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# WAY BEYOND BOOKS

## *The Law Library's Karen L. Spencer wins Chancellor's Award for librarianship*

**T**he longest-serving member of the current Law Library faculty has been awarded the prestigious Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship, in recognition of her skill in librarianship; service to the University and the profession; and scholarship and professional growth.

Karen L. Spencer, Archives and Special Collections librarian, was nominated for the honor by James G. Milles, director of the Law Library and associate dean for legal information services.

"Karen is truly one of the most dedicated and skilled law librarians with whom I have ever had the honor of working," Milles said in announcing the award for Spencer, who has been a UB law librarian since 1974. "In many significant ways, the current UB Law Library bears Karen's imprint."

In each of the awards three constituent areas, Milles wrote in his nomination letter, Spencer excels.

In librarianship, he noted her early experience in audiovisual materials. She created a number of slide-tape programs to help teach legal research skills. Faculty and students have testified to the extraordinary lengths Spencer and her staff will go to meet their legal research needs, and she is noted "for her ability to teach the most difficult types of legal research with skill, warmth and humor," Milles wrote.

Wrote Clinical Instructor Lauren Breen: "Each time I ask, she greets me with enthusiasm, and makes time to talk about the nature of the presentation and what sort of a fact pattern might work best for that particular class and that particular group of students." Students, Breen wrote, "report back that Karen was so helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. And the research quality is superb."

Spencer's special expertise in Native American law and immigration law are invaluable in Western New York, Milles wrote, in responding to issues involv-



ing treaties and other laws. She taught in the Law School's Asylum Law clinic for two years and continues to provide pro bono assistance in immigration cases on her own time.

In service to the University and the profession, Milles wrote, Spencer maintains an outstanding record. She has served twice on the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee, and recently completed a two-year term on the University's Faculty Senate Affirmative Action Committee. She currently serves on UB President John B. Simpson's Panel for the Review of Search Procedures, which reviews appointments of new faculty and professional staff and ensures compliance with affirmative action and equal opportunity procedures.

Spencer also has chaired a number of search committees, including those

for the Law Library's reference librarians and processing archivist. Colleague John Edens noted, "Her skill in working with others on the search committee, her ability to handle the administrative aspects of a national search effectively, and her unselfish commitment of her own time to the process" make her a good choice for that difficult service.

In addition, Milles noted, Spencer drafted the Law Library's collection development policy and keeps it up to date; wrote, updates and oversees maintenance of the Law Library's extensive collection of subject bibliographies; and has taken a leading role in teaching legal research.

In scholarship and professional growth, Milles wrote, Spencer has excelled. She contributed a chapter on Indian law to the second edition of the *New York Legal Guide* by Ellen M. Gibson, and revised that chapter for the just-published third edition. As an early enthusiast of non-print publications in librarianship, she continues to develop new expertise in archives and special collections management.

"In more recent years," Milles wrote, "Karen has produced a number of significant Web-based publications, including the Iraq Crisis Webliography, for which she won a 2003 Service Excellence Award." He also noted her indexes of the Howard R. Berman and John Lord O'Brian papers, now available as databases on the Law Library's Web site.

In addition, Spencer has been a presenter at professional conferences, especially in her areas of expertise in Native American law and immigration law.

"Her commitment to the goal of service to legal scholarship and practice, and her outspoken advocacy of her well-reasoned and carefully considered positions, are of immeasurable benefit in my own management and decision-making," Milles concluded.