

Memorial: Amelia Sandique-Owens (1933–1999)

Amelia Sandique-Owens, Associate Law Librarian Emerita at American University's Washington College of Law, died on November 29, 1999. She had suffered a stroke the previous Wednesday and had also been undergoing treatment for cancer. Amelia served as the chief of the Cataloging and Bibliographic Access Department of the American University Law Library from February 1, 1980, until her retirement, exactly nineteen years later, on February 1, 1999. She is survived by her husband, Larry Owens, and three sisters.

Amelia was born and raised in the Philippines. She received a B.S. degree in education in 1954 and an M.A. degree in English in 1962, both from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. Prior to emigrating to the United States, Amelia taught English, literature, and composition at the high school and college levels. After her arrival in the United States, she accepted a job at Catholic University's Mullen Library as the added volumes clerk. She also returned to school and earned an M.S. degree in linguistics from Georgetown in 1970 and an M.L.S. from Catholic University in 1974. She then became a catalog librarian at Mullen Library and served as the head of its card processing section until accepting a faculty appointment as Associate Law Librarian and Head of Cataloging at American University Law Library.

While at American, Amelia oversaw the transformation of cataloging from the paper-based system originally devised in the nineteenth century to the computerized system of today. The citation read at the convocation during which Amelia's formal appointment to the emeritus faculty was announced stated that "[she] was called on to oversee the construction of a fully integrated network of computers even at a time when almost all other offices still relied on stand-alone word processors." Amelia consistently embraced innovation and brought a style of leadership to the library that reaped considerable accomplishments. Upon her retirement she left a state-of-the-art computerized catalog containing records of all the library holdings in all media.

Amelia was an active member of AALL who attended every annual meeting from 1984 until her retirement. She also was very active in the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, the American Library Association, the Library and Information Technology Association, the Potomac Technical Processing Librarians, and the District of Columbia Library Association. She made many presentations at meetings of these organizations. She also served as the law library's official representative to CAPCON, the OCLC regional network for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, and played a role in developing their services. Amelia and her husband even found the time to establish and operate a consulting company that supplied management and technical services to several small libraries.

Regretfully, Amelia did not live long enough to fully enjoy her retirement. She had planned to travel extensively with her sisters, work with her husband in the consulting business, and spend winters at a second home in Florida. Upon learning of her passing, American University's dean of faculties told me that she was especially saddened that Amelia had been unable to follow through on all the plans that the two of them had discussed so extensively in the year prior to Amelia's retirement.

Amelia was a wonderful colleague and friend. She will be missed by all of us who had the honor to know her.—*Patrick E. Kehoe*¹

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