the law school at Marquette University. In 1964 she was appointed research reporter to a special committee of the Wisconsin Judicial Council which was studying a revision of the law relating to guardians *ad litem*. The important research paper which she produced led to the drafting and passage by the legislature of an act substantially reforming Wisconsin law in this area. For the high quality of her teaching, research and writing, and the excellence of her library administration, she was advanced in rank to Associate Professor and given academic tenure in 1969. She was active in a wide variety of faculty committees during the period of her service, and her resignation from the faculty to return to practice in 1973 was deeply regretted by her colleagues.

In the eight years of practice which remained to her after leaving the law school, in the same office she had left to come to Marquette, Professor Hohmann distinguished herself in the fields of trust, probate law and taxation. She brought to her practice the same high standards of excellence which she had set for herself in her academic work and in her administration of the law library.

Mary Alice Hohmann was called to the bar and to her faculty position toward the close of a long era of male dominance of the profession. She was one of but two women in her graduating class in 1959. She rejoiced in the entry of women into the profession in greater and greater numbers beginning

in the years of her law school service, and she held the view that the day of substantial influence by women in the legal profession was inevitable and did not require artificial stimuli in the form of such efforts as special recruiting programs. She was proud to be a lawyer and woman, but she did not like to have the fact that she was a woman lawyer held up *per se* as a badge of honor or accomplishment. Judged by the standard she set for herself, she excelled in every respect and earned the admiration of her colleagues in academe and in practice. We shall miss her, and the profession suffers for her untimely loss. May she rest in peace and in the knowledge that her relatively short life in the law was a most fruitful one, particularly in its impact upon the growth and enrichment of legal education at Marquette University.

