

In Memoriam
Mary Joe Frug
1941-1991

New England School of Law Professor Mary Joe Frug, a leading feminist legal scholar, was violently stabbed to death on April 4, 1991, as she walked within blocks of her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her senseless and brutal murder has horrified our academic communities. We send our compassion and caring to her family and close friends who are suffering most deeply from her loss. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have met Mary Joe through our work are also struggling to understand the painful circumstances of her murder and cope with the great emptiness her death leaves.

For many of us in the feminist legal community, Mary Joe Frug was a mentor, role model, and personal friend. She gave generously of her time, insights, and extensive knowledge to help us grow as feminists, professors, lawyers, and students. She truly was an intellectual and spiritual beacon for feminists in law. Mary Joe has left an indelible imprint on the landscape of feminist and critical legal thought. We were blessed to have had her among us, even though her sojourn was so tragically cut short.

Professor Frug received her B.A. from Wellesley College, her J.D. from The National Law Center, George Washington University, and her LL.M. from New York University. She was a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow, Mobilization For Youth Legal Services, 1969-71 and a Ford Fellow in Urban Law at NYU. She had taught at New England School of Law since 1981. Mary Joe was a founding member of the Fem-Crits, a group devoted to exploring feminist and critical theory. She was also one of four organizers of the 1985 Fem-Crit Pine Manor Conference and a core participant in the Critical Legal Studies summer camps. She leaves two children (Stephen, 20, and Emily, 16) and her spouse, Gerald Frug. Although her works are numerous, she made a particular contribution by her co-authorship of a feminist legal scholarship bibliography and through her article, *Rereading Contracts: A Feminist Analysis of a Contracts Casebook*, 34 AM. U.L. REV. 1065 (1985).

We have asked a few of the people who knew and loved Mary Joe to share some of their thoughts and feelings. The lines that follow are dedicated to her memory:

We are all multiply wounded by the death of Mary Joe Frug. The pain experienced by her family is beyond measure. In her life and in her dying she has been for all of us an inspiration to commitment and honesty, to kindness and generosity, and to fierce courage.

-Marie Ashe, College of Law, West Virginia University

Although Mary Joe often chastised me for what she called my "crude Gilliganism" (and therefore would probably object to this brief eulogy), to me she epitomized an ideal "different voice" that we desperately need in law. She brought an unequalled caring and sense of responsibility to how she lived her life, how she taught, how she wrote, how she thought, and how she related to people. I learned so much from her. My fondest memories of Mary Joe are from CLS summer camps where she was always a shining star. She is deeply missed.

-Leslie Bender, Syracuse University College of Law

Mary Joe Frug was a political, post-modern feminist legal scholar; she embraced contradictions. She was a brilliant colleague; an ever-present friend; a woman of wit, warmth, courage and style. Her death leaves a void in the feminist and legal communities, at New England School of Law and in my life.

-Judi Greenberg, New England School of Law

Mary Joe was a friend and a comrade. We never said good-bye. It was always understood that there would be another time, another opportunity to continue the conversation; to keep struggling to work through our differences and to learn. While she is now gone, her memory and inspiration will always remain with me. Mary Joe inspires all of us to challenge the constraints of gender and to remain hopeful and optimistic about the possibility of coming to grips with the dilemmas of difference that separate our lives. The pain of loss is tempered by the memory and inspiration of her life.

-Gary Minda, Cardozo School of Law

I was astonished to discover how many of my Canadian colleagues felt personally engaged with Mary Joe, even though we saw her rarely, mostly at conferences. Did she look for ways to touch each of us, one to one? Perhaps, because I think she did work at creating her life. But this getting into real contact with people had a special feel to it, the feel of a gift. I always thought there was a gossamer quality to her Contracts article; and my image of her community in the world is similar—a far-flung web—the strands connecting disparate points to the center, delicate but strong; the whole structure deliberate, yet seemingly sprung from nowhere, magical. She was probably spinning it during those long walks she was always on with one or the other of us.

-Toni Pickard, Faculty of Law, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

Mary Joe's confidence in the capacity of friendship to be challenging was infectious, her intellectual curiosity and acumen seductive. She insisted and made possible the continuity of personal, theoretical and political concerns. We would talk about our insecurities about raising adolescent children and it would be a conversation about the contradictions in the construction of the modern self. We would talk about a rock video, a novel, or fashions at a mall and it would be a semiotic exploration. She filled these exchanges with authentic and unmeasured good will and, I believe, love. Five years ago, Mary Joe invited me into her life and now there is an abysmal and unruly hole in mine.

-Susan Silbey, Department of Sociology, Wellesley College

I can't think of anyone with whom it was more productive and more fun to disagree than Mary Joe. Like so many other people, I felt as if there were at least fifteen different unfinished conversations I was having with her, on topics which took on special life because of the way she was interested in them. Among her many gifts to us is the reminder that a certain kind of naughtiness is inseparable from lively and loving intelligence.

-Elizabeth V. Spelman, Department of Philosophy, Smith College

Contributions in honor of Professor Frug can be made to: Mary Joe Frug Fund, New England School of Law, 154 Stuart Street, Boston, MA 02116.

