

In Memoriam

Remembering Kim

October 25, 1960–January 21, 2008

By Naseem Stecker

January has been a cruel month. News of the tragic, untimely death of our immediate past president Kimberly M. Cahill from cancer on January 21 deeply affected and saddened all who knew and worked closely with her. She was too young, too full of life, and had so much more to give. We grieve for Kim and her family and take this moment to remember the person she was and her many, many accomplishments. Here are some memories from her State Bar friends:

Kim Cahill was smart. She was loud. She was sometimes bawdy.

She had the intelligence and ability to analyze the stickiest political wicket, the judgment to know when to point out the error in her opponent's position, and the compassion to do so in a way that often made her counterpart feel as if Kim's suggestion was his idea.

No one outworked Kim Cahill, or devoted more time and effort to advancing the interests of justice and the legal profession. And *no one* had more fun doing it, as evidenced by the twinkle in her eyes and occasional devious grin.

She loved her profession, and especially practicing with her hero (her Mom) and one of her best friends (her sister, Dana). She loved to brag about her sister, Pam, and how she was setting the corporate world afire, and occasionally joked that her family consisted of a bunch of lawyers and one really smart person. She was proud of her family.

She was a whirling dervish who *always* had a little more time to give to a friend or just cause.

Kim first took me under her wing when we served as Representative Assembly officers in 1997. "Slow down, Sparky! We can't change the world in a day!" *No one* called me Sparky, before or since, except Kim. It was her fun way to remind me to pause, step back, and look at the big picture. It's a voice, a laugh, and a lesson that I'll never forget.

While I will desperately miss my dear friend Kim, I can smile today because of how she *lived*. One thing is clear: Heaven just got a little louder and a whole lot funnier.

Bruce A. Courtade
SBM Commissioner



Kim and I met a long time ago at a State Bar of Michigan leadership conference and right away a special friendship began.

For those of you who did not know Kim personally, you really missed out. She was an extraordinary person—highly intelligent, strongly principled, exceptionally kind, and very down to earth. Spending time with Kim was energizing, uplifting, and always interesting. Driving to Lansing together for numerous Bar meetings gave me the opportunity to pick her brain to my heart's content. We discussed everything, including our dreams for the future. She shared her wealth of knowledge on the law, politics, fine wines, sports, and on any other topics we raised.

Kim never ceased to amaze me with what she knew. But there were no airs about her. She liked to laugh and have a good time and she wanted everyone around her to have fun, too. Her smile and good humor were infectious. Many people said that Kim was the best. But I say that Kim was better than the best. My heart is sorrowful, but my spirit is strong because I was so blessed to have Kim Cahill as my friend.

Nancy J. Diehl
Former SBM President



Those of you who knew Kim Cahill know that she was the last person to sing her own praises. But we are going to. Kim brought a remarkable energy to the State Bar that is rare. She was an outstanding leader and knew how to get things done. Throughout her year as State Bar president, Kim visited more local bar associations than any president in memory, always inquiring what the State Bar could do for them. She framed every issue that came before her in the context of its impact on the members of the Bar and the public, and passionately championed each one.

Kim's illness took her from us far too swiftly. Just this past summer, we were at the annual meeting. It is stunning to me that she is gone in a matter of months. I will always remember her

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outstanding service to the Bar and to the legal profession in our state. Most of all, I will remember our friendship, and the conversations and many good times we shared. Those of us who were lucky enough to spend time with Kim will never forget the intelligence, wit, and humanity she brought to everything she did.

Ronald D. Keefe

SBM President



In the face of all the negative stereotypes of lawyers, I love the description of lawyers as problem solvers. Kim Cahill was a consummate problem solver. In fact, as a Bar leader she was a one-woman walking seminar in every aspect of the art of problem solving: gather the facts, analyze, plan, execute. In addition to her prodigious knowledge base (not only a masterful command of probate, family, and commercial law, but also, just for starters, professional hockey, the automotive industry, oenology, fashion, Shakespeare, and the favorite desserts and names of the children and grandchildren of every judge in Macomb County), Kim possessed the ideal problem solver's temperament—a perfect balance between realism and optimism—plus an innate ingenuity that gave rise to creative solutions to seemingly intractable difficulties.

Kim was a dizzyingly quick study. While most of the world was still working out the contours of a problem, Kim typically would be working on step six of the action plan. In some folks, such precocity might be off-putting, but one secret of Kim's effectiveness as a leader was how much fun she was to work with. Before I met Kim's mother and sisters, I speculated that Kim probably developed her trademark sense of humor as a way to



Kimberly M. Cahill and family: front row, Lorraine VanOverbeke, aunt; Florence Schoenherr-Warnez, mother; and Pamela M. Cahill, sister; back row, Dana M. Warnez, sister, and Kimberly M. Cahill

amuse herself while she was waiting for the rest of the world to catch up to her. Now I know that her comedic talents are one of the many gifts she was given by her remarkable mother and law partner, Florence Schoenherr-Warnez.

Janet K. Welch

SBM Executive Director



Contributions to honor Kim's memory may be made to the State Bar of Michigan Access to Justice Fund, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Focus Hope, University of Michigan Law School, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Scholarship Fund, or the Macomb County Bar Foundation Scholarship Fund.

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Deep condolences go to State Bar Commissioner Gregory L. Ulrich and his wife, Linda, who recently suffered the loss of their son, Lance Cpl. Scott Winter Ulrich, 21, who died January 23. He was on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps and based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Described as a very personable young man, he is remembered for his many kind actions and often befriended people who faced difficult times. Scott Ulrich is survived by his parents, his older brother, Todd, and younger sister, Tessa. A funeral mass was celebrated on January 31 at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Grosse Pointe Woods, followed by full military honors. Memorials may be made to the Lance Cpl. Scott Winter Ulrich Fund for the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, Veterans Law Clinic, 651 East Jefferson, Room 251, Detroit, MI 48226 or to the State Bar of Michigan Access to Justice Fund, 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

