

LENORA M. SMITH, ESQUIRE
MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

DAUPHIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Presented in Special Session of the
Court of Common Pleas, Dauphin
County, Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, December 14, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGES OF THE COURT, Our Colleagues at the Bar, and friends in attendance:

GREETINGS as we celebrate the life of Lenora Marie Smith, Esquire.

Our friend and esteemed colleague Lenora M. Smith, Esquire, departed this life October 28, 2016 at age 68. Lenora practiced law for close to 40 years.

Noted Author Sally Berger observed:

“The secret to getting ahead is getting started!”

In that regard, Lenora attended The St. Charles Boromeo Catholic Parish Elementary School before attending the John W. Hallahan High School for Girls. Soon thereafter, Lenora earned a Bachelor’s Degree from The Ohio State University. Lenora earned her law degree from the Beasley School of Law at Temple University.

Arriving in Harrisburg in the 1970’s, she became Chief Counsel of The Office of Auditor General at the then tender age of 31. Additionally, Lenora served as a prosecutor at the Office of Professional and Occupational Affairs, Department of State. Soon, however, the impassioned call of private practice summoned Lenora. My friends, some of us utilize the practice of law to simply pay our bills and upgrade our quality of life. Lenora, however, looked upon the law as a “calling”. The practice of law to Lenora represented a strong urge toward a particular way of life where she was determined to help others in their time of need. The pursuit of justice by utilization of the law was of supreme importance to Lenora.

Therefore, it became common practice for Lenora to tackle cases other attorneys would shy away from due to a strong likelihood of defeat or due to a client not having quite enough money to pay the fee. As well, Lenora took on a number of pro bono cases in an effort to help those most vulnerable when paying clients stood at the ready to retain her.

And even on vacation – to exotic places such as Italy, France, Spain, and Venezuela – Lenora’s dear friend Gwen Mosley noted, Lenora was often on the phone talking to clients or reviewing files of pending cases awaiting her upon her arrival home in Harrisburg. Gwen often explained to Lenora that, “You’re defeating the entire purpose of going on a vacation!” as Lenora put forward a sly smile.

During the holidays, Lenora was notorious for sitting at the dinner table and telling outlandish stories that she simply made up! Non - suspecting individuals would sit back totally amazed listening to the bizarre extraordinary stories most often about a person sitting there at the table while the subject of the far out quirky story would simply play along.

Sometimes Lenora would say "I was just fibbing!"; sometimes she wouldn't!

Linda Hicks, Esquire, and Gwen Mosley, Esquire, both dear friends of Lenora, explained that if there was one or two things to get Lenora to temporarily put the practice of law to the side, it was fishing in West Cape May, New Jersey! For Lenora, fishing represented a relaxing time of solitude and effective strategy of securing and using the appropriate bait to get the fish to bite...And following a successful outing, Lenora would invite her friends over for an outstanding fish fry consisting of fresh fish, fried potatoes, and onions and pickles!

Aside from fishing, word has it that Lenora liked to gamble a little bit, to relieve the stress from the practice of law. While her favorite haunts were in Atlantic City where Lenora and her crew would sometimes "spend the night", Lenora also enjoyed the Hollywood Casino in Grantville, as well.

And in terms of relaxation, it must be said that Lenora had a legendary garden of hot peppers. She enjoyed cutting them up and adding them to the meals of her friends, sometimes as a surprise – if you know what I mean!!

Eleanor Roosevelt stated:

***"Great minds discuss ideas,
Average minds discuss events,
Small minds discuss people"***

Lenora won a seat on Harrisburg's City Council in 1985 and she soon made her voice heard. She rose to the position of Vice President and put forward what was deemed at that time as cutting edge issues that some people did not fully understand. Among other proposals, Lenora led the seven member council to consider ordinances requiring private businesses to offer unpaid leave to new parents. Lenora also proposed a then novel idea to allow senior citizens to pay their municipal taxes in quarterly installments.

Indeed, what Lenora proposed as then landmark legislation is now deemed normal, routine, and expected as a matter of social policy.

Lenora went on to run for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives but lost in an extremely tight race. After her State House run, Lenora never ran again for public office but nonetheless continued to be a force behind the scenes in connection with providing counsel and vocal support to winning candidates.

Lenora started a community newspaper, "Common Ground News", which was a ground breaking community newspaper. Among one of its major early articles was an interview with the then President Judge Clarence Morrison.

Lenora, moreover, established a scholarship 501 (c)(3) fund for law students at Widener and Dickinson Law Schools through the Keystone Bar Association.

Maya Angelou stated:

***"How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate
our heroes and SHE-ROES!"***

Lenora was inspired by the late Jurist Juanita Kidd Stout, the first African American woman elected to any judgeship in the United States and the first to serve on the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania from 1988-1989.

Lenora, like Judge Stout, was instilled with a lifelong habit of working hard. And though Lenora never sought a judgeship in Dauphin County, her influence was instrumental in assisting others to ascend to the bench.

Doreena Sloan, Esquire, after dealing with the shock of the passing of Lenora, observed that Lenora was the first African American woman lawyer she had ever met.

Doreena, and countless other members of the local bar, will continue to carry forward the hard work Lenora put forward on behalf of the downtrodden, those down on their luck, and those needing someone to tackle the "unpopular cause".


Lenora was a plain spoken, blue collar advocate! Lenora would often say, "Don't let this law degree fool you - I am South Philly through and through; I tell it like it is!"

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that in the passing of Lenora M. Smith, the Greater Harrisburg Community has lost a warrior, the Bar has lost one of its most tireless practitioners, and her family and friends have lost a true spirit for the ages.

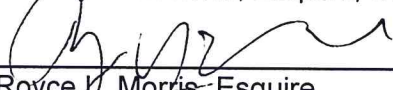
AND resolve further, that the members of the Dauphin County Bar Association, in meeting assembled, mourn the death of our esteemed colleague, Lenora M. Smith, and respectfully tender our sympathy and condolences to the family;

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 her family.


Respectfully submitted,



Stanley H. Mitchell, Esquire, Chairman



Royce L. Morris, Esquire



Edward F. Spreha, Jr., Esquire



Linda Hicks, Esquire

Diane M. Dils, Esquire

Doreena Sloan, Esquire