

Up close & personal

BY KRISTINE BREWER
STAFF WRITER

Meeting political science major Mack J. Miller II, one would not believe he is a 19 year-old freshman. Miller says that on the average, most guess his age around 25, but some have thought he was 35.

Miller does not have dentures or graying hair. His maturity level comes through in the way he carries himself as well as in his accomplishments.

As a freshman at Valley High School in 1990, he realized what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. "I knew I wanted to be a criminal attorney," said Miller. "I couldn't wait for the traditional process that takes 15 years, so I found a non-traditional way to get what I wanted."

Before he was old enough for a driver's learner's permit, Miller and several of his friends formed the Las Vegas Youth Law Association. He personally wrote the constitution and articles of incorporation for the association of aspiring attorneys, who sought to acquire more information about law and opportunities to practice it.

Miller approached judges, city councilmen and local attorneys to propose the possibility of training and community support needed to realize the organization's goals.

Once judges and attorneys pledged support, the Clark County Bar Association agreed to begin meeting with Miller and his classmates.

"I wore a suit to high school every day because I found it easier to manipulate teachers," joked Miller. "Seriously, it saved me time because I had meetings everyday after school."

After serious perseverance, in the summer of 1993 the organization was granted a home in the District Court building. Members of Miller's group participated in a 10-week session that resembled a condensed law school, where local attorneys donated time to teach students about their specialties.

A special bar exam was prepared for the students who participated in the mini-law school. Those who passed were sworn in by a Nevada Supreme Court Justice and inducted into what became the Clark County Youth Law Association.

"I was 16, and there I was being sworn in by a Justice at least 10 years before anyone else gets sworn in," Miller remembers. "It was such an incredible feeling it is hard for me to describe."

For Miller, it was a matter of doing something that everyone else around him said couldn't be done.

The organization began working with the juvenile court system by dealing with first-time offenders. Restrictions were placed on the type of cases they were allowed to accept. They were not allowed to take cases that were gang-relat-

ed, felonious in nature, or to represent students that went to the same school as they did. Instead they worked on cases that involved drug and alcohol possession, curfew violation, weapons and fighting.

"It was just like L.A. Law when the cases were assigned every week by the bar association," says Miller. "We would sit around a large table and accept current cases."

Students who were part of the association acted as the prosecuting or defense attorney, as bailiff and as clerk. A juvenile jury was selected and cases were argued by Miller and classmates in front of actual juvenile court justices.

Permission from a legal guardian was required for a case to be turned over to the association. If the defendant chose this course of action, the military or police would never see the record.

"The system was for first- or second-time offenders," said Miller. "It gave juveniles a second chance."

In addition to arguing cases in court, the group also argued for sentencing. Possible punishments for juvenile offenders included restitution payment, community service and essays of apology.

After graduating from high school in 1994, Mack delayed college a year to run for City Council. He finished third in the primary, just 20 votes behind a two-term assemblyman who won against the incumbent in the general election.

Miller is now employed by Haney & Associates local law firm. He has also started a small business, Nevada General Business Services, which advises clients in legal matters that do not require an attorney.

Miller says he believes in being well-rounded and staying busy. He is the only member of the fall 1995 Pi Kappa Alpha pledge class to serve as an executive and is director of expansion for College Republicans. Every Sunday he meets with the Community College Golf League.

Even after a car accident on Nov. 15, Miller only missed one day of work and golf, despite doctors' recommendations to rest. "I got rid of the crutches the doctor gave me and ordered a cane so I could carry everything I needed," said Miller. "I just couldn't be kept down."

Miller says he sees himself graduating from UNLV in 1997 and then attending law school at UCLA or Whittier, two schools that have already approached him. He said politics and law take you everywhere you want to go, and eventually he wants to be a Congressman or Senator.

"If you can find a job that is fun to you, you will never have to work a day in your life."

Holiday

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with a different personality. This impairs his governing ability, but it is not his fault because some people are born with disabilities they can't control. All is well that ends well as the nutcracker comes to life just in time to negotiate peace among all the toys.

"Rudolph the Nasally Empowered Reindeer" is reminiscent of a 1950s zealot team-

ster. Instead of feeling badly about the obvious physical differences in the protruding appendage on his face, he cultivates a reputation of being a "young angry reindeer." The nasally-gifted Rudolph lives his life as he pleases until that fateful foggy Christmas Eve when the sleigh-driving whip user approaches him to guide the team. This time however, Rudolph mandates conditions to the servitude he has to endure. His demands surprise the calorically resplendent

persun in red and all the antler-bearing creatures too.

Scrooge is portrayed as a product of his environment in "A Christmas Carol." He is taken against his will on a long guilt trip and as predicted, attempts to blame his deceased partner Jacob Marley, for his shortcomings. Spiritual beings struggle to show him the error of his ways, and in one famous scene, Diminutive Tim asks "May a higher entity (if there is such a thing) bless us, every one."

Studio

from pg. 5

somber atmosphere was transformed by bright paint.

"We wanted to add color to the grayness and give it some character, to make it look good both day and night. It's sort of the antithesis to Las Vegas," says Kevin Thompson, a graduate student.

One of the main goals of the project was to heighten the morale of the college. "There was definitely a lack of community spirit. We were becoming more and more disenchanted, so we wanted to bring students back together and create something through a team effort," said Thompson.

Another reason for the project was to generate positive attention from other faculty and students in the university. "We were given the worst space on campus, and that's why people never really noticed us," said senior Greg Clark. "But now we have people walking through, interest-

ed." Clark appreciated help the department received from university employees. "We were also able to build some on-campus maintenance relationships. We showed them our plans, and they gave us a lot of support."

Darcy Wencel, a senior, got much more than new friendships and some positive attention. "I learned more about construction and structure through this hands-on experience," she said. "There is a big difference to drawing something on paper and actually building it."

Mike Alcorn, assistant dean to the college of architecture, viewed the project as an opportunity for students to build something concrete. "We tried to focus on the students since it is a student project," says

Alcorn.

He said the plan also allowed for artistic freedom. "We wanted to get as many different viewpoints as possible and generate ideas and enthusiasm. It's one big pool of designers, a team project, a collosion of ideas."

With the united efforts of students and faculty, the vertical studio is bringing spice to the environment surrounding the College of Architecture.

"In the beginning we didn't know if it was going to be good or bad," said Alcorn, "but the students definitely made it a success."

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... or any night?



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