

In Memoriam: Mark Wood



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Mark Wood, who passed peacefully in his sleep on May 29, 2021, left an enormous mark on the firm he loved so dearly.

For every day of his 50 years at O’Melveny, Mark embodied the firm’s values—as a lawyer and leader, as a colleague, and as a friend. A tireless advocate for his clients, he was also a champion for everyone at the firm. As Brad Butwin says, “He made you proud to work at O’Melveny.” George Demos adds, “Mark Wood was a giant.”

Chuck Bakaly, who met Mark at a *Law Review* dinner in 1967 says, “I am so sorry to hear about Mark. I hired him from USC School of Law and he became an outstanding and wonderful partner. He will truly be missed.”

After spending summer and fall with the firm in 1967 before attending the US Army and Naval Schools and serving as a JAG in the US Marines, and then serving in Vietnam, Mark returned to the firm in 1971. The rest is history. He became a top-notch litigator and mentor, and chaired the Litigation Department from 1998 to 2006. He [focused his practice](#) on aviation and insurance issues, and international dispute resolution. In one high-profile case, Mark was lead counsel for Logan Airport in connection with claims arising out of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

But no matter the weight of the case at hand or how busy he was, Mark—who was awarded the O’Melveny Values Award in 2007—always found time for every person on his team. He made them feel good about themselves and about what they were doing, and he saw to it that they knew they were part of the O’Melveny family. Never one to claim credit for himself—though he deserved plenty—he was committed to mentoring and celebrating others and dedicated to the firm’s achievements, not his own.

Today, there are few O'Melveny veterans who were not inspired and guided by Mark. "Mark changed my life," says Rich Goetz. "He was a true gentleman, maybe the kindest man I have met, and a pervasive motivator and mentor. His enthusiasm was infectious. He was generous with his time and his advice, which was priceless."

"Mark always exhibited tremendous confidence in new lawyers—more than they had in themselves," recalls Mark Samuels. "For the new lawyers, this was always a great morale booster and wind in their sails."

Seth Aronson adds, "It was impossible not to love Mark," and Apalla Chopra calls Mark "a quintessential O'Melveny partner. He trumpeted the accomplishments of others and was endlessly kind."

Says Dan Petrocelli, "Mark was a world-class lawyer and a gem of a person. I have a special fondness for Mark because he was instrumental in bringing me to O'Melveny. I will miss him."

Bob Siegel and Mark were co-chairs of the Litigation Department for one overlapping year, which Bob calls "one of the best years I've ever had." It was Mark's collaborative spirit that he treasures most. "He was an extremely supportive, warm, ebullient human being," Bob says. "Mark was genuinely interested in everyone's achievements and the progress the firm was making. He had a supportive energy and never an ounce of competition when it came to his colleagues."

Brad met Mark in 2002 as O'Melveny and O'Sullivan were merging. The vast majority of O'Sullivan's lawyers were corporate attorneys, but Brad was a litigator and he was unsure what to expect at the combined firm. "Mark immediately told me how excited he was about my arrival and was a great source of comfort during the transition," Brad recalls. "He went out of his way to make the O'Sullivan litigation team feel welcome. He later had enough confidence in me to give me my first leadership role at the firm as co-head of the New York litigation practice.

"Mark was a great mentor to me," adds Brad. "He always made others feel good—and, remarkably, he always had time for you, even as head of the Litigation Department—and even with a very busy trial schedule. And he did it all with a smile. I've never seen someone who was always so upbeat."

As Mark mentored others, Chuck Bender had mentored him. "Mark Wood was my partner, colleague, and dear friend for forty-five years," says Chuck. "He embodied all the special qualities of an ideal partner—generosity of spirit, compassion, and genuine affection for his colleagues."

Allen Burton also remembers Mark for his kindness and his dedication to helping clients and colleagues: "He demonstrated an unbelievable commitment to promoting others. He was a true leader in the best sense of the word." Allen recalls that when one of Mark's former clients retired, "Mark flew across country years after his retirement to congratulate him. The client said he was touched but not surprised because he knew that this was who Mark was."

