

1-1-1993

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Recommended Citation

R. M. Lee, *Bill Landers—Lawyer and Friend*, 26 Loy. L.A. L. Rev. 274 (1993).
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/llr/vol26/iss2/5>

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BILL LANDERS—LAWYER AND FRIEND

*R. Marilyn Lee**

When Bill and I met nearly fifteen years ago, I never thought I would be writing a memorial tribute to him before we were a ripe old age. Because of the difficulty of the task, it has taken some prodding for me to put this on paper. Yet, through knowing Bill, I have seen that it is not the number of years a person lives, but what is done with those years that counts. Bill lived life fully. The Editorial Board of the *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* could not have chosen a more able lawyer and kind friend to honor with this tribute.

I remember the first day Bill and I met in 1978 at the Los Angeles Municipal Traffic Courthouse on Hill Street. Bill was easily spotted across the crowded room of Deputy City Attorneys on their way to court. He was tall, well-dressed and had the look of a successful private practice lawyer. This was Bill's first day on the job, drawing the lowest prosecutorial assignment of Ticket Court, a humbling experience. A few of us took him to lunch, and he fit right in with his easy smile and quick wit.

In addition to being professional colleagues, Bill and I became close friends, sharing many experiences, from carpooling to court—where we brainstormed evidence objections for each others' trials—to owning and living in an apartment building in Los Angeles—where we prepared dinner parties for friends. Even after Bill's move to the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., in 1983, he remained as the building's authoritative accountant, and we continued our friendship long distance.

Much has and will be written about Bill's brilliant legal career and his keen analytical mind, however, I wanted to share the personal side that many of us also knew. Bill had an uncommon humanity that inspired others. He was a mentor for new attorneys he met, those he supervised, law students he taught, and his eight nieces and nephews whom he adored. No matter how rushed his schedule was, he always had time to help someone with a problem.

Bill was the resident counselor for many of his friends, colleagues and family members on everything from legal theories to how to purchase a new car. As one friend said recently, "Bill seemed to organize my life better than I ever could have"; many felt the same way.

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He touched so many diverse people in life; and even in the process of dying, he brought people together in a profoundly moving and spiritual way. At his very supportive church in Washington, D.C., Saint Mark's Episcopal, a packed vigil of friends and colleagues remembered Bill the night before his funeral. Many celebratory tributes were made to Bill, including a review of his legal career in Washington by his supervisor, Jay Stevens, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. One woman stood up quietly and said she had heard on National Public Radio that morning about a prominent Washington attorney who had just died. It was Bill Landers. "I never knew that about Bill," she sighed, "he was just such a good friend to me."

Having friends and colleagues on both coasts, Bill shared his warmth and humor with all, but especially his loving family: his parents, sisters Karen and Kathy, and brother Chuck. His mother, Nelda, planted the seed of faith in Bill that became so important to him. Bill's good friends Craig Howie, Sally Garr, Lynn and Ed Kneedler, and many others in Washington helped make his last days the fullest possible.

Bill's sister Karen summed it up best with a simple statement: "Bill was a good man." He showed that you could be a good lawyer and a good person at the same time. Bill's family, faith and friends were his foundation, and law was the expression of his intellect and integrity.

We will miss Bill immensely, but he has left a legacy of courage, professionalism and humanity that will guide us always.