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Mike Hoffheimer

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## UM Law School Mourns Loss of Professor George Cochran

Services set for Friday at Waller Funeral Home

JUNE 21, 2017 BY MIKE HOFFHEIMER



George Colvin Cochran

OXFORD, Miss. – George Colvin Cochran, a 45-year law professor at the **University of Mississippi**, died Monday (June 19) at the age of 80 from complications of melanoma.

An educator and civil rights scholar, Cochran leaves a singular, enduring legacy with the School of Law and a half-century's worth of its graduates.

"It is hard to imagine the law school without George Cochran," said Debbie Bell, the school's interim dean. "His students remember him for his intense, challenging classes and his amazing memory of materials and cases.

"Over the years, he was quietly generous to students in need, a fact a number of our graduates have mentioned to me in the last two years."

Visitation is scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday (June 22) in West Hall at Waller Funeral Home in Oxford, and services will be at 11 a.m.

Friday (June 23), also at Waller Funeral Home. In honor of Cochran's service to our country, the flag of the U.S. Army will be flown.

A campus memorial service and celebration will be planned later.

Cochran was born Dec. 1, 1936 in Maysville, Kentucky. He graduated from Cranbrook School in Michigan and from North Carolina State, where he studied textile engineering, played football and was active in student politics.

In his early 20s, Cochran worked briefly for his family's Kentucky textile mill before serving two years as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Airborne infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Cochran graduated first in his class from the University of North Carolina Law School and served as editor-in-chief of the law review. He was inducted into the Order of the Coif, the premier legal honor society.

He clerked for U.S. Supreme Court justices Stanley Reed and Earl Warren, including service on the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

Cochran practiced law with Steptoe and Johnson between 1966 and 1968. That year, he and his wife, Nancy Newbold Cochran, welcomed his only child, daughter Reed. Though he and Nancy ultimately divorced, Cochran considered her to be his greatest love and their daughter to be his crowning accomplishment.

Cochran worked as director of the Duke Center on Law and Poverty from 1968 to '72, when he accepted a faculty position at the UM School of Law. Here, he found his true calling as educator and scholar.

Cochran arrived in Oxford while Mississippi was still resisting the outcomes of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, the Legislature having expelled faculty members who supported the Supreme Court decision.

As one writer has observed, "Professor Cochran joined the law faculty at a turning point. From early in his career, he played an important role in transforming the law school from a parochial institution into a nationally respected law school.

He taught constitutional law, federal jurisdiction, Supreme Court practice and related seminars. For 19 years, he also taught during summers at Fordham Law School in New York.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

Also in New York, he collaborated with the Center for Constitutional Rights, considering one of its founders, Morton Stavis, to be among his greatest friends and mentors.

Altogether, Cochran was attorney of record in 17 constitutional law cases. He and his good friend Wilbur Colom successfully challenged single-sex education at Mississippi public universities in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Cochran was also one of the nation's leading experts opposing punitive actions against public interest attorneys. And he was instrumental in establishing the Mississippi Innocence Project, which was renamed the George C. Cochran Innocence Project by unanimous vote of the faculty in 2015.

To his students, Cochran was best known for his spirited and provocative lectures on constitutional law, civil liberties and, especially, free speech. Former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Oliver Diaz, one of his students, wrote, "He offended liberals and conservatives alike. He taught us that the price for living in a free society is that we will be offended. Get over it. This is what democracy does. We can't be frightened by speech."

While the professor was notorious for his gruff demeanor and salty language, Cochran's students never doubted his devotion. He continued teaching after retirement, through this spring. Indeed, he was in the classroom only a few weeks before his passing.

Cochran's favorite hobby was sailing. He and Nancy owned "Young Tiger" in the early years of their marriage on the Chesapeake Bay. Later, he and Colom would sail "Misty" to Cuba, by legal invitation, with their daughters Reed and Niani among the crew.

Cochran is survived by his daughter, Reed Cochran; his sister, Frances Cochran Sanders; niece, Ann Sanders Anderson-Behrend; and nephews William Henley Sanders, John Poyntz Cochran and William Duffield Cochran IV.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655, designated for the George C. Cochran Scholarship in Law Endowment or to the George Cochran Innocence Project.

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