Mark's dedication to the firm is what A.B. Culvahouse remembers. "He always volunteered to do the more difficult far-away assignments," A.B. says. "For example, he was in Alaska twice for extended periods and was key to the innovative approaches we took in those cases."

Seth remembers that, in a trial in the late 1980's "After the defense rested but before the jury returned, Mark hosted a celebration party for the large defense team. When asked whether it was premature, Mark replied: 'Always have a party before the jury returns. Regardless of the outcome, at least you'll have a party.' Mark was able to host a real celebration after the jury returned a verdict for the client. I have followed Mark's advice ever since. The next time we are waiting for a verdict we should all raise a glass to Mark; with luck, we can raise another after the verdict."

Modest to be sure, but Mark was proud of the work the Litigation Department did and he wanted to share its achievements with the whole firm. In those days, he would deliver the news through voicemail. A voicemail tape was only three minutes long, and Mark's messages would take multiple tapes. Each update would begin, "Mark," and then there would be three beats before "Wood."

"The first time I got one of Mark's Litigation Department voicemails I was out to dinner and I took a break to check my phone messages," Brad recalls. "And I saw that I had eight voicemails from the head of the Litigation Department! I thought I was going to get fired because the head of the Litigation Department left me eight voicemails and I hadn't returned any of them." But it was just the latest department update from Mark.

A typical voicemail: "This is Mark Wood calling you from across the pond in London with the Litigation Department update." He would then tick through the details of that month's litigation matters—large and small. It was important to him to praise everyone, even those remotely involved with any matter.

"And the tone was always upbeat and excited," recalls Jonathan Rosenberg. "Close your eyes and you hear him still."

"When I was a junior associate and I would get his messages about our Litigation Department successes, I always felt I would never measure up," says Amy Laurendeau. "And then one day

when he reported on one of my matters, I realized Mark had a way of making everything sound a little more incredible than it was. His enthusiasm, love for the firm, and pride in his colleagues were infectious.”

Mark’s message would continue: “Now moving to the City by the Bay, there was an important discovery win that the following 14 OMM lawyers and staff achieved when the court reduced the number of depositions of our client from 15 to 12.”

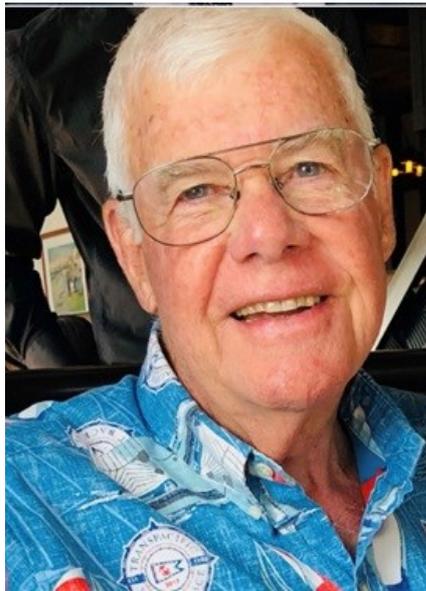
There were no small matters or small wins to Mark Wood. After recounting how the O’Melveny team had limited those depositions, he might then move on to an important Supreme Court victory.

“My favorite phrase of his was, ‘I will continue on another tape,’” remembers Brophy Christensen. “I think he actually thought there were tapes, but he could never finish on just one because he had so many people to acknowledge!”

“There has never been a better thing for morale than Mark’s voicemail reports,” adds Evan Jones. “Nor anyone who actually believed in partnership more. You were his partner, and that was what mattered. And after a while, you learned the code to the messages: ‘We’ve just about got this one won’ meant an answer had been filed. But the eternal optimism and pride was a key part of the man he was, and made you feel all the better.”

Mark would also leave voicemails that were not department updates. Every St. Patrick’s Day, he did his best to sound like a leprechaun and wish all a joyful holiday. Brad remembers those messages with a smile. “I have to admit, I didn’t know what to make of our leader the first time I heard his St. Patty’s day voicemail,” he recalls. Adds Tancred Schiavoni, “A St. Patrick’s Day has not passed since that I don’t think of Mark’s voicemails.”

