

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION UPON THE DEATH OF CARL G. WASS

Our friend and colleague, Carl G. Wass, died on April 12, 2010. In his passing, the Bar has lost a distinguished practitioner and a well regarded, generous and high-minded companion. Carl was born in Harrisburg on August 4, 1937, the son of the late Vernon and Dorothy Dapp Wass. It was fitting that Carl would become a dedicated public servant as his father, Vernon, served as the Susquehanna Township manager for many years and later as the first manager for Lower Allen Township. It is said that Vernon lived for his job, did it well, and left no task unfinished. That this was so is confirmed in the Township's having named its lovely park, the Vernon C. Wass Park. These same qualities were instilled in Carl.

Vernon and Dorothy raised Carl in Susquehanna Township where he lived through his high school graduation. Owing to his portly dimensions, Carl's nickname in elementary school was "tiny." His stoutness gave way to a fit and extended height that well fit his interests in basketball and volleyball, the latter being a sport he enjoyed all his days. Young Carl, like his father, was a workaholic demonstrating this trait even in grade school when he worked the counter at his father's part-time meat business in the Broad Street Market.

As a teenager, Carl enjoyed cars. Though a Cadillac man for the last 20 years of his life, Carl began car ownership with a Ford: a 1920-something Model A, bought for \$50 and sold for \$25; or perhaps the other way around. One of Carl's two daily passengers to high school recalls straddling a large gap in the floor board through which he could view the passing street. When the exhaust, billowing up from this hole, became too great, a window would come down, but to do that a handle would first have to be found under books and jackets somewhere in the back.

After graduating from Susquehanna Township High School, Carl attended and graduated from Juniata College. Carl was quite popular in school and held several positions of considerable responsibility. He was vice president of the Student Senate and in his junior year, head of its Judiciary Committee. This was considered a high honor.

As mentioned, Carl was a workaholic. During summer breaks Carl exercised his brawn providing labor to George Gingelow, a concrete contractor responsible for many of the sidewalks and curbs we have in Susquehanna Township. Over Christmas vacations, Carl delivered mail as a temp for the United State Postal Service.

During his senior year at Juniata, Carl lived on a hall with 12 boys who later referred to themselves as the Council of Twelve. Having enjoyed each other's company that final year, they agreed that graduation would not spell the end of their friendship. The 12 vowed to meet every 12 years after graduation. Before departing school, they buried a time capsule which became the subject of an excavation 12 years later. Yes, the Dean of Students was initially upset to see 12 thirty-somethings excavating a hole in the center of a green on homecoming weekend, but there were no arrests and they were forgiven. The Council of Twelve, whose ranks include the Honorable Charles Brown of Centre County, met three times those first 36 years following

graduation, and then knocked the interval down to three years. Eventually the Council, with spouses, met every year. All were faithful and none were absent until Carl's passing.

Carl also met his best friend and future wife, Nancy, at Juniata College. They were married in 1960 while Carl was attending the Dickinson School of Law. Carl graduated from Dickinson on June 3, 1962, and as his young bride set off to teach at William Penn High School that fall, Carl began a clerkship with Judge Homer Kreider of this Court of Common Pleas. Three months later he entered a preceptorship under Warren Morgan, then a practicing attorney who later took a seat on this Bench. Out of deference to his Honor, I will not reveal what Carl was paid, only that it was the prevailing wage! Nevertheless Carl, while employed by Judge Kreider and Attorney Morgan, found the need to supplement his income, and did so by working weekends for his former boss and concrete contractor, George Gingelow. Now as an educated man and with his knowledge of the Township, Carl was entrusted with the additional task of estimating. Many years later Carl would still point out to Nancy the many sidewalks and curbs that bear his mark.

In early 1963 John Shumaker took Carl in as an associate with Shumaker and Placey, a general practice firm. It was not unusual for young lawyers to supplement their private-practice incomes and gain experience by taking part-time positions as government lawyers, and John helped Carl locate a job at the Pennsylvania Legislative Reference Bureau. Carl worked at the Bureau two days a week and with Shumaker and Placey the rest of the week. Ultimately the job at the Legislative Reference Bureau was replaced with a part-time position as a prosecutor with the District Attorney's office of Dauphin County. Carl prosecuted cases, honed his skills, and kindled friendships with fellow prosecutors, defense attorneys and many of the lawyers of this community whom we fondly and respectfully refer to as our "senior brethren of the Bar", many of whom are present with us this afternoon.

Carl came to Caldwell & Kearns' predecessor, Caldwell Fox and Stoner, in early 1969. And with its successors, he remained until his passing.

At Caldwell & Kearns, Carl was a constant, in early and out late; maybe before church, and always after; day after day, year after year for over four decades. As Nancy unequivocally observed, this tireless effort was only born in part out of a sense of obligation; rather, Carl loved being a lawyer. He loved to practice law and to do what lawyers do. He loved advocating for clients, learning the answers to their needs being a member of a law firm and of a community of lawyers. And like his father, Carl was a public servant, most notably as solicitor for East Hanover Township, Dauphin County Vocational-Technical School, and for the Dauphin County Board of Tax Assessment Appeals to name a few.

Carl was also a teacher. For over a quarter century, he was an instructor for Magisterial District Justices to whom he taught Landlord and Tenant and Civil Law. When a Caldwell & Kearns lawyer appeared before a District Justice, he would surely announce his affiliation with the law firm of Caldwell & Wass.

