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Volume 26 | Number 2

Article 3

1-1-1993

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Recommended Citation

Phillip D. Brady, *William J. Landers: The Washington Years*, 26 Loy. L.A. L. Rev. 270 (1993).
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WILLIAM J. LANDERS: THE WASHINGTON YEARS

*Phillip D. Brady**

The *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* is to be commended for dedicating this Issue to the memory of one of its former Editors-in-Chief and one of Loyola Law School's finest graduates, William J. Landers. It is a privilege to be among those asked to provide some personal reflections on Bill. As perhaps the only classmate who worked with Bill during much of his time in Washington, D.C., I would like to share some memories from that portion of his career.

We first worked together when he joined the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice as a Special Counsel to Assistant Attorney General Stephen Trott.¹ Bill had previously worked for Steve when the latter served as U.S. Attorney for Los Angeles. Before Bill assumed his new position at the Department of Justice, I had occasion to mention to Steve that Bill was a classmate and that I looked forward to his joining the Department. Steve's response was characteristic of everyone who had the opportunity to work with Bill. He was effusive in his praise of Bill and, in an illustrative comment, noted that Bill's joining his staff was exactly what he needed to make his virtually unmanageable job manageable.

During the next few years, on any number of Department of Justice projects, Bill always demonstrated the "can do" attitude and ability that Steve Trott had so accurately predicted. As a consequence, he was frequently tapped to take on some of the Department's most difficult and sensitive matters. One project involved executive privilege. He did pioneering work in seeking judicial review of legislative branch requests for disclosure of sensitive executive branch documents for which executive privilege had been asserted without there first having to be a congressional contempt prosecution. The problem was (and continues to be) a genuine one, typically involving each side asserting its position in good faith, and Bill made a significant contribution to the development of the current law on the subject.

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1. Stephen S. Trott is now a Judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Bill's next job in Washington again brought us together and again involved a memorable discussion with his soon to be employer. In this instance, then Counsel to the President, A.B. Culvahouse, in advising me as Deputy Counsel of his intention to bring Bill Landers to the White House Counsel's Office, described him as one of the "superstars" of the Department of Justice's Criminal Division. Upon learning of our prior relationship, A.B. further shared with me that he had received an unprecedented number of endorsements from senior Justice Department officials attesting to Bill's great character and ability.

In keeping with his penchant for assuming the most difficult assignments, during his tenure with the White House Counsel's Office, Bill was asked to coordinate the Executive Branch's response to the myriad legal issues arising from the aftermath of the Iran-Contra matter. Bill met that challenge with his characteristic professionalism and earned the respect of everyone involved, from the relevant departments and agencies to the Independent Counsel's Office.

Bill's Washington career next took him to the U.S. Attorney's Office where he served as Chief of the Public Corruption Section. Again, he was viewed as one of the most gifted and dedicated members of that office. His work, which continued until his death, was characterized by his innovative and thoughtful approach to every issue. The outpouring of support at Bill's memorial service from all the offices with which Bill had been associated in Washington was a fitting tribute to the high regard in which he was held by his colleagues.

By way of postscript, the above has focused on a portion of Bill's outstanding legal career because that is what I can uniquely contribute to this Issue. However, as I know is the case with the other contributors to this memorial, the memories I will always have of Bill are much more personal and are primarily related to his great humanity. We got together relatively infrequently on social occasions, but our friendship was genuine and the loss is real. While I was fortunate to have had an opportunity to work with Bill, I was even more fortunate to have known him as a friend.