Mark was also sensitive to the stresses that young lawyers feel after long days and nights spent on a hard-fought case. Matt Close remembers a long conversation, “almost a father-son discussion,” with Mark when he was a midlevel associate. “It was the first time a senior partner treated me like that,” he recalls.



Mark’s influence on the firm is still seen today, every day. George Demos credits Mark with formalizing O’Melveny’s Healthcare Practice and, together with Don Bliss, giving George the opportunity to be seconded for seven months to client Cigna and its GC. Mark then welcomed George, previously a tax lawyer, and the new Healthcare Practice into the firm’s Litigation Department.

When *The American Lawyer* named O’Melveny “Litigation Department of the Year,” in 2004, Mark was head of the department. “I will never forget Mark’s speech accepting the award,” Tanc recalls. “He talked about the teamwork, the sacrifices of families, the dedication to clients—without a word about himself, in contrast to every other recipient that night. He made me proud to work here.”

That was typical. “Mark gave you a big handshake and greeting, and was totally focused on you in conversations,” Brad recalls. “He took an interest in people’s lives outside the office and wanted to make sure you were taking care of yourself. He’d thank our families for the sacrifices they were making to support the firm.”

“Countless times I have reflected on his lessons, and done my best to pass them along,” says Rich. “He taught me that you only need to prove yourself to yourself; he told me he did that as a Marine. When I completely lacked focus, he taught me that you can only be effective if you create two lists—one of things you will focus on and one of things you won’t. He taught that small kindnesses matter. And there are so many more examples. He made the world a better place.”

George says that Mark was guided by his faith: “He was humble, kind, clear-headed—he put his faith and his family first and that drove everything he did.”

Says Chuck Bender, “To me, he was a saint, always expressing concern for my health and well-being. During my twenty years of retirement, whenever I was ill, no matter where Mark was, even when working overseas, he would find a church, go in, light a candle and say a prayer for me. He was truly an extraordinarily nice man. I was profoundly lucky to have him in my life.”

“Mark was above all a family man and a man of faith,” says Bob Willett. “He had flawless character. He taught generations of litigators how to do it right. He cared for his clients, his colleagues, and the staff. One could do worse than aspire to model a career on Mark’s. I am not suggesting that those aspirations could be realized, but the effort made the wannabes better.”

Mark’s greatest love was for his beautiful and large family—they were a source of enormous pride to him, as evidenced by the wonderful holiday cards that would detail the accomplishments of his wife, Sharon, their kids and their spouses, and their grandchildren. Through these delightful yearly updates, many felt like they were watching Mark’s family grow up before their eyes.

His Oregon Ducks were another source of pride and joy to him. Mark attended many University of Oregon football and basketball games, both home and away, and often sent pictures to his O'Melveny colleagues from the stands or a pre-game tailgate of Mark in his green and yellow Oregon gear. Mark was in his glory attending the 2020 Rose Bowl, where his beloved Ducks were victorious.

Former partner Pat Lynch summed up Mark poignantly: "From the Marine Corps, he took 'No One Left Behind.' From the gospels he took, 'Do Unto Others.'"

After Mark retired from the firm he remained Of Counsel and was an active participant on the Community Legal Services committee. Brett Williamson points out that "Mark regularly gave input on proposed new pro bono matters as well as changes to our policies and procedures."

Mark also continued to serve as a trusted advisor to many clients. "He jumped in on a Chubb trial team as a retired partner and, later, during arbitration, he served as a much-needed guiding hand," says Allen Burton. "I remember once, it was three o'clock in the morning, and I kept telling him he didn't need to stay. 'I'm not going anywhere until you're done,'" Mark said.

"Mark was so generous with his time," George adds. "Even after he stepped down and retired, he got involved in the ACE/Chubb litigation and spent a lot of time in the New York office working closely with the partners there on those matters."

