

**ROBERT G. HANNA, JR., ESQUIRE  
MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

**DAUPHIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**  
Presented in Special Session  
Court of Common Pleas Dauphin County, Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
August 23, 2023

**TO THE HONORABLE JUDGES OF THE COURT**, our colleagues at the Bar, and family and friends here today to celebrate the life of our colleague and friend – **Robert G. Hanna, Jr., Esquire.**

Robert George Hanna, Jr. was truly an original, not to be a duplicated, individual.

Bob died on March 11, 2023 at the age of 81. He was a 1963 graduate of Rutgers University, and a 1973 graduate of the Temple School of Law. Bob obtained his law degree from the night program at Temple while holding down a full-time job and supporting his family. Bob also had previously served in the United States Army as a military police officer. As he described it, he faithfully guarded the beaches of Puerto Rico.

Throughout his legal career, Bob was a trial attorney, first with Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, and later with Lavery Law in Harrisburg. He practiced law for over 45 years. He specialized in the representation of local governmental entities, their officials, and employees. Most notably, he represented countless police officers and police executives over the years.

There were four things in this life that Bob Hanna loved and passionately cared about. First and foremost was his family; his wife and love of his life, Ellie, to whom he was married for 57 years, his sons Rob and Drew, daughter-in-law, Maria, grandson, Zachary and great grandson, Matthew. He was proud of the military service of his sons, Rob, a retired Navy Commander who had served as Executive Officer on a fast attack nuclear submarine, and Drew, who served as a medic with the Pennsylvania National Guard. He was equally proud of his

daughter-in-law, Maria Hanna who founded Survival Systems, a world leader in underwater egress training and water survival techniques.

The second passion that Bob loved almost, but not quite as much as the first, was scuba diving. He literally scuba dived all over the world, particularly on ship and submarine wrecks. He was dive master certified. He was affectionately known by friends, family, and colleagues as “Scuba Bob.” The only thing he enjoyed almost as much as the actual diving was talking about it, which he did with the passion of a true devotee of the sport. He also much enjoyed sharing dive photos and videos, mostly of Bob diving near sharks, or on sunken wrecks. Bob said that diving amongst sharks never frightened him in the least as they always “gave him professional courtesy.” He later more seriously stated that sharks regard scuba divers as other fish below the water. They fortunately leave divers alone, “for the most part.”

The third passion that Bob had was singing in the Derry Presbyterian Church Choir which he did for years. Bob was blessed with a good tenor voice and had previously performed with a barbershop quartet. He loved the people in the choir and being part of it. He was also known to talk theology with fellow members and others over beverages from time to time in a program known as “Theology on Tap.” He was particularly fond of the choir’s annual Christmas show which is always a first-class event that often includes outside guest performers.

Bob’s fourth and final love was being a litigator in the area of civil rights law, and mentoring young lawyers into effective trial advocates. Bob truly was a trial lawyer. He tried over 100 civil jury trials to verdict during his long career. He was a worthy adversary in a courtroom, and won most of those trials. He was “old school” in the best sense of that term. He was always courteous and polite to everyone, including his opponents and the trial participants. He was credible and likeable in his demeanor which served him well with jurors. He came

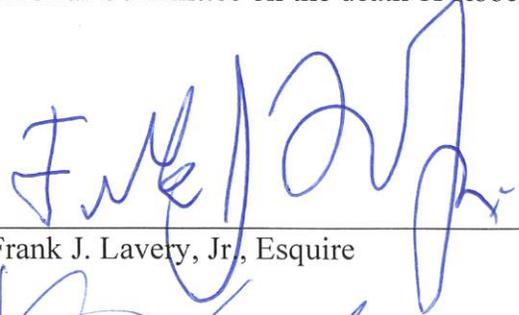
across as the type of person whom if your neighbor, you wouldn't hesitate to ask to borrow his lawn mower if yours had broken. He could also be tough and steadfast where necessary. In one mediation after being repeatedly berated by an opponent about not paying what the opposing attorney wanted, Bob never raised his voice or responded in kind. He simply said quietly, "if you want that, you will need to get it from a jury." Most importantly, he served as a mentor to many young, upcoming lawyers over his long career. He worked actively to advance their careers as advocates in his area of specialty. More than one of these now no longer young lawyers has remarked that Bob was instrumental in furthering their career. This was his best and most lasting contribution to the practice of law.

Fittingly, Bob's last jury trial in 2017 was defending a police K9 case involving one of his favorite "police officers", Harrisburg Police Department K-9 Zeke. "Officer Zeke" as Bob called him had developed quite a local reputation after being shot while attempting to apprehend a felon in another incident. When the jury was taking what Bob felt was too much time to decide the matter, he remarked in front of the Judge and opposing counsel that he should "be on his second gin and tonic by now." That was Bob Hanna, an original to the end.

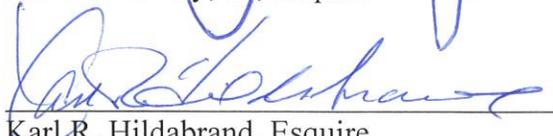
And so, **BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Bar Association mourns the death of Robert G. Hanna, Jr., and the Bar extends to his wife, Ellie Hanna, and other family members and friends, our deepest sympathies. **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this memorial resolution be placed on the records of the Dauphin County Courts and Dauphin County Bar Association, that the original be filed in the Office of the Prothonotary, and that copies be transmitted to his family.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED** by the Memorial Committee on the death of Robert

G. Hanna, Jr., this 11<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frank J. Lavery, Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

Frank J. Lavery, Jr., Esquire

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karl R. Hildabrand', written over a horizontal line.

Karl R. Hildabrand, Esquire

**ROBERT G. HANNA, JR., ESQUIRE  
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SECONDING REMARKS**

My name is Karl Hildabrand and I was a partner of Bob Hanna's at Lavery Law. I am pleased to second the Resolution previously made by Frank Lavery.

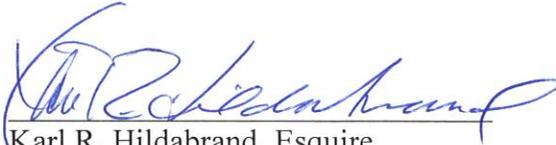
I first met Bob when I joined the Lavery Firm in the spring of 2012. Bob was quick to invite me to lunch. Not long thereafter he and his wife, Ellie, invited my wife and me to dinner at Bob's favorite restaurant, Fenicci's in Hershey. It became readily apparent that Bob was a regular who was warmly received by the staff.

The phrase "gentleman and scholar" is descriptive of someone who is held in high esteem, admirable, well-behaved and well-educated. That fits Bob Hanna well. He was a skilled trial lawyer with an emphasis in civil rights litigation and municipal and law enforcement defense. He was recognized as an expert in the field by his peers, his clients and his adversaries. He presented many training seminars to lawyers and to clients. He enjoyed doing that and he was not shy about crediting others who assisted him in preparing for those presentations.

Bob was a personable man who was well respected and genuinely liked by clients and those he worked with. He loved to chat and invariably, as Frank mentioned, he would come around to his scuba diving. He would tell everyone in detail of his adventures and would circulate by email photos he took of creatures he encountered underwater. He had a picture of a shark he ran into on one of his dives on the wall in his office. Even in his late 70's he was diving and planning his next dive. He is missed.

It is my honor to second the Resolution. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Karl R. Hildabrand, Esquire