



IN MEMORIAM~ DENISE MARTIN

By: Chief Judge Caryl E. Delano

Our friend and colleague Denise Martin, born on April 30, 1956, passed away suddenly on Saturday morning, November 21, 2020. Denise had suffered a major heart attack on Saturday, November 14, but seemed to be recovering and was discharged from the hospital the following Thursday. Tragically, just two days later she suffered another major heart attack. A memorial service was held on December 4, 2020, and many Court staff, judges, and local attorneys attended or watched the live stream from the church.

Losing Denise is a terrible blow to her family and to our Court, especially to the Tampa Division. November 19, 2020 marked the 41st anniversary of Denise's employment with the Court. In fact, other than Judge Paskay, who served on the bench for 48 years, to our knowledge, Denise is our Court's longest-tenured employee. Denise was hired as a docket clerk in 1979, and later served as the Courtroom Deputy for Judge Paskay, for Judge Baynes when he was appointed to the bench in 1987 (throughout the *Celotex* years), and, after Judge Baynes' retirement in 2005, for Judge McEwen.

Denise was an integral member of Judge McEwen's chambers staff, and will be greatly missed by Judge McEwen, Lisa Scotten, and Dedra Gann. She was also very close friends with Mary Morrison (Judge Paskay's and Judge McEwen's retired judicial assistant), Mary Maddox (JA to Judge Williamson), Laura Stevenson (JA to Judge Delano), and Tampa's longtime court reporter, Kim Johnson. Denise will be missed by all of us in the Tampa Division.

In addition, during her 41 years with the Court, and having worked as a courtroom deputy for three judges, Denise was well known to the lawyers in the Tampa bankruptcy community, several of whom had served as law clerks to her judges. Judge McEwen recalls that prior to CM/ECF and, before that, the Court's after-hours emergency fax filing procedure, attorneys would take their after-hours emergency filings to Denise's South Tampa home so that she could accept them for filing.

On May 8, 2019, Denise arrived uncharacteristically late to a Tampa Division “Taco Lunch and Trivia Contest.” Unbeknownst to her Tampa friends and co-workers, Denise and David Martin, her long-time beau, had slipped off to First Presbyterian Church in downtown Tampa to be married during their lunch hour. Denise was known as a great cook, a wonderful party planner, a sharp dresser, and the life of any party. Denise and David loved relaxing by their pool and entertaining friends. In 2008, at age 52, after training for over a year, Denise completed and “placed” in a senior body building competition.

Denise and David also loved to spend with their family. Denise is survived by her daughters, Alyson Walsh (Nate) and Megan Long (Chris), stepson Andrew Martin, and five adorable grandchildren between the ages of nine months and five years old: Addy and Callen Walsh (and Baby Boy Walsh due in March 2021), Cooper and Molly Long, and Monroe Martin. As sad as we all are to have lost Denise, it is comforting to know that she was at a very happy stage of her life, enjoying life with David and her grown children and grandchildren, and looking forward to retiring in the foreseeable future.

I asked Judge McEwen to share her memories of Denise. She said

Denise was a personal friend of every member of our chambers. We so enjoyed each other’s company and socialized frequently. She was the life of any of our parties. She delighted in hearing stories about our individual adventures, always responding with a big smile and an enthusiastic “how fun!”

On the job front, Denise was an integral member of a team that thrives on each member’s being empowered to do her job with much discretion, while keeping in mind the overall goal as well as what the others are doing. Denise was a good fit for this kind of team culture. We trusted her to deal with the attorneys in a way that made sense for us and was in keeping with the prohibition against ex parte contacts. The attorneys really liked and respected her, based on what folks have related to me since her passing.

Denise was incredibly organized; she never left her office without leaving a clean desk behind. And she willingly took on the extra burden I placed on her to set up the pre-341 meeting status conferences — a/k/a pep talks — for our first-time pro se filers, which is no easy task as it involves immediately scheduling, noticing, and furnishing the materials that I discuss during the status conference. One last thing: Denise was a heck of a cook. When she would make lunch for us in our galley

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kitchen, even if it was a lunch of her leftovers, it wasn't unusual for me to say out loud, "I could mainline this!"

Denise is missed by many people, but she will be especially missed by Dedra Gann, Lisa Scotten, and me.

