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## Upcoming Events

A funeral Mass for Dr. Kelly Frailing, followed by a brief memorial, will be held on Tuesday, January 24, starting at 12:45pm in Ignatius Chapel. The service will be [live-streamed](#) and available as a recording.



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## A Woman With and For Others: Remembering Dr. Kelly Frailing

By Sue Weishar, Ph.D.

Late last year a brilliant star in the bright and diverse constellation of students, scholars, and staff members that make up Loyola University New Orleans left us. After a brief illness, Dr. Kelly Frailing, Associate Professor of Criminology and Justice and the coordinator of the Master's in Criminology and Justice Program, passed away on December 11, 2022.

Dr. Frailing was planning to contribute an article to the *JustSouth Newsletter* this month about her research on the criminalization of mental illness and substance abuse and the need to do better, including funding a real mental health and substance abuse treatment system in the U.S., shoring up the social safety net, and developing a single payer health care system. Instead, we will share here a sprinkling of the poignant and comforting reflections that were offered at a December 15th memorial service for Kelly in Thomas Hall by some of the people who knew best this accomplished scholar, dedicated criminal justice reformer, and beloved teacher and colleague.

Mr. Kurt Bindewald, Executive Assistant to the Provost, began the service by reminding us that it is in the present that we encounter God, not yesterday, not tomorrow, but today. Trusting this, Kurt suggested to place ourselves in the present moment of shock and grief and bring to God our questions, disbelief, and pain. Kurt assured that just as Jesus wept for his friend Lazarus, God weeps for us today. No one grieves alone, and when faced with life's uncertainties, Kelly's family, friends, and colleagues have the love and support of the Loyola community.

Dr. Rae Taylor, Chairperson of the Department of Criminology and Justice, spoke of the great love and admiration she had for Kelly Frailing, with whom a deep friendship over the years had evolved to a special "sisterhood." Dr. Taylor shared, "No one hurt more for hurt people than Kelly. And no one triumphed more in others' joy... There was nothing she would not do to help, to lift up, and to teach, to support, or celebrate anyone, everyone. Any student, any colleague, any stranger. She was one for others in a way that was unparalleled and certainly irreplaceable." In the sadness of the moment, Dr. Taylor brought smiles through the tears when she shared humorous stories of Dr. Frailing's irreverent and quirky sense of humor.

Kelly Frailing was one of the country's leading experts on crime in the wake of disasters and has been credited as a driving force in the development of the criminology of disaster, along with her long-time colleague and former Loyola advisor, Professor Emeritus Lee Harper. Another research focus of Kelly Frailing was specialty courts that served people with mental illness and/or substance abuse. She published scores of journal articles on these topics and several books. At the memorial service, Dr. Taylor asserted, "Kelly was a genius, a real deal, literal genius." She was also humble and unassuming. "Kelly found attention to herself intolerable. She would want to highlight everyone around her, especially her students."

Kelly Frailing was a beloved and accomplished teacher. In 2020 Dr. Frailing received the University Senate Award for Advising for "her outstanding commitment and dedication to Loyola's students and their success." At the memorial service, Dr. Kate Yurgil, Associate Professor of Psychology, spoke about observing Dr. Frailing teach a class. "She was energetic, humorous, insightful, and irreverent, of course! Students were engaged, ... and the discussion wasn't just a list of theories, it was not just about statistics or facts. It was a conversation about real societal issues. About human desperation. About social and structural inequities. And about justice. It was a call, a demand, for everyone in that classroom to take responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the systems that operate in our lives."

Fr. Justin Daffron, Interim President, provided tender words of sympathy to Kelly Frailing's family, especially her daughter, Matilda. Fr. Daffron thanked Matilda and her father, Jay, for sharing Kelly with us at Loyola. He noted, as several other speakers had, that Kelly's legacy will live on in the contributions she made as a mother, a scholar, a friend, and a member of the Loyola community. Before the service concluded, Interim Vice President for Mission and Identify, Dr. Tom Ryan, prayed that those present be, like Kelly, people of hope and act on that hope for a more just and more flourishing world.

Several poems were said at the memorial service to evoke memories of Kelly Frailing and honor her legacy, including [On Friendship](#) by Kahil Gibran, read by Dr. Rae Taylor\*, and *A New Belonging*, by Fr. Henri Nouwen, read by Drew Morock, a friend of Kelly's. We will close with the excerpt of [When Great Trees Fall](#), a poem by Maya Angelou read by Associate Professor of Criminology and Justice, Dr. Christian Bolden.

**And when great souls die,  
After a period peace blooms,  
Slowly and always  
Irregularly. Spaces fill  
With a kind of soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restore, never  
To be the same, whisper to us.  
They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
Better. For they existed.**

\*Feminine pronouns and adjectives were used instead of the masculine in the original.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.

Please send feedback to [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu)

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