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Memorial: Colleen Kristl Pauwels (1947-2013)

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Recommended Citation

Fariss, Linda K., "Memorial: Colleen Kristl Pauwels (1947-2013)" (2013). *Articles by Maurer Faculty*. 843.
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Memorial: Colleen Kristl Pauwels (1947–2013)*

¶1 Colleen Kristl Pauwels, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Law Library Emerita at the Indiana University Maurer School of Law, passed away on April 24, 2013, at the age of sixty-seven, in Bloomington, Indiana. Colleen served as director for more than thirty years, and under her leadership the law library became one of the finest legal research facilities in the country. Her energy, creativity, and high standards left a lasting impact on the law library and all those who were fortunate enough to work with her.

¶2 Colleen was born Chicago and spent her early years in Washington, Indiana, until her family moved to South Bend, where she attended grade school and high school. In high school, Colleen was a state champion swimmer in breaststroke, demonstrating a competitive spirit and desire to excel that remained with her throughout her life. Colleen received her A.B. from Barat College in 1968. In 1971, she moved to Bloomington with her husband, where he attended graduate school at Indiana University. During this time, Colleen began working in the government documents department at the university library. This experience convinced her to pursue a career in librarianship, so she began taking classes at the School of Library and Information Science while continuing to work full time. In 1975, shortly after completing her M.L.S., Colleen accepted an appointment as Public Services Librarian at the Indiana University Law Library.

¶3 I first met Colleen in 1976 when I accepted a staff position at the law library. At the time, I had no intention of working in a library for my entire career. However, getting to know Colleen and watching her work inspired me to become a law librarian. Through her encouragement, I completed my M.L.S. and J.D. while continuing to work at the law library. We worked together side by side for more than thirty years, not only colleagues but close friends.

¶4 While Colleen had no thoughts of spending her entire career at Indiana, fate had a different idea. In 1978, after being at the law library for only three years, she was named acting director when the director left suddenly. Although she was only supposed to be in the position for a short time, it became obvious to everyone that this position was a natural fit for her talents and vision, and she was named director in 1983. Concluding that a law degree was essential to her success, she began taking courses in law school, completing her J.D. in 1986, just three years after starting classes while continuing to work full time.

¶5 Colleen inherited a library that urgently needed more funding, more staff, and more space. She always explained her enormous success by claiming that it was easy to look good in the early days because doing anything made one appear to be a genius. As usual, she was being too modest. Under Colleen's leadership, the law

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library was transformed from a facility that struggled to meet the basic needs of its faculty and students to a nationally recognized legal research facility. The collection grew in size and strength and she brought together, and retained, a highly qualified staff. Colleen believed that the most important goal for a library was to provide top-notch service, and she often stated that she was most proud of the service offered by the library's outstanding staff.

¶6 The library's space problems were addressed when funding was received to build an addition to the law school, which was completed in 1986. Colleen was an integral part of the planning for the addition and renovation project. It was during this time that her talent for space planning first became evident. From that time until her retirement in 2011, every building or renovation project in the law school benefited from Colleen's good sense, careful eye, and excellent taste.

¶7 Colleen's research focused primarily on the history of the Maurer School of Law. She was keenly committed to preserving its history, conducting numerous oral history sessions with faculty, staff, and graduates, and building an archive for the law school within the library. She became the go-to person for any question dealing with the school's past. Shortly before her death, Colleen was inducted into the Academy of Law Alumni Fellows, which is the highest honor the Maurer School of Law bestows on its graduates. This award recognized her many years of dedicated service to the school.

¶8 Colleen is survived by her husband, Gerry, and her children, Erin and Matt. She also leaves behind her "second family" at the law library, who mourn her loss. Under Colleen's leadership the Indiana University Law Library flourished, but what her staff remember most is her smile, her laugh, and her unfailing optimism. She was my mentor and dearest friend for more than thirty years and there is not a day that goes by that I do not miss her friendship.—*Linda K. Fariss*¹

1. Director of the Law Library, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, Bloomington, Indiana.