

Dauphin County Bar Association
Memorial Resolution Upon the Passing
Of Our Colleague and Friend
Mark Van Blargan

The most difficult eulogies are delivered in honor of those who leave us far too early. Alas, in the eighty-six year history of McNees, Wallace and Nurick, this has occurred with tragic frequency. Despite our many, many blessings as an organization, and as a family, we have endured the loss of some of our finest during their prime years. As hard as this has been for us, our firm family's losses have been eclipsed by the lost opportunities for our community as future lions took their leave of us far too early, and before completing all that they intended.

No matter how technology and progress may narrow the boundaries of our world each day, in Central Pennsylvania we remain a small and insular neighborhood where the contributions of the best can still have profound, direct and positive impact on the many. I suspect that is one of the reasons why many of us have stayed here, or perhaps left and returned, despite opportunities elsewhere.

I hope that never changes, and we know to the depth of our being that our departed colleague, Mark Van Blargan felt the same way. We spoke of this often over the more than twenty years that we were his colleagues and friends. At his core, Mark was Central Pennsylvania. The impact that Mark had on our Central Pennsylvania organization, on our family, was profound. Indelible. Irreversible. Exemplary. The same holds true for our larger Central Pennsylvania community.

So today, fourteen months after he left us far too early, we remember Mark and all that he meant to us, our firm and our community. But we must take care to do it in the manner that he would want. That does not mean that we don't shed a tear, or many tears. That's OK. Though no doubt he would make fun of us for doing so, particularly me if I cannot finish this testimonial without my eyes leaking. And as my colleagues at McNees know, I have a perfect record of not being able to do that.

To make our recognition complete, let us start with the background context. Mark was the only beloved son of Rev. Ronald Van Blargan and Barbara Miller VanBlargan, born in 1962. He grew up in the Hershey area. He started his career at McNees upon graduating from Syracuse University undergrad in 1986 and Villanova Law School in 1989. His career at McNees nearly got off to an inauspicious start, as he interviewed with our Chairman Emeritus, David Kleppinger, while wearing two dress shoes: one brown and one black. He was good enough to get a job, despite such eccentricity.

Mark spent his formative years with our firm, and at that time had the mental acuity and freedom to work in a variety of substantive disciplines and for diverse clients.

The diversity of experience was a double-edged sword for us, as it afforded Mark the gravitas to leave us, albeit briefly, to serve as in-house counsel for Polyclinic Hospital. Thankfully, Mark returned to McNees in 1997 and was instrumental in the development of the Firm's Healthcare Practice.

During his tenure at McNees, Mark served two separate tenures on our firm's Management Committee: first from 2006 through 2015, and then again from 2018 until his death in August 2020. Mark shined as a leader. So many people relied upon him, internally and externally. He was so many things to so many different people but was always what those people closest to him needed most, be it friend, mentor, coach, confidante, contrarian, trusted advisor.

Mark also emulated the civic service that McNees strives to offer in our community, serving as Chair of the WITF Board of Directors and as a member of the Susquehanna Arts Museum Board of Directors. Mark's passion and commitment to the mission of WITF, anchored by a sincerity and an unmatched sense of humor, established him as an integral part of the WITF family. Mark was a lifelong believer in public media, a supporter and a WITF member for almost 30 years. Mark was a critical part of guiding the organization to the growth they now enjoy.

Over the past months, I've been asked on several occasions to say a few words about Mark. Each time something new, a different memory, a different facet of Mark would come to the surface and guide me. That, in itself, is yet another tribute to Mark.

Like many of us at McNees and in our community, Mark and I had many different relationships over the last quarter of a century. Client, colleague, partner, friend, surrogate older brother. This is not unique. Mark impacted us all in many positive and different ways.

But what strikes me more than anything about Mark, as I think of him often, is how he squeezed every drop of life out of his far too few 57 years on this rock of a planet. When we had a brief chance to celebrate his life last summer, I cited one of my favorite country music songs to sum up Mark. The irony was delicious: Mark absolutely hated country music.

The song is "Happy Ending", by the band Sugarland, and the lyrics that struck me were words that I will forever associate with Mark:

*We come here with nothing
Take it with us the day we leave
The first and last breaths don't matter
It's all the ones in between.*

Friends, there is no doubt that Mark Van Blargan's breaths in between his first and last were ones in which he squeezed every ounce out of life. And we can take some solace in that.

Professionally, Mark gave it his all. All the time.

As a colleague and a friend, he was always there. Always present.

In his down time, Mark didn't have mere hobbies like the rest of us. They were passions. Fixations. Fitness/martial arts/exercise. Guns. Fountain pens. Bourbon. Gourmet food. Travel.

Whatever it was, Mark threw himself into his new interest and in a short time would know everything there was to know about the subject. Every time Mark got interested in something new, he shared. And this usually wound up costing his friends lots of money.

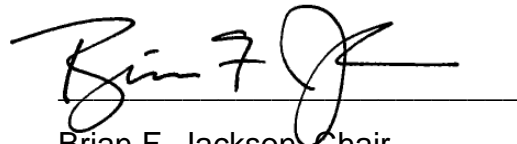
I tried to return the favor a few years ago. Mark wasn't much of a wine aficionado, so this younger brother was going to try to pretend to be play the role of oenophile. And cost him some money too. Inside of a few months, he was talking to me about grapes I've never heard of. This pupil was never the teacher.

As I suggested earlier, we must try to honor Mark as he would like to be remembered. Untraditionally, no doubt, but when we think of our friend here today, let's remember his joy for life. His zest for living.

So hard as it is, even more than a year after his leaving us, let us smile and laugh today as we remember Mark. That's what he would want.

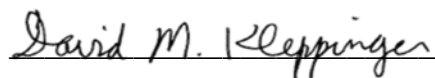
Cheers our friend and brother. Save us a barstool and have a Basil Hayden ready.

Respectfully submitted this 13th day of October, 2021,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian F. Jackson", written over a horizontal line.

Brian F. Jackson, Chair
McNees, Wallace and Nurick, LLC

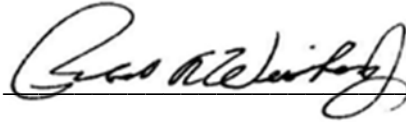
With concurrence and assistance from:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Kleppinger", written over a horizontal line.

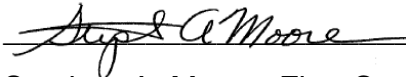
David M. Kleppinger, Chairman Emeritus
McNees, Wallace and Nurick, LLC



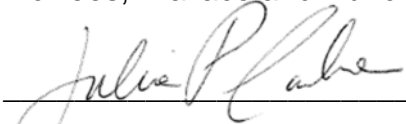
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Robert A. Weishaar, Jr., Vice Chair
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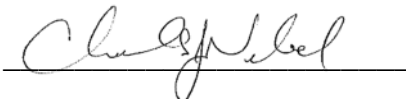
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