

Memorial: Madison M. Mosley, Jr. (1950–2005)

“To be successful, an administrator must have a loyal administrative team which shares his vision for the future of the department.”—Madison Mosley, Jr.

¶1 There’s a great deal of irony in writing this tribute because, as those of us who worked closely with Madison know, one thing he really tried to avoid was anyone making a great fuss over him. Birthdays, professional achievements, whatever—he didn’t want anyone to gush about it. But we always found a way—just like we’re doing here.

¶2 Take, for example, the event that will always live in Stetson Law Library infamy: Dr. Mosley’s (also known as Dr. M, Madison, even Dr. 3M) fiftieth birthday. He tried to act as if the business office didn’t publish a list of birth dates, but we all knew that he was having a big birthday and we wanted to celebrate. We asked if we could take him out for dinner or to the track but he didn’t want us to do anything. So much for his wishes, though—when the library staff is handed a problem, we *act!* So, with two weeks of intensive planning, we scheduled a surprise for Dr. M. On Super Bowl Sunday of that year, while he was taking his turn working at the reference desk, several members of the library and school staff snuck into the library atrium, had him called to the front desk on some pretense, and then performed—*very* loudly—a song and dance to Aretha Franklin’s “Respect.”

¶3 There are three things that stand out when you watch the video shot that afternoon. First, how much he loved Aretha Franklin; second, the Mosley “Look,” a facial expression most of us can’t master (it’s a cross between a befuddlement and disbelief); and third, the song. Not only is “Respect” Aretha’s most famous song—one of the best songs ever—but the title was so, so fitting. We had so much respect for Dr. M—and so much love.

¶4 Dr. M first came to Stetson University College of Law in 1990 as a student. He had been the director of the library at Florida Community College in Avon Park from 1982 to 1989. Prior to 1982, Dr. Mosley worked for a year at Florida State University’s Center for Studies and Vocational Education, a position he held after earning his Ph.D. in library science in 1980 from Florida State. Dr. Mosley earned his bachelor’s degree in library science and English from Florida State in 1971 and his master’s degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1974. He served for two years on the Avon Park City Council before attending law school.

¶5 “I saw how the law determines what you can and cannot do and I was just fascinated by the concept,” Dr. M said about his reason for attending law school. “I really didn’t come with the idea of practicing. I wanted the degree and the knowledge.” Dr. Mosley was given the best speaker award in his research and writing section while at Stetson.

¶6 Dr. M joined the Stetson staff in 1993 after earning his law degree and served as reference librarian and associate director before being appointed library director in February 2001.

¶7 Dr. Mosley was an active member of the American Library Association and the ALA's Black Caucus, the American Association of Law Libraries and AALL's Southeastern Chapter, the Florida Library Association, Suncoast Information Specialists, the Central Florida Association of Law Libraries, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Florida Bar, and the National Bar Association.

¶8 He was also an active member of the community, serving as cochair of St. Petersburg's Citizens Review Committee for the Police Department and the parliamentarian of the city's African-American Voter Education Committee. He served as a board member of the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative and was very supportive of its work to foster library development.

¶9 He served as president of the Florida Library Association in 1999–2000 and was a member of the Nominations Committee of AALL at the time of his death. He was also very involved with AALL's Diversity Committee and served as chair of AALL's Recruitment Committee in 1996–97. He mentored many students and other librarians throughout his service to our community and the profession.

¶10 Dr. Mosley encouraged his professional and support staff to become involved as he had been, indulging our idiosyncrasies, mentoring us, and leading us to develop and enhance our skills and professionalism.

¶11 Here are some things those who worked for, and with, him, remember:

- He loved Aretha.
- And Atomic Fireballs.
- And cheesecake.
- And Jello with fruit in it.
- And lottery tickets.
- And his blue cardigan, which he wore most days he was in the library. (We've had it suitably framed and hung in the technical services area of the library.)
- And he loved his library. The building itself, and seeing people use it. Practically every semester, during exams, he'd send out an e-mail exulting over how many of the study rooms were being used—he was so excited! (And you could tell, because he'd use one of his favorite phrases: *I'm excited!!*)
- He loved his community, personally serving it through things like St. Petersburg city organizations; and he loved the librarian community, always encouraging our participation in campus, regional, and national library organizations and events.
- He loved the law school itself as both a graduate and a faculty member, and encouraged us to do anything we could to put the school out there for others to see. He worked as closely as he could with the faculty, helping with classroom instruction and tours, and encouraged us to do the same.

- He loved the law students, seeing them use the library, watching them learn how to use it, and doing what he could to make them enjoy the place. We pride ourselves on being, as one student said, “really different from most libraries I’ve ever been in—you aren’t boring!” A great part of that was due to Dr. M, who came up with ideas like hot chocolate outside the library during exams, ice cream socials in the atrium, Halloween goody bags with candy to give out to students in the library (which brought many appreciative e-mails in response), and magnets and pencils with our library’s name, Web site, and phone numbers on them so that students would have those handy—and use them.
- And most of all—he loved the library staff. We never doubted the affection he had for us, the respect and faith he had in us and in our ideas and ways of doing things. If he had a notion of how we should change a certain thing, or do it better, he listened to our input and helped us put together a plan; if he thought we were doing fine, he left us alone to keep on doing what we were doing.

¶12 Every person on the library staff can tell you their own Dr. M story involving something funny he did with them or some act of unexpected kindness that he performed, whether bringing a surprise Christmas present for their kids, sending an e-mail to the staff singling someone out for a project they’d done well, or having a little meeting in our break room to celebrate a job well done.

¶13 “Dr. Mosley was an extraordinary individual. He was kind, intelligent, and very dedicated to Stetson and the library,” said Dean Darby Dickerson. “He was a talented and highly-trained library professional. His loss is a tremendous loss to the Stetson community.”

¶14 Every one of us knew that he enjoyed, respected, and had great affection for us; and every one of us did, and still does, love and respect him right back. —*Sally Waters*,¹ *Earlene Kuester*,² *Pamela Burdett*,³ *Cathy Rentschler*,⁴ *Wanita Scroggs*,⁵ *Steve Cannata*,⁶ and *Julieanne Hartman*.⁷

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