Michael Hamilton sees a lesson in Mark's life. "It is our responsibility to make sure that similar words are spoken of us," Michael says. "We have inherited something here that could so easily be lost. Every day. Every. Single. Day. We must continue to create, grow, and nurture these types of relationships and legacies. It's on us."

Retired partner Brian Anderson struck a similar note. "I had wonderful mentors during my O'Melveny career. But there was none better than Mark Wood. He mastered the difficult task of being both a skilled lawyer and a saintly human being. We should all aspire to follow his example."

While he will be terribly missed by the very many he touched so deeply, it is somehow fitting that Mark, the Marine and former Military Judge and Judge Advocate, died boating with friends on Memorial Day weekend.

We had the honor of filming Mark in 2019 for a series of videos we called "O'Melveny Love"—watch a collection of clips of Mark talking about his experiences at the firm below.

"All of us at the firm who had the privilege of working with Mark and being his friend will forever view him as the gold standard for human relationships," says Randy Oppenheimer. "He always put others first. Every single day. And always with a great and open heart. He was a gentle lion. We will miss him greatly, but part of his legacy is that we will always strive to treat friends and colleagues as he did."

These are just some of the tributes to Mark we have received. Many more can be found below. As additional members of our extended O'Melveny community write in to honor Mark and his memory, we will continue to update this page.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mark's wife, Sharon, their children and their spouses—Casey and Greg, Kelly and Brian, Pat and Janette, Ryan and Megan, and Sean and Joanne—and to the entire Wood family.

Mark's obituary, as published in *Los Angeles Times* on June 13, 2021, may be read [here](#).

Tributes to Mark:

John Altieri

(In response to Don Bliss) Amen.

Brian Anderson

My first big case was the BAT/Axa Midi litigation that Mark ran in 1989/90. I was a young associate from a modest background, and was star-struck to work on a high-stakes case in which I traveled to London and Paris and counseled powerful people. I was not sure if I belonged in this rarified environment. Mark's humble leadership style made me feel welcome on a team filled with supreme legal talent. Mark, the General of the Army, made me believe he knew about and supported what I, a low-level soldier, was doing. He gave me the confidence that allowed me to eventually build a successful career at the firm.

I recall Mark's 1990's-era voice-mail messages to the Litigation Department, describing our victories in multiple three-minute segments. Mark identified and thanked everyone involved in the effort, from senior partners to junior paralegals. His messages were corny, but genuine. They reaffirmed the firm's values, and motivated everyone to give their all.

I have been a recipient of Mark's Christmas letters, in which he talked about his children and grandchildren, with the obligatory shout-out to the Oregon Ducks. He was a true family man, deeply religious, and content in his retirement.

Four years ago, my family visited San Juan Island and I spotted Mark in a restaurant. He invited me to visit him in Roche Harbor, and I enjoyed discussing old times with him. He was a happy person, as he deserved to be.

I had wonderful mentors during my O'Melveny career. But there was none better than Mark Wood. He mastered the difficult task of being both a skilled lawyer and a saintly human being. We should all aspire to follow his example.

Beryl Arbit

As a member of the Transactions Department, I never worked directly with Mark (although I did listen to his monthly Litigation Department updates). I did, however, assist him in reorganizing a number of real estate-related family LLCs, and while many comments reflect on Mark's skills as a lawyer, I can vouch for the fact that he was also the consummate client - always available to answer questions; always quick to provide background documents and information; always ready to sign countless documents himself (and collect additional signatures from his far-flung family). Getting to know Mark and the rest of the Wood clan was a joy - it's an O'Melveny memory that I will always treasure.

Seth Aronson

In a major case in the 1980s, Mark hosted a celebration party for our large defense team while the jury was out. When asked whether it was premature, Mark replied: "Always have a party before the jury returns. Regardless of the outcome, at least you will have a party." Mark was able to host a real celebration after the jury returned a verdict for our client. I have followed Mark's advice ever since. The next time we are waiting for the verdict we should all raise a glass for Mark; and with luck, we can raise another after the favorable verdict.

Chuck Bakaly

I am so sorry to hear about Mark. I hired him from USC law school and he became an outstanding and wonderful partner. He will truly missed.

