

**Salvatore A. Darigo, Jr., Esq.**  
**Memorial Resolution**

**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 – Sal Darigo:

My name is Cathy Nolan. For the last six years, I was Sal’s immediate supervisor at the State Employees’ Retirement System, where Sal worked for 25 years. Prior to that, I was his colleague, as we both started at SERS on the same day, December 7, 1998. Joe Marcucci, our chief counsel at SERS, is unavailable today and has asked me to present this memorial resolution for Sal.

Sal passed away unexpectedly on May 10, 2024, at the young age of 53, and he has left a large hole in the lives of those who knew him. Sal was one of those people to whom the expression “larger than life” truly applied. He had a zest and vitality about him. Anyone who spent any significant amount of time with Sal knew that he was a man who lived his life to the fullest, did good for others, and brought cheer and good will with him.

Before coming to work for the State Employees’ Retirement System, Sal spent three years as a solo practitioner in Philadelphia. The drive and initiative it took to run a solo practice and the broad-based general knowledge that Sal acquired in that short time, made him a stand-out candidate when he interviewed for a position at SERS. Sal was, as the saying goes, “A Good Hire.”

At SERS, most of Sal’s work was concentrated on public pension benefits and administration. Through his focus on domestic relations issues pertaining to SERS, he became an acknowledged expert in Pennsylvania on the subjects of equitable distribution of public pension benefits and attachments to satisfy support obligations. Sal individually helped thousands of State employees and their estranged spouses, working with their respective lawyers to navigate the State Employees’ Retirement Code requirements for the equitable distribution of SERS benefits as marital property and structuring support agreements.

Sal was a fine lawyer, a skilled litigator, and a knowledgeable and effective representative of, and counselor to, SERS and the Board. He was a caring public servant who kept in mind that the State employees and their family members with whom he dealt were real people trying to navigate difficult and often confusing personal and legal situations.

But Sal was more than just a lawyer for SERS. He also was a teacher and a sounding board to his colleagues at SERS and other members of the legal community. Sal often served as an enthusiastic and supportive mentor to younger attorneys just beginning their careers, and he generously shared his knowledge with his more seasoned colleagues. He relished playing the devil's advocate. To him, there were no "dumb questions" as long as you did not ask twice. Sal not only trained a generation of SERS lawyers and other employees on the intricacies of the intersection between domestic relations and pension law, but he also made numerous continuing legal education presentations on pension issues to the Dauphin County and Pennsylvania Bar. Sal's philosophy was that by freely sharing his expertise with his private practice counterparts, he would help them avoid drafting pitfalls while shielding his client from avoidable litigation.

Sal was a member of the Inns of Court and active in the Dauphin County Bar Association where he held a succession of leadership roles. He also was a member of several national fraternal service organizations.

I would like to share a few vignettes to memorialize Sal as a person and convey what he brought to his wide circle of family, friends, and colleagues.

Although Sal lived in the Harrisburg area for 25 years and became a part of this community, he remained loyal to his Philadelphia roots and returned there often to spend time with his parents and his fiancé. Sal was a proud 1988 graduate of Central High School, a loyal and active alumnus of the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science (now Thomas Jefferson University), and a 1995 graduate of the Dickinson School of Law – and woe to anyone who said Sal graduated from Penn State Dickinson Law.

From a young age, Sal was an avid antique automobile enthusiast, attending car shows, collecting models and car-related ephemera, and dispensing advice to his sister on the best modern cars to purchase. He made many dear friends from around the world in pursuit of this hobby. His office was decorated with the finest collection of die cast and model cars that Joe and I have ever seen. Probably his favorite cars were Cadillacs from the 1960's, especially convertibles, which he enjoyed owning, restoring, and driving. Sal's approach to cars tended to be "the bigger and more classic, the better."

Sal's sense of humor was quirky and legendary. He loved a good dad joke (or a bad one, depending on your point of view.) Sal was modest, but not meek. Once after reading his annual performance review, he serenaded his supervisor with a verse of the old country song, "It's Hard to be Humble." He was a natural storyteller and would take on the various roles and voices of the characters in his tales. And speaking of his skills as a mimic, Sal could do a great impersonation of Curly from The Three Stooges.

Sal was highly regarded by his clients and colleagues both in SERS and outside the agency. He is going to be remembered for his booming laugh, his sense of humor, bringing holiday goodie bags to coworkers' kids, and so many more things. He was a Harrisburg Senators season ticket holder and regularly treated his friends and coworkers to a game, sometimes inviting the entire office for an evening at the ballpark. Sal demonstrated patience and understanding, and he promoted a constant atmosphere of camaraderie and acceptance. He was a shining example of quiet fortitude and heroism as he faced a series of personal health issues.

In closing, Sal had a big smile, a big heart, and a big impact on the people who knew him. He was a respected colleague and a good friend to those of us who worked with him in the SERS Chief Counsel's Office, and we miss him.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that in the passing of Salvatore A. Darigo, Jr., the Bar and the community have lost a friend, mentor, professional colleague and valued citizen. We recognize the loss to our Bar and extend to his fiancé, Jeannette Cartwright, to his sister Rosemary Darigo, and to his family and friends our sympathy and condolences.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this memorial resolution be spread on the record of the Dauphin County Courts and the Dauphin County Bar Association, that the original be filed with the Prothonotary, and copies transmitted to his family members.

Respectfully submitted



Nicholas Joseph Marcucci, Esq.



M. Catherine Nolan, Esq.