Jay G. Sykes, who died Aug. 10 at the age of 63, was an associate professor in the Department of Mass Communication, as well as a journalist, lawyer, activist, politician, and valued colleague.

Despite having had heart surgery twice in the past 10 years, Jay never slowed down. But that was Jay's way, he couldn't sit still. If he wasn't writing an article or a book or running someone's campaign, he was helping a student find a job, doing a favor for a friend, or picking an argument -- just for the fun of it.

Jay Sykes was a curmudgeon and a gadfly, at times impish, at times irascible. When he insisted that the beat of his drummer was correct and the rest of us were out of step, he was often right. Through his independent thinking, he brought insight and imagination, not only to his teaching but also to the conduct of departmental affairs.

He was a tough classroom taskmaster who challenged his students to learn. They soon saw the proverbial soft heart under the gruff exterior and valued his concern about them as students, future professionals, and friends.

Jay Sykes despised rules, regulations, and red-tape. He scorned forms and formalities. He probably would be incensed if he knew his colleagues had spent time and effort composing this memorial resolution, especially if it were not short and to the point.

He will be missed.

Dave Berkman
Kenneth Johnson
Kay Magowan