Charles Bender

Mark Wood was my partner, colleague and dear friend for forty-five years. He embodied all of the special qualities of an ideal partner—generosity of spirit, compassion and genuine affection for his colleagues. And to me, he was a saint, always expressing concern for my health and well being. During my twenty years of retirement, whenever I was ill, no matter where Mark was, even when working over seas, he would find a church, go in, light a candle and say a prayer for me. He was truly an extraordinarily nice man. I was profoundly lucky to have him in my life.

Jan Birtwell

This is very sad news indeed and such a shock for his family. Mark was so friendly to and supportive of me right from when I joined the firm, he made me feel very much at home.

Don Bliss

(In response to Brophy Christensen, Jeff Kilduff, Jonathan Rosenberg, and Evan Jones) It is easy to be skeptical when a law firm touts its special "values"— that is until you have met Mark Wood.

Allen Burton

He demonstrated an unbelievable commitment to promoting others. He was a true leader in the best sense of the word. When one of Mark's former clients retired Mark flew across country years after his retirement to congratulate him. The client said he was touched but not surprised because he knew that this was who Mark was. Mark also continued to serve as a trusted advisor to many clients. He jumped in on a Chubb trial team as a retired partner and, later, during arbitration, he served as a much-needed guiding hand. I remember once, it was three o'clock in the morning, and I kept telling him he didn't need to stay. "I'm not going anywhere until you're done," Mark said.

Brad Butwin

He made you proud to work at O'Melveny. [Following the O'Melveny and O'Sullivan merger] Mark immediately told me how excited he was about my arrival and was a great source of comfort during the transition. He went out of his way to make the O'Sullivan litigation team feel welcome. He later had enough confidence in me to give me my first leadership role at the firm as co-head of the New York litigation practice.

Mark was a great mentor to me. He always made others feel good—and, remarkably, he always had time for you, even as head of the Litigation Department—and even with a very busy trial schedule. And he did it all with a smile. I've never seen someone who was always so upbeat.

The first time I got one of Mark's Litigation Department voicemails I was out to dinner and I took a break to check my phone messages and I saw that I had eight voicemails from the head of the Litigation Department! I thought I was going to get fired because the head of the Litigation Department left me eight voicemails and I hadn't returned any of them. But it was just the latest department update from Mark.

Mark gave you a big handshake and greeting, and was totally focused on you in conversations. He took an interest in people's lives outside the office and wanted to make sure you were taking care of yourself. He'd thank our families for the sacrifices they were making to support the firm.

Apalla Chopra

[He was] a quintessential O'Melveny partner. He trumpeted the accomplishments of others and was endlessly kind.

Brophy Christensen

Other than our debates over the Bruins over the Ducks, my favorite Mark Wood phrase was, "I will continue on another tape." I think he actually thought there were tapes and he could never finish on just one because he had so many to acknowledge!

Matt Close

Mark was also sensitive to the stresses that young lawyers feel after long days and nights spent on a hard-fought case. I remember a long conversation, almost a father-son discussion, with Mark as a midlevel associate. It was the first time a senior partner treated me like that.

A.B. Culvahouse

He always volunteered to do the more difficult far-away assignments. For example, he was in Alaska twice for extended periods and was key to the innovative approaches we took in those cases.

George Demos

Mark Wood was a giant. He was humble, kind, clear-headed—he put his faith and his family first and that drove everything he did. Mark was so generous with his time, even after he stepped down and retired, he got involved in the ACE/Chubb litigation and spent a lot of time in the New York office working closely with the partners there on those matters.

Teresa Doremus

He was the partner on the first case I ever worked on at O'Melveny and one of the reasons I have such a love for the firm. From the very beginning I understood what it meant to be part of the O'Melveny family. Truly one of the kindest men I've ever met.