Carl also taught adult Sunday school at the Mount Calvary Methodist Church in West Hanover Township. A man of deep faith, Carl was known to challenge his students who described him as a very thorough teacher. As observant as Carl was, he did not lay aside his work on Sundays. As mentioned, after church, he went to his law office. A fellow congregant used to remind Carl that the Bible said that if you have an ox in the well, it is okay to get him out on a Sunday. Carl would joke that his law office was his ox in the well.

Carl also had a deep and abiding relationship with food. Nancy was a home economics teacher so we know Carl ate very well. But he enjoyed eating everything and in surprising quantities. He enjoyed growing food and was a master at growing every imaginable crop. He enjoyed sharing the bounty of his successful harvests with all. His colleagues and the staff of Caldwell & Kearns will miss the bushel baskets of tomatoes, cucumbers, and other vegetables found in our offices in late summer. Carl also raised steer, most of whom bore the names of litigants or clients or former partners. We would anticipate the day when Carl, with great pleasure, announced the castration of Bill or Bob or whomever.

Of course, worse things happened to those steer, their provision for table and freezer. As an understanding father, Carl wanted to assure that his young daughter, a devoted pet owner, would not become horrified at slaughter, and therefore repeated this mantra: "Leslie, see that steer; we are going to feed him; we are going to grow him; we are going to kill him; and we are going to eat him." Leslie got the point. When Leslie was four or five, her mother overheard Leslie telling another little girl: "See that steer; we are going to feed him; we are going to grow him; we are going to kill him; and we are going to eat him." We are not sure if that child ever returned to play at the Wass home again.

Between gardening, office, church, evening school board meetings, and township meetings, there was little time for anything else. He rose before the first light, was in bed long after dark and never with a complaint. And who was it that plowed the law office parking lot whenever it snowed? Carl.

Carl was to retire. His partners had doubts that he could stay away, but Carl made every preparation, transferring cases and taking steps for a nearly full transition to retired life. By virtue of a reluctantly accepted resignation, the post Carl held for so many years as counsel to the Dauphin County Board of Tax Assessment Appeals was set to end in early January 2010. He had already left his position as solicitor to Dauphin County Vo-Tech School.

Carl never retired. On December 6, 2009, Carl fell from a ladder while stringing Christmas lights at home. One of his last acts at home, while suffering from the injuries that ultimately took his life, was to prepare for a hearing Carl planned to attend later that week. How very Carl. Carl spent the last four months of his life bedridden with very limited mobility. He defied his doctors and their prognosis and demonstrated remarkable cognition and even humor. No pain, illness or despair could overcome his graciousness and his essence.

Carl was a most honest and generous lawyer. Never expressing a concern for himself, dedicated to what was best for the firm; true and honest to the bone; an honorable adversary; a gentleman; a man of good humor, and without a single failure, always ready to help. He was an adequate yet more than willing volleyball player and an ever smiling friend, a man who enjoyed the soil, an amazing eater and a steadfast friend, partner, husband and father. For many gathered here, his image is indelible: standing tall, rocking back on his heels, his arms folded across his chest, peering down over his glasses, and always with a cheshire grin.

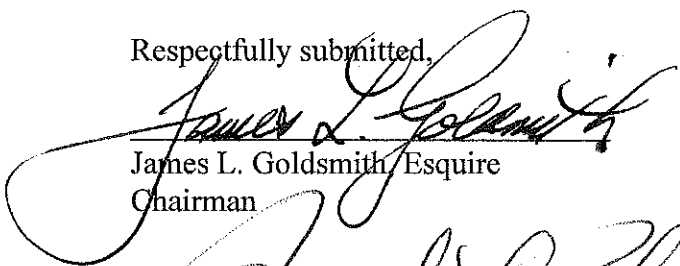
Carl is survived by his wife, Nancy; son, Jeffrey; daughter, Leslie Speaker; grandchildren, Erika and Derek Wass and Rachael, Emily and Alexandra Speaker; a brother, Delbert and a sister, Linda Surenchak.

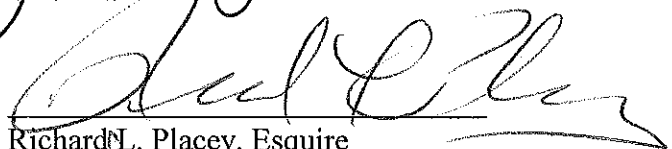
Therefore, be it resolved, that in the passing of Carl G. Wass, the community has lost a true gentleman and respected citizen, the Bar has lost one of its able practitioners and the family has lost an affectionate and devoted father, husband, brother and grandfather.

And resolve further, that the members of the Dauphin County Bar Association, in meeting assembled, mourn the death of our esteemed colleague, Carl G. Wass, and tender our sympathy and condolences to his widow, children, brother, sister and grandchildren.


And further resolved, that copies of this Memorial Resolution be spread upon the records of the Dauphin County Courts and Dauphin County Bar Association, that the original copy be filed in the Office of the Prothonotary, and that copies be transmitted to his widow and family.

Respectfully submitted,


James L. Goldsmith, Esquire
Chairman


Richard L. Placey, Esquire


James R. Clippinger, Esquire


Charles J. DeHart, III, Esquire