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Tribute to Barbara Salken

Ellen Schall*

Hi, I'm Ellen Schall and my husband, Steve Kellsan and I were Legal Aid colleagues of Matt and Barbara's many years ago.

Matt, Billy, Mr. and Mrs. Salken, Judy, Rick and Marge, and all Barbara's family and friends and colleagues and students, I'm going to try and give you some sense of Barbara outside of her Pace environment. As I said, we met in the mid-seventies at Legal Aid. We already knew Matt who was director of training at Legal Aid and trained both my husband and me and then Barbara. Barbara and I shared an office for all those years we were in criminal court together with Joanne Ferdinand who is now a criminal court judge. Although Joanne was six inches shorter and Barbara and I looked more different then than we ended up looking, our supervisor confused the three of us all the time, calling us by each other's names. Those were not great days for women at Legal Aid but we enjoyed it.

As I think about it, it's amazing that we became friends even with the proximity because at the time and even now most of Barbara's friends were named Barbara. In fact, three of the great friends in her life were named Barbara: Barbara Muller who is not here; Barbara Moore who is; and Barbara Wolfert who will speak. Although there were a few Ellens who slipped in, her neighbor across the street and me, and even people with other names, but Barbara was the major theme. We became close friends and remained close friends for over twenty years and it's odd when I think about it because we had very different interests. She loved the law, for one, and I myself although I'm trained as a lawyer, have absolutely no interest in it. I really like being a Legal Aid lawyer but the way I did it actually, with all due respect, had very little to do with the law. Barbara liked the law so much (as I'm sure you'll be glad to hear and I'm sure

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you'll hear more); she liked to talk law, not just in law school but at parties and in social settings. This continually amazed me that anybody could want to discuss the intricacies of criminal procedure or evidence, but she did.

She had many talents and interests almost none of which I share. She loved to cook and to entertain. She'd scour *Gourmet Magazine* for hours and she'd cook these elaborate meals. She would do it even if you were on a particular diet or had a particular food allergy; that was just another challenge for her. And she'd set this completely beautiful table and my favorite piece of that table was these amazing napkin rings. She had a fabulous collection; it could go in a museum. Now, when I want to entertain or eat I either order in or eat out; these are my two options.

She gardened with great skill and took very seriously all the parts of the process. She planned it; she ordered the things; she planted them; she weeded them; she fought the deer that were winning and she enjoyed the beauty. I have an account with the florist and when I want to see a flower I call my florist and order one; and when I want to eat a tomato I go to the store.

Barbara knitted, as many of you know, and she took her knitting anywhere and everywhere. She preferred elaborate patterns and very complicated designs. She persuaded me once to try knitting. It was about six years ago—we were at Canyon Ranch for the weekend—and I picked as simple a pattern as I could in a small little baby size for a baby that was too young to object if the sweater was ugly, but meanwhile it's not finished to this day and she's done, you know, twenty sweaters since.

She had amazing energy. She trained for and ran in a marathon with Carolyn Subin after her first diagnosis of cancer; my greatest athletic achievement is having learned to ride my bike again after quite a few years off of it.

But for all our differences, we were very close friends. I thought a lot, have been thinking a lot about the basis of that friendship given our differences. And I think at the heart of it for each of us it was that we could tell the other anything and know that we wouldn't be judged, know that we would be accepted. I loved her spirit, her sense of humor, her energy, her power as a person. She was a complicated person to have for a friend, as many of you know, but she was worth the effort.

We did share a few things. We each loved earrings although our taste diverged over the years. So this morning as I was getting dressed for the day, I went back into my earring drawer—it's full—and these were the closest I could find to something that Barbara would wear. And they made me smile all day when I wore them and make me think of Barbara now. And I have on the barrette that Barbara gave me this spring as my hair grew long; she has this string of barrettes that she must have been collecting since she was twelve years old, all on a ribbon.

Having spoken of Barbara, as I close I want to speak *for* her and *to* her. As I speak for her, presumptuous as that sounds, I want to say how much she loved Pace. She was tremendously happy here in this community of all of you lawyers, her colleagues and her students. In one way Barbara had a lot of bad luck in her life. Yet in another way her life was full of joy, joy she took in living her life fully and her extended family and her friends. She found work that mattered and mattered a great deal. Before, I said there are two things people needed in life, love and work, and she had both.

And finally, to her: I miss you terribly. I imagined growing old together, rocking on the porch—she'd be knitting, I'd be watching. We'd be talking, sharing stories and feelings and each others lives. It will be hard to go on without you.