Bob Draper

At a time when I was in San Francisco as part of a trial team on a major antitrust case, my son suddenly became ill and had to be hospitalized in the ICU unit at UCLA. I was in the middle of a major cross-examination and could not immediately come down. He and Sharon went to the hospital at UCLA, picked my wife Barbie up, took her to their house in Manhattan Beach for dinner, and then drove her back to our house in Pacific Palisades. For those of you not

familiar with Los Angeles, that's probably a drive of an hour or so both ways, but the distance is a minor part of the point. As shown by many of your comments and as those of us who knew Mark well know, Mark lived his life that way, both personally and professionally. He will be sorely missed.

Tim Evans

I knew Mark mostly by reputation, but reading the tributes has been very meaningful. I was particularly struck by the following sentence [from Brad's announcement]—to me it captures in a few words what we should all aspire to, both personally and as O'Melveny lawyers: "He was a vibrant, empathetic, and inspiring leader who made everyone feel good—he had a nice word to say about everyone." Thank you for this—it is a high, but motivating, standard.

David Foster

Mark was an exceptional lawyer and a wonderful human being. Working with him was a real pleasure. Not only did I learn a lot from watching him in action, but he was so supportive and encouraging that I always felt I had someone to turn to for help when things became tricky. He was a regular visitor to the London office, and we will all miss him.

Jeff Fowler

When I joined the firm in 1998, Mark Wood called me to make the arrangements. I met him in the office lobby where he gave me a tour, waited while I took a picture for my security card, and invited me to lunch. He explained he was the Chair of the Litigation Department and would be the right person to contact if I had any questions. He then told me my office was next to his, that I would share his assistant, Joyce, and that his door was always open. And it really was: all day, I could not help but observe the sheer number of people he took the time to compliment, assure, and help. As busy as he was, he would step into my office every day to see how the most junior, least important lawyer at the firm was doing. "We sure are lucky to have you," he'd say. I could hardly believe it! Here he was, the leader of our venerable department, taking the time to treat me with such humility. It not only motivated me to do my best work; it inspired me to humbly follow his example. That's the power of Mark Wood: he could make you a better person just by knowing him.

Richard Goetz

Mark changed my life. He was a true gentleman, maybe the kindest man I have met, and a pervasive motivator and mentor. His enthusiasm was infectious. He was generous with his time and his advice, which was priceless. Countless times I have reflected on his lessons, and done my best to pass them along. He taught me that you only need to prove yourself to yourself; he told me he did that as a Marine. When I completely lacked focus, he taught me that you can only be effective if you create two lists—one of things you will focus on and one of things you won't. He taught that small kindnesses matter. There are so many more examples. He made the world a better place.

Stephen Harberg

I learned a lot from Mark over my years at O'Melveny, but the most important lesson he taught me, through word and deed, was that even in this hyper-competitive career we have all chosen, nice guys can finish first. My condolences to the entire O'Melveny family for this immense loss.

Jack Hardy

Losing Mark is unexpected and incredibly sad. He was truly one of the people who embodied what it meant to be an "O'Melveny partner".

Michael Hamilton

This [responses to Brad's announcement] is lovely. It is our responsibility to make sure that similar words are spoken of us. We have inherited something here that could so easily be lost. Every day. Every.single.day. We must continue to create, grow, and nurture these types of relationships and legacies. It's on us.

Ivan Hemmans

I have had the distinct pleasure of getting to know Mark Wood over the last several years. He was always pleasant, patient, and kind. Somehow or another I got added to his family holiday mailing list. Perhaps I made it onto his "good" list, because he always find time to check in on me to see how my family and I were doing, and he took me out to lunch several times over the last half decade. I carry fond memories of my time talking with him and send his family heartfelt condolences. It is clear that he will be missed by many, many people.

Boyd Hight

I find Mark's sudden, untimely death particularly shaking for the reasons many of you have articulated. Mark and I worked closely together early in our careers. Mark, as many of you know, was basically unstoppable. Years later, after my second return to the firm

from professional perambulations, Mark and Sharon honored Mary Kay and me with a party. The invitation cited the Biblical passages telling the story of the Prodigal Son's warm greeting, thereby cementing their place in our hearts. Mark was truly an extraordinary friend.

