

306

**Dauphin County Bar Association**

**Memorial Resolution**

**On the Death of**

**Donald R. Waisel—August 11, 2008**

Our friend and colleague, Donald R. Waisel, better known as Don Waisel, died on August 11, 2008 at the age of 76. He was born on January 12, 1932 in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn, New York, to Benedict and Betty Waisel.

He attended Yeshiva Etz Chaim, in Brooklyn, for the first through eighth grades and was graduated from New Utrecht High School, also in Brooklyn. He stayed in New York to attend City College from which he received his B.A. (cum laude) degree in 1953. Don was a member of Phi Beta Kappa at City College. Interestingly, he also graduated from the Herzliah Teachers Institute in Manhattan. Apparently, Don was more interested in becoming a lawyer than a teacher and attended Harvard Law School from 1953 to 1955 and then received his J.D. degree from Columbia Law School in 1956. What an honor to be admitted to not one, but two, such distinguished law schools.

After law school, Don was employed as an associate at Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett, in Manhattan, for one year and then joined the firm of McNees, Wallace & Nurick, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he was an associate, and then partner, for 36 years. His teacher instincts never left him as associates who worked under his tutelage

might well remember. Preparing a draft of a document for Don invariably meant that the document would be returned and returned and returned with markings such as one would receive from an English professor in college. While this could be a little troubling, particularly because billable hours could not be charged for this effort, it was, however, an indication of how much Don wanted to produce the best product possible.

In 1994, Don opened his own practice in Harrisburg. Throughout his career, he focused on Trusts, Estates, and Federal Taxation. He was a superb analyst who was very well known in his areas of practice as evidenced by being listed in “Best Lawyers in America” in the fields of Trusts and Estates.

Don reached beyond his practice and was active in both Bar Association and other activities. He was a member of the Pennsylvania and Dauphin County Bar Associations. Over the years, he was a member of a number of Bar Association committees, as well as the Decedents’ Estates Advisory Committee which was established by the Pennsylvania Legislature to advise it on new legislation affecting estates. He was also a past chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Real Property and Trust Law Section.

Other than Bar Association work, Don was a past president of the local B’Nai B’rith, a member of Harrisburg Lions Club, and the ACLU. He was a member of Beth El Temple and the Jewish Community Center—both of Harrisburg. Don took a very active part in his synagogue’s services and could always be counted on to chant difficult Hebrew portions of the service even at the last minute as a substitute for a person

otherwise designated to do this. This is no easy task, but one which Don fulfilled without flaw.

Don had a very difficult childhood. His father died when he was twelve and his mother had to work. In view of these situations, Don took it upon himself to help care for his sister, Judy, who was ten years younger than he. He did this even though he himself worked part time while in high school and college. Then his mother died when Judy was only thirteen. Don transferred from Harvard Law School to Columbia Law School so that he could be with Judy and help raise her.

This devotion to family continued throughout Don's life. In 1975, our esteemed fellow at the Bar, the late Arthur Goldberg, and his wife Frances, introduced Don to their niece, Rhoda. This resulted not only in the marriage of Don and Rhoda, but also a combined family of Don's children, of his first marriage, Laurie and David, and Rhoda's children Marcie and Harold whom Don eventually adopted, and treated, as his own. Imagine suddenly having four teenagers at one time, and 16 years of college in 7 years. Yes, Don was indeed a devoted husband and father.

Don had a unique sense of humor, was non-judgmental, kind, and never raised his voice in anger. In fact, it was very disconcerting to Marcie that Don would heap both praise and discipline in the same even-keeled tone of voice. She found it to be frustrating that she was not being yelled at for something for which she deserved to be reprimanded.

Harold believes that this turned Marcie towards her career in counseling so she could better understand this phenomenon.

Don had the deepest respect for everyone without regard to the person's station in life. Indeed, it was this respect that inspired him to dedicate his career to being an Estate attorney. In this capacity, he could help ensure that people's preferences would be honored when they no longer could ensure it themselves. Don was also a survivor. A few years after he started his own law practice, at age 62, he had multiple bypass surgery which one of his doctors said would last for 5 years. Fortunately, he lived well beyond that span during which he was able to see all of his children married and grandchildren born. As Laurie mentioned at his funeral, he taught his children "to rise to life's challenges, to make the best of any situation, to believe that things will work out, and to appreciate the beauty of doing something well." These words epitomize the life of Don Waisel whom we will sorely miss.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the members of the Dauphin County Bar Association, extend our sympathy to the family of Donald R. Waisel, his wife, Rhoda, his children, Laurie, David, Marcie, and Harold, and his grandchildren, and,

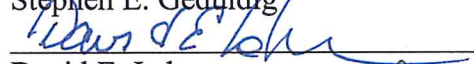
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Memorial Resolution be spread upon the records of the Dauphin County Court and the Dauphin County Bar Association.

Respectfully submitted by the Memorial Committee on the death of Donald R.

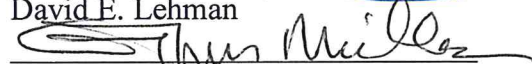
Waisel this 14th day, of January, 2009.



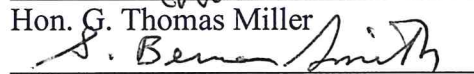
Stephen E. Geduldig



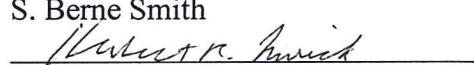
David E. Lehman



Hon. G. Thomas Miller



S. Berne Smith



Herbert R. Nurick, Chair