



**A RESOLUTION OF THE
FRANKLIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
IN MEMORY OF BARBARA TOWNSEND**

WHEREAS the members of the Franklin County Bar Association met in a Special Meeting this **27th day of September 2024** to celebrate the life and honor the memory of our colleague and fellow member, Barbara Townsend, who was called home by her Almighty God September 7, 2024, and

WHEREAS, although saddened by her death, it is our desire, and the tradition of the Franklin County Bar Association, to share our recollections of Barb and honor her with a Memorial Resolution at this Special Meeting; and

WHEREAS, before offering this Resolution, the members of the Franklin County Bar Association desire to offer a brief record of her life and career.

Barb was born December 23, 1942, in Los Angeles, California, the daughter of the late John G. and Muriel Winifred Borger. She is survived by her sons Jay A “Tony” Townsend and wife Susan C. Schroder, and Griffith A. Townsend and wife Katerina G. Olsen and grandchildren Grace Catherine, Samantha Rose, Emily Ann, Samuel Godfrey, Charlotte Edith Ann and Gregory Thor; a brother Lawrence Borger and former spouse Jay Townsend, Sr.

Barb graduated from Northern Valley Regional High School, Dickinson College class of 1964 and the Dickinson School of Law class of 1976

Following graduation from college, Barb worked as a high school English and Math teacher.

Barb was one of the first female lawyers in Franklin County. Barb worked at Sharpe and Sharpe where she became a partner. In 1990 she opened Townsend Law Office in Chambersburg specializing in Family Law and Real Estate transactions. She continued practicing as a solo practitioner until closing her office in June 2024.

Barb was a member of the Franklin County Bar Association., the Pennsylvania bar Association, Pennsylvania and American Trial Lawyers Associations.

Barbara was among the leaders of the Franklin County Bar Association who undertook the task of beautifying the courthouse by planting flowers in the planters outside the entrances to the courthouse.

Barbara was active in the Shippensburg community attending Christ United Methodist Church where she was an active member of the church choir. She also lent her vocal talents to

the Shippensburg Town Singers and the Shippensburg University Chamber Orchestra. Barb served on the board of Women in Need. She became a PIAA swimming official in 1984 and served as president of the Shippensburg Aquatic Club.

Above all else in life, Barb fiercely loved and cherished her children and grandchildren. She was always involved in her children's activities. Her family was not only her children and grandchildren but included her friends and those in need.

The following are memories and observations submitted by his fellow members of the Franklin County Bar Association:

My first recollection of Barb was watching her greet a small group of attorneys at the Elks Club over lunch when she ran for Common Pleas Judge. She was funny, yet earnest. When someone indicated that she may not have a chance politically, I recall her saying something along the lines of the political process is better with some competition. Once I started practicing and was litigating family law cases, I knew that if Barb was on the other side, and she thought my client was at fault, that Barb would deliver a few "barbs" as only Barb could. Over the years I truly came to appreciate how much she cared about her work as GAL in custody cases. She invested time and brought that parental blend of sternness and compassion to the role. She was willing to give the court her opinions without reservation or restraint. It was also great in between hearings to hear stories of her travels singing, family vacations at Lake George and her wryly recounting her stint as a Pan Am Stewardess. Barb lived life to its fullest, and our bar association was better having her as a member and friend.

Honorable Shawn D. Meyers, President Judge

It was with sadness that I learned of the passing of Attorney Townsend. As a young attorney she treated me with kindness and was always willing to discuss a tricky situation with good nature and sage advice. Three months after taking the bench in 2020, I presided over my first custody trial in the social room of the Capitol Theater. Attorney Townsend and Attorney Kulla represented their respective clients zealously and I recall bending my ear to catch some of the comments being made between counsel that were clearly not meant for the record. I assumed the two didn't care much for one another until the first recess when they chatted and laughed like longtime friends. In my years of attending bar functions, I have heard many stories of such a dynamic between counsel and how many of the senior members of our organization found great value in such relationships. I knew at that moment I was observing such a relationship firsthand. Attorney Townsend served as guardian ad litem in several custody cases, and I appreciated the way she interacted with children. On one occasion Attorney Townsend shared that a young child wasn't saying much while talking at home, so the meeting was rescheduled for another day on a bench at Bruster's Ice Cream. She could have simply reported to the court that the child had little to say and was difficult to talk with. And whether her reason to try again with ice cream was to provide the court with the best recommendation possible or to be a bright spot during a difficult time in a child's life, I found the small act to speak volumes. I extend my sympathy to Attorney Townsend's family and her loved ones. She will be missed.

Honorable Mary Beth Shank, Judge

Barb was deeply committed to her clients and to those who often were underserved in their walk of life. I believe this is why she chose to continue her active practice of law through age 81. I last saw Barb in June of this year at a retirement luncheon where she was surrounded by colleagues and friends who showed up to honor her and her commitment to the practice of law. I was struck by how happy and healthy she looked despite the past few years of health challenges. She truly enjoyed serving her clients up to the very end. This is the picture of her that I will keep in my mind when I remember her and her dedication to our profession.

Honorable Carol van Horn, Senior Judge

Just a few words regarding Barb. I was saddened and quite surprised to hear of her passing and was unaware that she was dealing with any acute health issues. I will never forget her graciousness, as Barb supported me in both an election and a retention election. In my mind, Barb was consummately dedicated to her clients. Though not always evident, her tenacity sometimes exploded in court to the surprise of some. And sometimes, so did her sense of humor. Barb genuinely loved the practice of law, and she stuck with it longer than most. Her heart was big, and it was kind. My memories of her are nothing but fond, and I am glad that our paths crossed.

