

Gary L. James, Esquire
Memorial Resolution

Dauphin County Bar Association
Presented in Special Session of
Court of Common Pleas, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania

Courtroom No. 1, Dauphin County Courthouse
Harrisburg, PA
April 19, 2017 at 4:00 P.M.

Good afternoon.

My law partner and friend of more than thirty years, Gary James, a senior partner at JSDC Law Offices, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, March 5, 2017. As we continue to adjust to Gary's absence, the suddenness of his death rocked our firm, and obviously shocked his family and those close to him.

Gary's three children, Brooke, Nigel and Ashley eloquently spoke about their dad at his funeral in a most personal and descriptive way that was touching to all present. They were able to portray Gary with just the right blend of seriousness and humor, capturing him perfectly. I will speak today mainly about what Gary meant to our firm and to me personally as his long-time law partner.

Gary's path to becoming one of the foremost attorneys in his practice areas began on August 13, 1950, when he was born in Harrisburg. He was raised in the Borough of Penbrook, and was a lifelong resident of central Pennsylvania. Gary received his bachelor's degree from Franklin & Marshall College in 1972, and then his juris doctor degree from the Dickinson School of Law in 1978. He went on to obtain his Master of Laws in Taxation in 1982 while attending Georgetown Law School at night. He spent his entire legal career in private practice since 1978.

I am both fortunate and honored to have been Gary's law partner since 1986, and to have experienced the growth of our firm in becoming one of the largest firms in central Pennsylvania. While I take pride in being with Gary since the firm's inception and throughout its growth, let there be no mistake: Gary James was the individual primarily responsible for the firm being what it has become, as a result of his intellect, vision and ambition. Whether it be the decision to buy a fax machine in the early days, or later implementing an integrated computer system, or adding partners, associates and staff, usually those were Gary's initiatives. It was Gary's idea to purchase the plot of land and build the office in Derry Township that has housed our law firm since 1995. The product of his efforts will long endure as our firm continues to pick-up the pieces from his passing.

Gary's work ethic is legendary. In the early years of our practice, it was not uncommon for him to work seven days a week. I recall feeling guilty leaving the office in the evening knowing that he was still there grinding it out. Curt Walizer, the State Farm agent across the street from our then-office on Chocolate Avenue, recalls leaving his office at night at 10 or 11 and seeing Gary leaving our office as well, wondering if each of them was crazy for being at work at such late hours.

Some of you may know that Gary's practice focused in the areas of the estate planning, estate administration, business organizations and transactions, cemetery and funeral law and federal, state and local taxation. Gary conducted hundreds of seminars relating to those practice areas. He possessed a rare ability to master sophisticated legal concepts, and simplify them in an understandable and down-to-earth manner when discussing them with both business and individual clients. That was a key to his success: a smart guy being able to master complex matters, and confidently present them in a simple way that made clients feel comfortable, whether it be a corporate executive or average people needing simple Wills. His methods and example filtered down to other attorneys in our office, and most particularly in his practice group.

About five years ago it occurred to me that Gary and I had been law partners for 25 years. Actually, there was a presentation of edibles in the office kitchen to commemorate the 25 years as I recall. So, I decided to send an email to Gary that I would like to share:

Gary, I learned yesterday that the food in the kitchen marked the 25th anniversary of the firm. I think you and I have been together since 1986. Obviously, dozens of attorneys and staff have come and gone since then, while you and I have ground it out over the long haul, with no end in sight (at least for me). There is some measure of pride I take in that, as we've (mostly you) assembled and maintained a pretty good thing here. As Neil Young said about Steven Stills, "we've had our ups and downs, but we're still playing together." So, congrats in hanging in there over these many years. Although our respective practices are divergent, your example, professionalism and approach to the practice of law mean more to me than you know.

Gary responded as follows:

Max, your message means a lot to me. I know we've had bumps in the road but the good news is that we've moved beyond that and today are stronger than ever. By nature I tend to look at the glass as half-full, which ignores the practice that you and I have built – almost 25 lawyers, including our two Mechanicsburg offices that are a mile apart (go figure). Pretty impressive for a couple of guys from suburban Harrisburg, neither of whom was born with a practice in waiting or silver spoon in our mouths. We built it and today we thrive and that should be a source of pride for both of us. One more thing you may find of interest is that I have grown to respect CSNY as a pillar in the pantheon of rock and roll. I'm a lot less opinionated in my old age. Congrats to you too partner, and like you, I'll make my final exit in the horizontal position. Gary

Then, it was this past December when I realized that Gary and I reached the thirty year mark in practice together. I saw him one day in the pit, which is the room in our building where the copiers and postage meter are located, as well as the mail slots and such, and commented to him "hey did you realize, here we are thirty years". He raised his hand to high-five and said "yes and many more years to go". Little did I know that he would be gone in a few short months.

As devoted as Gary always was to the practice of law, he had many other interests, some business-related and many leisure activities. Actually, I was somewhat surprised that he practiced law as long as he had, because of those other interests. He was quite an entrepreneur, and over the years had become involved in separate business ventures that I thought might entice him to slowly move away from the law. That never happened, and in fact, in the past several years Gary had been as energized and committed to practicing law as ever. Maybe at a less intense pace, but no less committed.

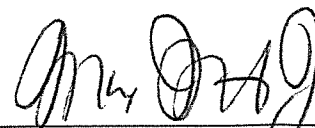
At age 66, Gary was as seemingly fit as any man that age could hope to be. He watched what he ate, participated in rigorous CrossFit workouts over the past couple of years and maintained a healthy lifestyle. Before becoming immersed in the CrossFit regimen he was into cycling, yoga, hiking and always engaged in some form of physical fitness. For many years he was an avid golfer at The Harrisburg Country Club, frequently with our partner, John Connelly. As proficient as he was in those activities, I learned at his funeral service that he didn't take well to all such endeavors. His friend, Austin, related his experience in Gary's attempts at kayaking. Some of you may know that Gary and his fiancée, Cindy, resided in northern Lebanon County in a beautiful, picturesque farm property on which they maintained horses. The farm is near Memorial Lake, where Gary tried kayaking. But according to Austin that did not go particularly well. He described Gary as being incapable of paddling straight and instead spun around in circles, the image of which was humorous to all who knew Gary. This is especially so since he usually did well at anything he tried.

In closing, we at JSDC Law Offices miss our partner. For me personally, Gary was my friend and as I said we go back a long way. It's rare to maintain a law partnership with the same partners for as long as he and I did. What I miss most perhaps is his presence, just the fact that he's not there. I pull into the parking lot and his car is not there. He's no longer around on Sundays which is when we had a chance to chat about life inside and outside of the office. The remaining partners in our firm are committed to carrying on, but JSDC will never be the same without Gary James.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, in the passing of **Gary L. James**, the Bar, the Court, and the community have lost a colleague, a friend, and a contributor to the legal community. We tender our condolences to his fiancée, Cindy, and to his children, Brooke, Nigel and Ashley, and to his extended family and to his many friends.

AND RESOLVED FURTHER that copies of this Memorial Resolution be spread upon the records of the Dauphin County Courts and the Dauphin County Bar Association, that the original be filed with the Office of the Prothonotary, and that copies be transmitted to his family members.

Respectfully submitted, this 19th day of April, 2017, by this Memorial Resolution Committee:



Max J. Smith, Jr., Esquire