

In Memoriam: Roy M. Mersky, 1925–2008

Professor Roy M. Mersky, the Harry M. Reasoner Regents Chair in Law, and longtime director of the Tarlton Law Library and Jamail Center for Legal Research at The University of Texas School of Law, died on May 6, 2008, in Austin after a brief illness. He was 82.

Professor Mersky was renowned as a law librarian, legal scholar, and leader in the legal community. He was a nationally recognized expert in legal research, the history of the United States Supreme Court, law and language, law in popular culture, and rare law books. He was a prolific writer, with scores of publications appearing over the past 50 years, including an article in the first issue of *Perspectives: Teaching Legal Research and Writing*. His first professional article appeared in *Law Library Journal* in 1958, and he was working on a legal history project, *Unknown Justices*, at the time of his death. His best-known work was *Fundamentals of Legal Research*, first published in 1977. This treatise, co-authored with Professor J. Myron Jacobstein, and then Professor Donald J. Dunn, quickly became the classic textbook for first-year law students. In 2006, *Fundamentals of Legal Research* was recognized by the American Association of Law Libraries Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section as one of the most influential texts in legal research.

Professor Mersky earned his B.S. in 1948, J.D. in 1952, and master's degree in library science in 1953 from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He was a member of the Bars of New York, Texas, and Wisconsin and actively involved in the American Bar Association. He remained committed to social justice and civil rights issues throughout his life, serving as the president of the Austin Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in 1968–1969.

Professor Mersky's distinguished service as a law librarian began at the University of Wisconsin Law Library. He served as Director of the Washington State Law Library and then as Professor of Law and Law Librarian at the University of Colorado before joining the faculty of the University of Texas School of Law in 1965. During his tenure at Texas, he became legendary for his vision and leadership, innovation, and commitment to excellence in librarianship and scholarship.

Professor Mersky was an active member of many associations and honorary societies, including the American Association of Law Libraries, the Association of American Law Schools, the American Law Institute, and Scribes: The American Society of Legal Writers. Among the many honors he received were the American Association of Law Libraries' 2005 Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award, the 2006 American Association of Law Libraries' Presidential Certificate of Merit, and the 1994 Scribe's Outstanding Service Award. He was posthumously awarded the 2008 Frederick Charles Hicks Award for Contributions to Academic Law Librarianship and the 2008 Spirit of Law Librarianship Award, which has been renamed the Roy M. Mersky Spirit of Law Librarianship Award in his honor.

Professor Mersky will be remembered for his expertise in legal research, his dedication to mentoring law librarians, his passion for legal history, and his engagement with the academy, the bar, and the judiciary. His was a life well lived.