Honorable Richard Walsh, Senior Judge

Barb was a true champion of justice, and she cared about her clients. She was always a friend to legal services and accepted pro bono cases. In just one example, Barb handled a complex custody matter which made a life-long positive impact in a teen's life. We will miss her greatly and have very fond memories of working with her in pursuit of access to justice.

Gloria Keener

Franklin County Legal Services

Barb was a great cook who also enjoyed dining out. During the 90's and 00's we had many dinners at her Shippensburg home and at the Copper Kettle in Chambersburg. She also went with us in the camper to wine festivals in Virginia. Memory is her father worked for Pan Am and set up the Pacific Clipper routes over the Pacific before WWII. He was a very interesting addition to supper. We mourn her passing.

Don and Brenda Kornfield

Barb Townsend was one of my best friends. Our close friendship really only began about ten years ago when together we started planting flowers in the Courthouse pots five times a year. Before that, we were almost daily opposing lawyers in family law matters as we zealously represented our clients in divorce, custody and support matters.

The evolution of our relationship from combatants to friends resulted from our shared love of flowers and our shared passion to beautify the ugly sidewalk courthouse security barrels. As we bonded over flower choices and color combination conversations, early morning breakfasts and planting sessions we shared our gripes, gossip, highs, lows, health and children concerns. In the last two years, we had car rides to Barb's doctor visits, tests, and hospital procedures and monthly lunches in between which provided hours of friendly chatter.

We got to know each other very well! Thus, I can truly say that Barb was a wise and sympathetic family lawyer. She really invested herself in her clients and their problems. She

frequently failed to charge her clients the value of her services. She took to heart their concerns worrying and stressing to her detriment with their issues.

She was independent, opinionated, stubborn and well-meaning. Her bravery as she faced numerous health issues was amazing. She taught us all that having friends means being a friend. She helped and supported and counseled and befriended many, not just her clients, but her colleagues, her fellow choir members, her staff, her neighbors, her children and grandchildren and thankfully me. I will miss having her in my life.

Marty Walker

I first met Barbara Townsend in the fall of 1959 when we were both freshmen at Dickinson College in Carlisle. Her name at that time was Barbara Borger (I think I have the spelling of her maiden name correct). We were not close friends, but we were friendly. Because I transferred to the University of North Carolina and graduated there I lost contact with her for probably 20 or more years.

It was not until I was teaching Wills and Estates and the Dickinson School of Law that we came in contact again. After teaching the first class of the fall semester, and as students were leaving the room, Barbara came up to me and introduced herself as Barbara Townsend. Also in that same class was Ed Wenger. Barbara and Ed were both good students and both had high scores on their exams. To make a long story short, I hired both of them to come practice law with me in Chambersburg. That is how the law firm of Sharpe, Cleaver, Wenger, and Townsend came into existence.

Dave Cleaver

I met Barb forty years ago when I first started practicing. She ably represented her client and, as I recall, had disdain for my client. However, she treated me with professionalism and didn't make me feel like I was just new to the practice. Over the years I have seen her take on the causes of the downtrodden and pursue justice for them – or at least the best possible outcome. She was a math whiz who was hard to keep up with in that area. I appreciated that she and Marty Walker set a good precedent for women practicing in Franklin County. It made it easier for those of us who followed them. Barb was also a trailblazer in that she was the first woman to run for Judge in this county. While she didn't succeed, I believe she opened the door and now we have had 3 female judges ably serve our county. On a lighter note, no one who was there will ever forget Barb singing Janis Joplin song during karaoke at one of the Bar social functions.

Janice Hawbaker

I feel very fortunate to have known Barb as a colleague, as a dedicated member of the Franklin County Bar Association, and with the Rotary Club of Chambersburg. Barb personified Rotary's motto of "Service above self". She selflessly gave her time and talents to help make our community a better place. Whether it was helping with Rotary's annual Chicken n Stuff fundraiser, attending a Bar Association yoga class, decorating the Courthouse planters, or participating in a pro bono service project, you could always count on Barb to be there and to support the cause. We will miss her very much.

Tony Cosentino

Barb was one of the first attorneys I encountered when I first started practicing in Franklin County. If memory serves me correctly, it was a complex, multi-day custody hearing with Judge Herman. Although Barb was a formidable opponent, she not only showed me the ropes but was always a straight shooter. In the twenty plus years (maybe 30) since then she has been a great source for me on local practice. Recently, even though she had already announced her retirement, she completed (very successfully) a case from which I had to withdraw. I have a pretty good sense that she never charged the client. But that is who she was. Kindhearted, giving, gracious are all words I would use to describe Barb. Her passing is a huge loss to the Franklin County Bar and certainly to those of us who had the privilege to work with her and call her friend.

She will be sorely missed!

Marie Cognetti

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Franklin County Bar Association assembled at a Special Meeting held the **27th day of September 2024** express our sympathy on the occasion of the loss of Barbara Ann Borger Townsend mother, grandmother and friend and colleague of the members of the Franklin County Bar Association. We will strive to keep her memory alive, for the strength, dedication and wisdom of those who have gone before us represent the foundation of the future generations of our profession.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Memorial Resolution Committee
Franklin County Bar Association**

Shawn D. Meyers, President Judge
39th Judicial District of Pennsylvania

John B. Keller Esquire
President, Franklin County Bar Association

Forest N. Myers, Esquire
Chair, Memorial Resolution Committee

George S. Glen, Esquire
Member, Memorial Resolution Committee