Evan Jones

(In response to Brophy Christensen, Jeff Kilduff, and Jonathan Rosenberg) There has never been a better thing for morale than Mark's voicemail reports. Nor anyone who actually believed in partnership more. You were his partner, and that was what mattered. And after a while, you learned the code to the messages: "we've just about got this one won" meant an answer had been filed. But the eternal optimism and pride was a key part of the man he was, and made you feel all the better. We will miss him terribly.

Rochelle Karr

I had the privilege of working with Mark on our internal veterans advisory group, O'Melveny Salute. Mark was one of our most active members always chiming in with a word of support and encouragement as we worked to provide pro bono and community-based support to veterans and military families, here and abroad. A couple of years ago, a young Marine (who no one knew) emailed the firm at its general email box asking for some career guidance as he wanted to attend law school after his service concluded. Mark and this Marine connected and Mark not only took him to lunch, but continued to follow up regularly with the Marine. Mark did everything he could (including an extensive email campaign to offices across the country) to help guide the Marine to the best mentors, law school, and professional experience. He took the time to bend over backwards to help someone he hardly knew—that's the kind of person Mark was. He had such a profound sense of kindness and warmth for those in the military, our vets, and for his entire O'Melveny family. We already miss him terribly.

Jeff Kilduff

(In response to Brophy Christensen) Let's not forget how every voicemail began with a weather report with details of wherever he was delivered after his unforgettable introduction of his name in seemingly slow motion.

Matt Kline

Mark was a truly lovely and generous man. Such a loss.

Jeffrey Kohn

This is such devastating news for all of us and for his family. He was always so kind. And he cared deeply for the firm and all of his colleagues. We lost a truly special colleague today.

David Lash

I am just so sad about Mark, devastated is the right word, in fact. He was one of the kindest, most special persons I have ever met. A couple things about him that should not go unsaid. When we first drafted formal policies and procedures for the Pro Bono Program, we included a provision that asked the heads of the Litigation and Corporate Departments each to appoint a representative to the CLS Committee. Mark immediately appointed himself. He told me this was the most important thing he could do as chair of the Firm's Litigation Department, that this pro bono effort was something he wanted to be a part of . . . every day. For the next decade or more, he generally was the first Committee member to respond to the Requests for Approval, always voting with his trademark "Ok by me". When he found a pro bono case to be particularly moving, he would pick up the phone and let me know or he would send a personal email. When he felt more Firm perspective was needed, he would write to the entire Committee and explain his interest in the case, the Firm's history with the issue, or whatever else he felt was important. I was so moved when, at his retirement party (at which I was one of only two non-partners, and soon found out why he asked me to attend), he talked so beautifully about the Firm's commitment to community, about how he took his greatest pride in the growth and impact of the pro bono program, and what it meant to him. Mark made it all about the cause, not himself, not his cases, just the commitment and the clients who needed us. And after he retired, Mark remained an active member of the CLS Committee, still serving for many years as the Litigation Department representative, still calling me or writing to me when a particular case moved him. At least once or twice a year, he would tell me how proud he was of what I was doing, of what the firm was doing, encouraging me, encouraging us all, and reminding me of the history and commitment that was so important to him. Until last week he continued to participate, he continued to vote with "Ok by me". One of the finest persons I have ever known. I will miss things being "Ok" by him, I will miss all he taught me, I will miss his heart, I will miss him terribly.

Amy Laurendeau

So incredibly sad. Mark was the best. When I was a junior associate and would get his

messages about our litigation department successes I always felt I would never measure up. And then one day when he reported on one of my matters, I realized Mark had a way of making everything sound a little more incredible than it was. :) His enthusiasm, love for the firm and pride in his colleagues were infectious.

Patrick Lynch

Mark: From the Marine Corps, he took "No One Left Behind." From the gospels he took "Do Unto Others."

Luc Moritz

This is truly a very sad day. I remember fondly the wonderful voice mail Mark left me when I became a partner, offering his support to a corporate tax colleague he barely knew, and had not and would not have any reason to work with. What a gentleman. His constant smile was irrepressible and contagious. A great member of our firm and a tremendous loss.

