

IN MEMORIAM

FRANCIS LOUIS MIKSA

Francis Louis Miksa Jr., Professor Emeritus in the School of Information, died on Wednesday, March 20, 2019, in McComb, Mississippi, aged eighty. An international expert in information organization, Fran joined what was then called the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in 1984 and remained until his retirement in 2008.

Born September 24, 1938, in Aurora, Illinois, the second son among ten children, Fran was affectionally referred to in the family as “Little Francis.” He graduated from East High School in Aurora in 1956 and Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1960, before earning a Bachelor of Divinity (D.B.) degree from Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1965. He pursued library studies at the University of Chicago, where he received a Master of Arts (A.M.) degree in 1970, followed by a Ph.D. in 1974. From 1972 to 1984 he served on the faculty of Louisiana State University, where he became interested in the “subject” in intellectual access to information, a topic that held his attention for the remainder of his career.

Upon moving to The University of Texas at Austin in 1984, he became instrumental in strengthening the doctoral program in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS), serving as the school’s coordinator of doctoral studies 1985-91. At UT Austin, he served two terms on the Graduate Assembly and two years (1995-96) on the University’s Faculty Computer Committee and Multimedia Instruction Committee. He also served as a member of the Dean Search Committee in 1989, chaired the GSLIS Dean Search Committee in 1996-97, and was Interim Dean in 1997 during a time of significant upheaval in the school and the field. During a

research leave in 1986-87, he was invited to serve as a Visiting Distinguished Scholar in the Office of Research at the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) in Dublin, Ohio.

Fran's research concerned fundamental aspects of information organization, rules for classification and categorization of knowledge, and the impact of organizational systems on disciplines and education. His early research, which focused on the work of Charles Cutter, resulted in two books: *Charles Ammi Cutter: Library Systematizer* (1977) and *The Subject in the Dictionary Catalog from Cutter to the Present* (1983). Other published works from this time include *The Development of Classification at the Library of Congress* (1984) and *Research Patterns and Research Libraries* (1987). During the 1990s, Professor Miksa's chief area of research was intellectual access to information entities (both traditional print-based items and those consisting of digital objects), including the categorization of such entities on the basis of content characteristics. In 1998, he published perhaps his most influential work, *The DDC, the Universe of Knowledge, and the Post-Modern Library*, a book that is still widely read in the field.

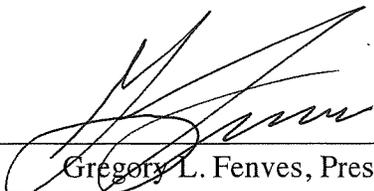
Challenging the conception of library and information science as a discipline, his 1991 work, "Library and Information Science: Two Paradigms," suggests a new discipline was required to overcome the weaknesses of traditional library and information science. This work prefaced the emergence a decade later of new schools of information, including the School of Information here at UT Austin, now ranked one of the top programs in the nation.

After Fran acquired a reputation as a demanding teacher, some of his students created t-shirts labeled, "I survived Miksa," to signify their successful completion of his course. His students have been in high demand in professional circles, and many of his doctoral graduates attained faculty and leadership positions at schools throughout the world. In the course of his time

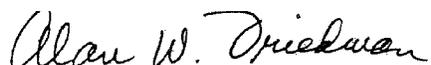
at UT Austin, he earned the Texas Excellence in Teaching Award three times: in 1985, 1989, and 2001.

In helping the School enhance its reputation and extend its influence, Fran led several grant initiatives, including a major proposal to the National Science Foundation's digital library initiative (1993-94). He was also an active participant in the initial digital library movement, particularly in the form of the School's cooperative work with the Texas A&M Hypermedia Laboratory and its Center for the Study of Digital Libraries. The latter led to his participating in the creation of the first national digital library conferences (the Association for Computing Machinery Digital Library [ACM DL] 1994 and Digital Library [DL] 1995), which have subsequently merged with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and become the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries, the leading international venue for research in digital libraries. He was also continually active in editorial and contributory roles for the UT Press journal *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, now *Information and Culture*.

In 2009, Fran received the Margaret Mann Citation from the American Library Association, a lifetime achievement awarded for outstanding research contributions in the areas of cataloging and classification. Colleagues remember Fran as a deep thinker and wonderful conversationalist who engaged with ideas and encouraged others to examine the world and the traditions of knowledge organization throughout history. Along with his intellectual contributions to the discipline, his wit, intelligence, and warmth will long be remembered and missed by those who worked with him at the School of Information and across the campus.



Gregory L. Fenves, President
The University of Texas at Austin



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
The General Faculty

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Andrew Dillon (Chair), Philip Doty, and Pat Galloway.