

Shareholder Loses Battle With Cancer

The firm is sad to announce that Robert Ward, a shareholder in our firm since 1998, lost his courageous battle with colon cancer on April 8, 2014. Robert joined Rushton Stakely in 1994. He previously had worked in the District Attorney's office in Montgomery County, the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division, and for the Honorable William Bowen of the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals.

Robert grew up in New Orleans in the Ninth Ward, graduated from Loyola New Orleans and then received his law degree from the University of Alabama. He came to Montgomery after receiving his law degree. Robert is survived in Montgomery by his son, Kellen, a student at Montgomery Academy, and his wife, Leslie.

Robert came to Rushton Stakely upon the recommendation of the Chief Circuit Judge in Montgomery at the time, William R. Gordon. The firm was in need of an experienced, capable litigator, and sought the advice of Judge Gordon. He did not hesitate when he recommended Robert as the most capable, prepared, and impressive trial lawyer who came frequently to his court. The firm then sought an interview with Robert and immediately recognized his potential.

During his years with Rushton Stakely, Robert distinguished himself as an outstanding trial lawyer and mediator. He became a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, having been recognized by his peers as an outstanding litigator who had the proven track record of numerous jury trials. He also served the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association as a Board Member in 2009 and Secretary-Treasurer in 2013-2014. Additionally, he served on the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club of Montgomery. His mediation skills were

recognized throughout this region because of his success in achieving compromise when compromise was needed.

Robert was an inspiration to our firm. He displayed character traits that reflected the teachings of his parents and family. His manners were impeccable. He was kind to all and showed enthusiasm each and every day for the work he was doing. Robert was an eternal optimist and never expressed any doubt that the day would bring good fortune to all.

Robert knew no enemies and spoke ill of no other person. He practiced the old adage, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Robert looked down on no person, but also had no problem dealing with the most important and influential people. He could speak with equal ease to the president of the company and to the employees performing the most menial labors of the same organization. He was gifted in that he saw no bias or prejudice in any person he encountered, and he certainly displayed none toward those with whom he dealt.

Robert had a smile which would engage the room and a voice which would command attention. He never abused his ability by bullying, but was quite good at persuading. His genuine kindness and love of all people spread throughout our firm and far beyond the boundaries of this workplace.

While we will miss Robert, we know that we have all been made better by his presence with us. If he had one thing to say before he left, I am quite sure it would be, "Don't worry about me, I've got to do what I have to do." Those were the words he often uttered as he fought colon cancer for the last several years of his life. He fought it into remission on several occasions and, when it came back, he resolved to fight it again. He never felt sorry for himself and never ever wanted sympathy from anyone. As we mourn the loss of Robert, we all hope to resolve to emulate the qualities he possessed, and if we do, we will all be better for having known him. If

we gain even some of Robert's qualities, we will feel the glow of that great smile as he looks down upon us with the knowledge that he contributed greatly to our development as human beings.