

THE EVENT-MAKING MICHAEL MASSEY

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Years ago, the philosopher John Donne distinguished between a person who is “eventful” and one who is “event making.” Persons who are “eventful” take advantage of a situation, whether good or bad, and proceed from there (Hitler or Robespierre). On the other hand, event-making people actually create the conditions or events which they then utilize in humanity’s best interests. With Mike Massey, this distinction is important.

I first met Mike Massey in 1969–1970 when I was the managing editor of the *Denver Law Journal* (now the *Denver Law Review*). Mike was the incoming editor in chief. It was our pleasure to “pass the gavel.” Mike immediately started transforming the law journal into what it has become today—a law review with a positive regional, if not national, reputation. He invited additional faculty to participate as law review advisors and thus broadened the law journal’s scope. Indeed, Mike’s efforts to promote the then-*Denver Law Journal* contributed to the founding of other law journals at the University of Denver, including the *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* under Professor Ved Nanda.

After law school, Mike and I had little contact for approximately thirty-five years. We each practiced law in a variety of venues. Mike was a very successful attorney in private practice with a securities and corporate emphasis. Then, about fifteen years ago, Mike called and asked me if I would become a mentor in what was, at the time, the embryotic Denver Law School Mentoring Program. I agreed somewhat reluctantly but Mike assured me that it would only take a few hours of my time each academic year. Mike significantly understated the amount of time involved, but mentoring was something that I continue to enjoy. In fact, as I have often said, I learn more from the students than they could ever learn from me.

Mike left the private practice of law to teach what is now known as the Lawyering Process course for 1L students at DU Law. While teaching, Mike had what was truly an event-making idea. He matched each of his students with a practicing attorney. That Professional Mentoring Program has since expanded to become nationally recognized and includes well over 500 mentors and students each academic year at Denver Law. Even after Mike left teaching, he increased the span and reach of the Professional Mentoring Program to what it is today. There is no question Mike continued to be a significant voice at the Sturm College of Law until his

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passing in January 2022. The *Denver Law Review* has long referred to “Professor Michael Massey” as a faculty advisor.

In addition, in 2016 the Professional Mentoring Program through Mike and the Sturm College of Law sponsored the National Legal Mentoring Consortium Conference here in Denver, which is a group of law reviews that have mentoring programs (some successful and some nascent). In 2015, the Sturm College of Law honored Mike when he received the Honorable Robert H. McWilliams Jr., Alumni Professional Award.

I always marveled at Mike’s ability to percolate an idea (which ideas flowed from his mind almost constantly) and after a few minutes of discussion you or me (or whomever) would actually believe it was our idea to begin with. That skill reflects Mike’s verbal acumen and intellectual ability to recognize what people needed, what interested them, and how to fulfill what started out as his goals and objectives and ended up ours. Mike was also active in the *Denver Law Review* Advisory Committee, which he foolishly asked me to join, but which I truly enjoy!

One of my heroes is the late Justice William Brennan of the U.S. Supreme Court. At a Saint Patrick’s Day event, he told a story about a lamplighter in Ireland who, even when he could no longer be seen in the dark, the gas lamps he lit were left behind.

“So, it is my friends with you and me as we go through life may we be found lighting the lamps of truth and justice and righteousness even as our forebears before us so that as time passes and we move from the scene of action, our own children and their children after them, though we be lost to view, may tell the way we went by the lamps we lighted along life’s path.”

Let us all maintain the many lights which Mike lit for us, to continue burning brightly.