

# Memorial Program

The Omaha Bar Association Memorial Program has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 19, 2010, at 11:30 a.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, Nebraska. The speaker will be **Marianne Culhane**, Dean of Creighton University School of Law. The chairperson of the committee is **Matthew Lathrop**. The **Barristers Club** will provide the ushers. The program is courtesy of *The Daily Record*.

The program is held each year to honor those members of the bar association who have died within the year. Twenty attorneys will be honored. They are listed below chronologically in order of their deaths. A red rose will be given to each family. The attorneys are:

**Honorable Albert Charles Walsh**  
May 3, 2009

**Thomas W. Carroll**  
July 9, 2009

**Calvin Edward Robinson**  
July 24, 2009

**Eric L. Whitner**  
August 22, 2009

**Edward A. Donahoe**  
August 27, 2009

**Robert H. Burgess**  
August 29, 2009

**Charles Titus**  
September 21, 2009

**Donald E. Girard**  
October 18, 2009

**Guy J. Birch**  
November 3, 2009

**Kent P. Kratz**  
November 12, 2009

**Honorable John T. Grant**  
January 26, 2010

**Byron D. Stratton**  
February 28, 2010

**Truman Clare**  
March 1, 2010

**Ernest B. Wintroub**  
March 1, 2010

**Barbara Anne Kueny**  
March 7, 2010

**Barbara Gale Blackburn Kratz**  
March 17, 2010

**Donald R. Overholt**  
March 24, 2010

**Norman F. Bradshaw**  
March 31, 2010

**Mary Lee Skaaf**  
April 9, 2010

**William L. Morrow, Jr.**  
April 12, 2010

We sincerely hope you will attend this special Memorial Service to honor our departed attorneys.



# THE YETTER SYSTEM

By: George Butterfield

How often have you gone in search of a Nebraska statute, such as section 25-21, 185.12, and gotten totally confused by that comma? Is it near the end of chapter 25 or near the beginning? The use of a comma to number statutes is one of the unique features of the Yetter System, the system used by Nebraska and Kansas. The comma, along with other features of the system, creates some challenges in understanding the organization of the statutes and then finding them. My first experience with this system caused me to use a very scientific approach to finding statutes: I just kept flipping pages until I ran into them.

Recently I asked the Advanced Legal Research class at Creighton School of Law to place several statutes in the order in which they would appear in the *Revised Statutes of Nebraska*. The statute numbers are made up to illustrate the challenge of the Yetter System. Why don't you take the quiz? See if you can order them:

39-2099.12  
39-2,117.12  
39-2117.12  
39-324.12

Two-thousand ninety-nine goes before two thousand, one hundred and seventeen and three hundred and twenty-four goes before both of those. But is that how you read them? And, if you read them in that manner, how is 2117.12 different than 2,117.12, except that the one has a comma and the other does not?

There is a relatively easy explanation for these numbers. After you understand the system, you wonder how you could have ever gotten confused by it. So how does the Yetter System work? First, each statute is designated by a chapter, article, and section number. Some statutes, the ones that have point 01, point 02, etc., also have what is called an amendment number, although "amendment" can sometimes be a misnomer (see the *Research Guide to Nebraska Law, 2008*, p. 30, available in the Creighton Law Library. An "amendment" may simply be a related section that is squeezed in by the use of the decimal and not technically an amendment). Following is how the above statutes are broken

down by chapter, article, section, and amendment numbers:

| Chapter | Article | Section | Amendment |
|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| 39      | 20      | 99      | 12        |
| 39      | 2       | 117     | 12        |
| 39      | 21      | 17      | 12        |
| 39      | 3       | 24      | 12        |

Thus, 39-2099 is not two thousand and ninety nine but article twenty, section 99. Also, 39-2,117 is not two thousand, one hundred seventeen but article two, section one hundred seventeen. What is most confusing about the Yetter system is that comma. Yet, think of each article as beginning with section number 01 and going all the way to section number 99, for example, 39-201, 39-202, 39-203, all the way to 39-299. Where do the section numbers go from there? In the Yetter System, after 39-299 comes 39-2,100, etc.

An easy way to figure out each statute is to begin at the end of the statute (e.g., 40-5902) or at the period when there is an amendment (e.g., 40-5902.11). If there is no comma in the statute, count to the left two digits and that is your section number. Everything to the left of those digits and before the hyphen is the article number. Thus, for 40-5902, I start at the end, count over two digits, and my section number is 02. Everything to the left of the 02 and before the hyphen is the article number, namely, 59. The process is even easier when there is a comma. The number to the left of the comma is the article and the number to the right is the section. Thus, 25-21,185 is article 21, section 185 of chapter 25.

So, how did you do on the quiz? Did you place them in the following order?

39-2,117.12  
39-324.12  
39-2099.12  
39-2117.12

Of course you did. The correct order of those articles is 2, 3, 20, and 21. On the other hand, if you did not pass this little quiz, take heart. One of my colleagues scratched his head as we were going over this. I said, "Sure it's different. But it's not bad. It's the Yetter System." He didn't quite hear what I said and thought I said the "Nutter" System.

Perhaps.