Randy Oppenheimer

All of us at the firm who had the privilege of working with Mark and being his friend will forever view him as the gold standard for human relationships. He always put others first. Every single day. And always with a great and open heart. He was a gentle lion. We will miss him greatly, but part of his legacy is that we will always strive to treat friends and colleagues as he did.

Dan Petrocelli

Mark was a world-class lawyer and a gem of a person. I have a special fondness for Mark because he was instrumental in bringing me to O'Melveny. I will miss him.

Laurence Preble

I'm so sorry to hear. I think Mark joined the firm the year after I did and we were good friends from the beginning. Of course, Mark was good friends with everyone. That's the kind of person he was. He was a staunch believer in the firm and its values.

Ira Raphaelson

I remember being interviewed by Mark to join the firm in 1996 in his then Newport office. He was a mainstay of the firm and his loss is both unexpected and sad.

Jonathan Rosenberg

He went out of his way to make us feel welcome with the 2002 merger. Such a sweet man, I'm so sad.

(In response to Brophy Christensen and Jeff Kilduff) And the always upbeat and excited tone, and the endearing mispronunciations. Close your eyes and you hear him still.

Frank Rugani

As a transactional attorney I always found Mark's voicemail reports about our litigation colleagues informative, interesting and a reason to be proud of the firm of which I was a part. I will miss but remain inspired by his example. Rest In Peace.

Mark Samuels

Mark always exhibited tremendous confidence in new lawyers—more than they had in themselves. For the new lawyers, this was always a great morale booster and wind in their sails.

Tancred Schiavoni

I will never forget Mark's speech accepting litigation of the year award. He talked about the teamwork, the sacrifices of families, the dedication to clients without a word about himself in utter contrast to every other award recipient that night. He made me proud to work here. A St Patrick's day has not passed since I don't think of his St Patrick Day voicemails. A real standup guy. I will miss him.

Bob Siegel

[Co-chairing the Litigation department with Mark was] one of the best years I've ever had. He was an extremely supportive, warm, ebullient human being. Mark was genuinely interested in everyone's achievements and the progress the firm was making. He had a supportive energy and never an ounce of competition when it came to his colleagues.

Mark Steinberg

Mark's attitude about taking on a new, thorny problem wasn't, "Can we do it?" but "Let's get it done."

Judith Tarantino

I am having a hard time getting my head around this. He was such a good man. We are not likely to see many more like him. He was the only partner at OMM who consistently reminded me of a little boy when he would walk around oblivious to the fact that his shirttail was hanging out.

Henry Thumann

(In response to Brophy Christensen, Jeff Kilduff, Jonathan Rosenberg, Evan Jones, and Don Bliss) Mark was the prototype of a truly compassionate leader. Whether leading a Marine platoon or our litigation department, everyone followed not because they had to but because they wanted to. He cared about each of us in a way that made it impossible not to follow. He will be missed, but his legacy will hopefully long linger.

Catalina Vergara

What a huge loss. He was such a giant at the firm, and lived his life so well.

David Watts

My tears are flowing.

Bob Willett

Mark was above all a family man and a man of faith. He had flawless character. He taught generations of litigators how to do it right. He cared for his clients, his colleagues, and the staff. One could do worse than aspire to model a career on Mark's. I am not suggesting that those aspirations could be realized, but the effort made the wannabes better.

Robert White

One day, not long after I joined the litigation department, following my 4 mandatory rotations, Mark (then a more senior associate) walked into my office and told me I was going to become an expert in insurance law. I said I didn't know we had an insurance practice, to which Mark responded "but you'll be prepared for it." I've been on the planet a while now, and I don't think I've met a nicer human being.

Brett Williamson

This is such sad and sudden news. I imagine very few people know that Mark remained an active participant on the Community Legal Services committee as our retired partner representative, regularly giving input on proposed new pro bono matters as well as changes to our policies and procedures. The last time I spoke with him he was so excited about the upcoming college football season--I think he and Sharon were going to travel to Columbus in September with their extended family to see Oregon play Ohio St.

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